



Hazelwick School

An Academy

Headteacher: Ms A Fearon BA (Hons) MA NPQH

Chair of Governors: Mrs R Bowron

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing to you regarding a pressing issue that is facing schools.

You may have seen information in the news about the misuse of social media accounts by students, and the negative impact that this is having on staff and students in schools.

There has been much coverage about students nationwide creating TikTok accounts using images of staff, as well as Instagram accounts being created using staff names. These accounts have posted completely inappropriate images with offensive and abusive language about staff. These actions are illegal and will be dealt with very seriously by our school. They may also lead to prosecution for malicious communication. If any of these instances occur using the name or images of Hazelwick staff, we will do all that we can to identify the students involved as these actions are illegal, abusive and entirely out of line with the inclusive and safe ethos that we promote as a school.

I would also like to remind you about the school expectations regarding students' use of social media. All the main social media platforms have an age limit and should not be used by students under the age of 13. These accounts can be used to bully other students or to download illegal or inappropriate content and therefore it is in the interests of legality and the safeguarding of the school community that I raise the issue of age limits. Although we provide our students with regular e-safety education and training, some of these messages are not getting through. Students should not have their phone turned on during the school day. The taking of videos or photos during the school day anywhere on the school site is completely unacceptable and will be dealt with very seriously. Any social media posts with students in Hazelwick uniform are a reflection of the school regardless of the time they are taken, and therefore any negative, abusive or concerning content will be treated as bringing the school into disrepute. Recent incidences of this behaviour have led to Fixed Term Exclusions for students involved.

You may believe that your child would not be involved in such activity but please remember that sharing images is a serious issue in itself. I am therefore asking that you please discuss the contents of this letter with your son/daughter and discuss the risks that they are placing themselves at if they either create or follow malicious and illegal accounts set up in teachers' names, or if they post negative or abusive content on social media.

We work tirelessly as a school to support our students. The impressive outcomes achieved when Hazelwick students and staff work harmoniously together builds and maintains the excellent reputation the school enjoys. This reputation leads to the school being oversubscribed and it being an appealing place to work for high quality teachers. The types of behaviours detailed above severely dent our reputation, jeopardise the safety of our staff and students and have a negative impact right across our wonderful school community. I would therefore be very grateful for your support in the matter.

Yours faithfully

Mr D Leadbitter

Deputy Headteacher

Designated Safeguarding Lead