

# Be Your Best Self

Monday 15th November 2021



Dear Students, Parents, Carers & Staff,

## **TikTok Accounts**

I wanted to firstly thank those of you who have been in touch to inform the school about spoof TikTok accounts which have been set up and which seek to belittle staff. Your support is invaluable and fully appreciated. Some of this material includes highly insulting and unfounded allegations. This is of course very upsetting for our staff and their families. As a close community you will also be aware that some of our staff are parents of students in the school and this could have a negative impact for these young people.

Although these posts appear to be in clear contravention of TikTok's community guidelines, we are informed that in the majority of cases no action has been taken by TikTok to remove these posts after a complaint has been made. As a school we know parents have reported these accounts to TikTok. When we have become aware of the person who has set the account we have worked with the individual and their parents to remove the account and have sanctioned accordingly.

Sadly, this appears to be a national issue with the teaching unions writing to TikTok seeking an assurance that it will take immediate steps to prevent posts of this nature appearing on the platform and that it will respond to any complaints by removing material immediately. Teaching unions have also raised this matter with the Department for Education.

As a school we have sought support from our community Police Officer, who is working closely with us to identify those involved. The school and the police are also working together to develop the way we educate students about the law surrounding bullying, harassment and the abuse of intellectual property on social media. In the first instance our community officer alongside key pastoral staff will be producing short videos for parents and students with regard to the law and social media. These will be circulated shortly.

Please can we remind parents of the age restriction around particular social media platforms, which is 13 years old in the majority of cases: [What age can my child start social networking?](#) Another

website with a wealth of support and information on online safety is the NSPCC: [Online Safety for Children - Tips & Guides](#)

Every hour school staff spend dealing with the fallout from inappropriate and insensitive use of social media platforms like TikTok by a very small minority of students is an hour that we are not devoting to our core role of providing the optimum curriculum experience for each student.

As always thank you for your support with this matter and please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C Mulhern". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a simple horizontal line.

**C Mulhern**

**Deputy Headteacher**

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