



14 February 2023

## **STAGE 3 eSAFETY - SOCIAL MEDIA**

Dear Parents/Carers of Stage 3 Students

We are informing you of current and/or potential issues regarding social media use between our Stage 3 students. It is very important to note that social media can be a powerful tool in a positive and negative way. Unfortunately, it is the negative that is often brought to us regarding social challenges between our students, often involving the use of apps that have age restrictions e.g. Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook and TikTok, which has an age restriction of 13 years. We prefer to bring this to your attention now, to minimise any effect on the wellbeing of our students and allow open conversations at home and at school regarding the safe, ethical and appropriate use of social media apps.

To address responsible online behaviour in general, our actions include speaking with the grades and stages, lessons in the classroom, incursions on respectful, responsible and safe online behaviour and informative visits from our Police Youth Liaison Officer.

Although chats and other online/app behaviour is often innocent to start, it can very quickly become problematic, particularly when large groups of students are involved, or improper use of apps that are not age appropriate for our young 10-12 year old Stage 3 students.

Therefore, while we can do our best to address any 'fallout' behaviour that occurs at school as a result of social media chats, we do not have any jurisdiction over their access to online material, use of their personal devices or memberships to apps outside school, which is when this most often occurs, as mobile phone and personal device use is prohibited at school. Therefore, we would like to forge a strong partnership with you as parents to support and guide our Stage 3 students and effectively teach them the impacts and eventual consequences of engaging in potentially negative interactions online, and the more positive ways they can use social media. Our message to Stage 3 includes but is not limited to:

- It does not follow our school PBL expectations, nor does it meet life values of kindness and care for others;
- Posting an offensive comment online is the same as saying it to someone's face;
- Anything posted can be copied, forwarded, posted again, and remain online forever;
- In the future, it is not uncommon for employers to view applicants' online presence to determine their suitability for their company or organisation;
- Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, Facebook and many other social media forums have a 13 year age restriction. We do not have any 13 year olds in Stage 3, yet from experience, it is not untypical for many of them to have accounts;
- It takes maturity (hence the age restriction) to responsibly use social media and what we have discovered in the recent past is clear evidence that some of our students have not yet developed the maturity to use these apps



responsibly or respectfully;

- Posting comments, pictures and other material about someone (child or adult) without their consent is highly inappropriate and could have legal ramifications.

We believe it is important, therefore, that parents openly talk with their children and become familiar with their online activity and what they are doing with it. We know children need guidance in this area, but also and that these issues need to be reported to parents, trusted adults or teachers. Therefore, we ask that parents also encourage their children to report inappropriate behaviour, learn how to 'block' people, delete accounts, and not engage in any inappropriate, mean or suggestive 'chat' through any social media app.

To assist you, the eSafety Commissioner provides an extensive A-Z app list that gives excellent advice on safety tips, age limits, parent tips and reporting abuse.

Please

visit

<https://www.esafety.gov.au/esafety-information/games-apps-and-social-networking>.

Furthermore, please see our PBL expectations revisited and applicable to all behaviour face to face and online. Additionally, you may like to follow up with your child's classroom teacher/Stage 3 supervisor should you have any further questions or concerns. We thank you for your active support of your child in navigating the complicated social media world in a responsible and respectful manner and hope that this early communication provides the information and support required for school and home to work together to prevent this from occurring this year.

Expectation	All Settings
<b>Respectful</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I listen to and follow instructions.</li><li>• I respect school and others' property.</li><li>• I accept differences and am considerate of others.</li><li>• I speak politely to others.</li><li>• I wear full school uniform.</li></ul>
<b>Responsible</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I solve my problems calmly.</li><li>• I report any problems to teachers.</li><li>• I am responsible for my own behaviour.</li></ul>
<b>Safe</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I keep my hands and feet to myself.</li><li>• I walk on paths and hard surfaces.</li><li>• I wear my hat outside.</li><li>• I am in the right place at the right time.</li><li>• I am only in buildings with adult permission.</li></ul>

Yours faithfully

Stage 3 Teachers

Mr Jordan Dalamagas  
Stage 3 Assistant Principal

Mrs Rebecca Ingram  
Principal