

23rd November 2021



Dear Parent

There have been a number of incidents in various schools in Hillingdon and across London where school children have been posting malicious information about school staff on social media platforms such as TikTok. This may include falsely accusing them of criminal offences involving children. Obviously, this is very distressing to staff and their families.

Can you please remind your child that this is a criminal offence under the Malicious Communications Act 1988: *Where a person sends a letter, electronic communication or article of any description which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.*

So, even if a child writes something about a member of school staff which is false or grossly offensive 'just as a bit of fun' or as a rumour and then posts it on social media – they commit a criminal offence. The child then may be at risk of permanent exclusion and/or prosecution.

Please speak to your child regarding the sensible use of social media. Consider also using parental software to restrict what they can access and monitor where appropriate. We would also advise consideration to not allowing your children to have access to social media in their bedrooms so that this remains a safe space and reduces the opportunities to misuse social media.

If your child is aware of other pupils who may be posting material onto social media involving this content please ask them to report this to either a staff member or the police. They can also confidentially speak to Childline or report crime anonymously via the Fearless website.

If you would like to speak further about this please speak to your school's Safer Schools Officer.

Yours sincerely

Allyson Keith

Sgt Safer Schools Hillingdon