

# HENDON SCHOOL

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*'Learning Together Across the World'*

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Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you are well! We are coming to the end of the first year and I am happy that the Year 7's have continued to work hard through this transition year. You will receive their reports at the end of this term showing their progress and will be able to discuss this with their form tutors on Academic Review Day.

I am writing today, however, to express my growing concern regarding the negative impact that inappropriate use of social media is having on our year group.

Over recent months, I have spent a significant amount of time addressing issues that have stemmed from platforms such as Snapchat and TikTok. These incidents are increasingly affecting student wellbeing and behaviour, and I believe it is now essential to seek your support in addressing this matter.

We are seeing a rise in the use of social media to target and victimise students. This includes the creation and sharing of manipulated images and videos intended to mock or humiliate individuals or groups, as well as the circulation of derogatory messages. In some cases, students have faced sanctions and even risked their place at Hendon School due to their involvement in such activities.

While mobile phones are banned during the school day, and will be banned from school when we return in September you may still wish for your child to have one at home. Unfortunately, much of the harmful content is created and shared outside of school hours, limiting our ability to intervene directly and as we are soon closing for the summer break there are ways in which you can assist to prevent inappropriate content from circulating by doing the following:

- Monitor your child's social media use regularly and check their mobile phones.
- Familiarise yourself with the apps your child uses. For example, Snapchat allows users to create and switch between multiple accounts, which can be easily hidden.
- Review group chats and shared content to ensure your child is not exposed to or involved in harmful behaviour—even passively.

If you come across any concerning content, I encourage you to share it with me. This is not to punish students, but to ensure we can provide the appropriate support and guidance to help them make better choices moving forward.

There are also parental controls and restrictions available on most devices. If you need assistance setting these up, please don't hesitate to contact me—I would be happy to help.

The challenges of social media have been widely discussed recently, including in the Netflix documentary *Adolescence* and in parliamentary debates about banning smartphones in schools. While social media can be a powerful tool for connection and creativity—our own school Instagram page showcases many of the wonderful things happening at Hendon—it also presents serious risks that we must work together to manage.

Thank you for your continued support. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to get in touch.

Have a restful summer break.

Yours faithfully

*G Jordan*

Gail Jordan

HEAD OF YEAR 7