

The Oldershaw School

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Dear Parents/Carers

Since we returned from lockdown, I have been increasingly concerned by the negative impact of social media in school as children appear to be using their phones more than ever before, either in defiance of our clear school rules or to post inappropriate messages which have an impact on other children.

Over the weekend there has been a high level of social media activity discussing sensitive issues wholly unsuitable for public publication. This has involved Oldershaw children being named by adults online and other adults and children subsequently making threats and posting abuse at various individuals. I cannot stress strongly enough how incredibly unhelpful and hugely disruptive this is for us in school and the possible consequences this may have in law for the authors.

We do our very best to work with children and families to resolve disputes and address bullying and are proud of the reputation we have earned over many years for taking such issues seriously. Due process must be followed to establish facts and to carefully manage fragile and sensitive issues. However, the impact of adults and children making inflammatory comments and allegations online is incredibly negative and makes the issue much harder to deal with, disrupting learning and often leading to further serious incidents which serve to make matters worse rather than better.

Can I please therefore remind all parents and carers that one of our core values is Kindness and this applies to all members of the school community at all times? Please also remember that the best way for us to support your child with any concerns is that you tell us about them as soon as possible and then continue to stay in touch as necessary.

Finally, can I reiterate that we take all reports of bullying extremely seriously and do our best to resolve them quickly and effectively. We can and do apply our behaviour policy to sanction anyone involved in bullying as well as involve our Safer Schools Police Officer if the law has been broken. I must also remind all that if there is evidence of posting on social media from pupils which breaches our behaviour policy these can and will be sanctioned. Adults may be referred to the Police and/or Local Authority.

Can I please ask that anyone who has posted something over the weekend pertaining to this issue removes it from social media immediately and contacts the school if they feel further support is necessary.

As ever, I remain grateful for your support.

Mr J Bush
Principal