

The Harefield Academy

Achievement through Active Learning

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Dear Parent/Carer,

I am mindful that a great deal of work by both our Safeguarding team and Safer Schools Police Officers has been delivered to all Year Groups in respect of the sharing and re-distribution of child pornography and Child Sexual Exploitation.

Therefore, I am concerned that it has come to my attention that a number of our students may have had child pornographic images shared with them via Snapchat.

Whilst the images are not of any of our students, we are working with the Police to ensure that the originator of the sent images is sanctioned appropriately.

Section 160 of the Criminal Justice Act 1998 states:

Section 160(1) creates an offence for a person to have any indecent photograph or pseudo-photograph of a child in his/her possession. The offence is an either way offence punishable on indictment with up to ten years imprisonment. This also includes the re-distribution of any such images via social media platforms. Any such re-distribution of the images by any of our students will also be referred to the Police in the first instance.

Whereby an image is distributed/re-distributed and is named as a member of our school community by the sender this will be addressed as a bullying incident, the Police will be notified and the individual could also face charges of slander in addition.

Parents are responsible for monitoring their child's social media platforms on a regular basis, we ask that you also check both their camera roll and deleted items on a regular basis. If you find any such images please delete them out of both folders and inform Mrs Barrett directly by emailing her at kbarrett@theharefieldacademy.org.

I have included a parent's guide to Snapchat for your information, along with other social media platform information below.

Twitter

Twitter, the site where users post messages and pictures in 280 characters or less, says you must be at least "**13-years-old to use its services**".

Snapchat

Similarly the minimum age for Snapchat - which allows people to post videos and photos for 10 seconds before they disappear – is also **13 years old**.

YouTube

YouTube requires account holders to be aged **18 and over**, and also restricts much of its content to over 18s. However, the video sharing platform will allow a **13-year-old** to sign up with their parent's permission.



WhatsApp

As of May 2018, WhatsApp's minimum age of use is **16 years old** if you live in the European Union, or a country that has adopted the GDPR, as the UK has. It was previously 13 and WhatsApp has not yet said what will happen to users between 13 and 16 who already held accounts under the old terms and conditions.

Musical.ly

A statement on the Musical.ly website says: "The service is not for persons under the **age of 13** or for any users previously suspended or removed from the service by Musical.ly. "If you are under 13 years of age, you must not use or access the service at any time or in any manner."

Fortnite

Fortnite is hugely popular amongst youngsters. The video game is set in a dystopian world where 98% of Earth's population suddenly disappears, living conditions become difficult, and zombie-like creatures roam the Earth. **The game is hugely popular with young people.** It also includes a mode called Battle Royale, in which 100 online players are put in a battle field to fight until death until one player remains. The video game welcomes players aged **12 and above.**

Grand Theft Auto

In the GTA universe, players choose different missions and can destroy parked vehicles, steal cars, deal drugs and kill pedestrians and police officers. Characters can regain health by paying to have sex with a prostitute, and can kill the prostitute afterwards to get their money back. GTA 5 is rated for players **18 years of age or older**, according to PEGI, Europe's video games ratings system.

Minecraft

Minecraft is a game about placing blocks and going on adventures. The game which has been described as like an 'online Lego' involves building blocks and creating structures across different environments and terrains. Set in a virtual world the game involves resource gathering, crafting items, building, and combat. Minecraft has been rated as suitable for **7+ up to 13+** depending on which version of the game you are playing. **Developers Mojang don't allow anyone under the age of 13 to set up an account meaning any new purchase will have to go through a parent.** If a user is under 13 and they sign-up with their correct age, certain game features cannot be accessed for example changing settings, making purchases, playing Minecraft Realms or chatting in scrolls.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

K. Barrett
Designated Safeguarding Lead