



5th December 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

Instagram Accounts

A number of you have been in touch with us concerning Instagram accounts which appear to be in the school's name. They do contain pictures of our students, some of them in the high school uniform, and also show some of our teaching staff, but these are certainly not official accounts.

As you may have heard on the news, there is currently concern at a national level about just this issue. Many of these photographs – although not all – have been displayed without the consent of the person concerned. Some of them have been deliberately altered.

It appears that the Government intends to make it illegal to create such accounts, but in the meantime we have to deal with them as best we can. We have had some success in notifying Instagram of accounts which are clearly offensive or malicious. Where we have been able to identify the authors, we have acted under our own Behaviour and Discipline Policy and passed on information to the local police.

But all too often we find ourselves unable to act; nor do we have the resources to be constantly monitoring users of social media for offensive accounts. I am therefore asking for your support in the following ways:

1. Please take any opportunity to reinforce the school's message about responsible use of social media. This is part of our curriculum, but clearly it is not always absorbed. You may find these links helpful:
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/social-media/>
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-safety-online-a-practical-guide-for-parents-and-carers/child-safety-online-a-practical-guide-for-parents-and-carers-whose-children-are-using-social-media>
2. Please discourage your children from any involvement in offensive accounts.
3. If you become aware of any offensive material please report it directly to Instagram. I hope that you will also continue to report such cases directly to us. Although we cannot always act on your information, it does help us to build a picture of what is going on.

With thanks for your support,

Yours sincerely,

Natalie Waters