Dear parents and carers,

Re: use of social media

At Uplands, we are spending increasing amounts of time resolving conflicts created outside of school on social media. These issues range from unkind comments, forwarding photographs of other students without their permission and, in more serious cases, online bullying.

I would be very grateful if you could re-read our ICT and social media policy, which can be found here http://www.uplandscc.com/safeguarding, and talk to your son/daughter about responsible use of these sites.

Some reminders which you might find helpful:

- Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat have a minimum age for use of 13. **If your child is 11 or 12, they should not have any of these social media accounts**. The minimum age requirement is in place to protect young people. I should be very grateful for your support in adhering to these guidelines;
- Even if your son/daughter is 13 or older, they should remember that other people can see what they post and they should use prudence and caution when using these sites;
- Remind your child that their phone/tablet belongs to you and check it sporadically;
- Do not let your child use their device on their own in their bedrooms;
- Have a phone/tablet curfew in the evenings;
- Keep all chargers for electronic devices away from your children's bedroom;
- Have regular digital-free time.

You may find the CEOP website useful: https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/

We are living in a fast-changing digital landscape and it is therefore important we adapt to this accordingly. Social media is not going to go away any time soon, so it is extremely important we work in partnership to ensure our young people use them appropriately and responsibly.

As a parent myself, I find the safeguarding of my children from issues online, on their phones, a particular worry. The 'internet' is no longer something which is mainly accessed via a home computer. With 4G networks surrounding us, our children can access anything from their phones. One example is the app, "Clash of Clans", which has an unmonitored chatroom running in the background. It is imperative that we speak to our children and check what they are doing, as we can never be sure what dangers they are putting themselves in.

I am grateful for your support in this matter.

Yours faithfully,

Liam Collins
Headteacher