

Dear Parents & Carers,

As a school community the safety and wellbeing of our students is always our main priority. With this in mind we wish to share the school's official position concerning student use of social media. The school has consulted with an eSafety Commissioner [Trusted eSafety Provider](#) to ensure we provide you with up to date and evidence based advice.

All social media platforms (*including Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, Discord and Tik Tok*) have a minimum age of 13 that is clearly outlined in the terms of service. Irrespective of the age rating mentioned in the App Store, 13 years is the mandated minimum age whether or not they have parental permission. For example, these are the terms of service directly from Instagram:

Who Can Use Instagram. We want our Service to be as open and inclusive as possible, but we also want it to be safe, secure, and in accordance with the law. So, we need you to commit to a few restrictions in order to be part of the Instagram community.

- You must be at least 13 years old or the minimum legal age in your country to use Instagram.

As a school we do not recommend any student under the age of 13 has access to their own social media account.

In addition to the age restriction, social media presents a myriad of issues related to the unsuitability of content (sexual references, language, drugs, alcohol and broader adult themes) on these platforms. These social media platforms have not been designed, managed or filtered with primary school age children in mind. The risks of cyberbullying and inappropriate messaging are increased when developing brains are presented with disappearing direct messages such as those featured in most social media. Another significant risk is the exposure to other users wishing to harm and abuse young people. The evidence is very clear that wherever young people gather online via social media platforms there will always be a risk of predators. We acknowledge that there is a time and a place for social media however these challenges of social media present much greater risk for primary school aged children.

Recommended: A messaging app that has been designed specifically for users under 13 is **Messenger Kids** (www.messengerkids.com). Parents require a Facebook account to manage and supervise their child's account. Using an app such as this provides a perfect opportunity for parents to introduce messaging and social media in a safer environment where open conversations can set up families for success don't the track.

Further information about specific social media platforms, as well as games and apps, can be accessed via the parent [eSafety Guide](#) (Australian Government eSafety Commissioner).

In 2022 we are taking a proactive approach as a school. Students in F-6 will be participating in termly online safety incursions delivered by Inform & Empower. ***We are also supporting parents and carers in this space through a "parents only" webinar/presentation on 5th May, 2022.***