



Meadowhead School

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Academy Trust

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Steve Bacon

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AEV/RBR/JWA

20th November 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

RE: CYBERBULLYING ISSUES

I am writing to you all today to inform you about a significant incident of bullying via WhatsApp/Snapchat groups in Year 7.

Some students in Y7 had set these groups up quite innocently as they joined Meadowhead to keep in contact with new friends made in forms. Unfortunately over the last few weeks they have started to become a forum to bully other students and some quite disturbing messages and threats to instigate fights have been seen.

Currently we have worked through the messages to find specific students involved, we have collected all of the phones (in line with our cyber bullying policy) and we are requesting parental meetings before the phones are returned to the student. Most of these meetings took place yesterday.

Both of the platforms suggest a minimum age of much higher than 11/12, WhatsApp is actually 16 years and Snapchat 13 years. These are set to the specific age groups as younger children do not use them in the correct way as shown by this incident.

We need your help and support in monitoring the situation closely and would really appreciate if you would check your child's mobile phone, iPad, tablet or other device regularly. Most of the problems occur between 6pm and 10pm in the evening when the child is at home with you. Cyberbullying is a topic covered on the school curriculum in ICT and luckily this will be the Y7 topic in January where we will go into it in much more detail.

If you need more information on any of the above or find that your child is being bullied over any of these groups/platforms please contact the Y7 office.

Please see overleaf for the bullying definition bullet points taken directly from our bullying policy and also the cyberbullying definition provided.

Bullying includes:

- Physical bullying: e.g. pushing, kicking, hitting
- Sexual remarks, assault, jokes, harassment, 'upskirting', see Peer Abuse, Sept 20
- Making people do things they don't want to
- Stopping people doing things they want to do
- Damaging and/or taking someone's belongings
- Verbal bullying: name-calling, sarcasm, teasing

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- Saying or writing nasty things, & rumours
- Blackmail or threats
- Showing upsetting material e.g. pornography
- Indirect bullying: e.g. social exclusion, scaring

Cyber-bullying can happen:

- Using technology to torment, threaten, harass, humiliate, embarrass or target
- Via internet digital technologies or mobile phones
- At any time & with bigger audiences

Authorised staff have powers to seize electronic devices, examine & delete data where appropriate without parental consent.

If the device is thought to contain evidence relating to a crime, it must be handed to the police without deletion of data.

Can I take this opportunity to remind you of the support offered in school by myself and our pastoral team:

Rachael Brown, Pastoral Manager ext. 707
Jane Walker, Safeguarding Officer ext. 616
Angie Evans, Head of Year ext. 807

Yours faithfully



Angela Evans
Head of Year 7