

Our Ref: Dr JP/MH

Wednesday, 13 March 2019

Dear Parents/Carers

I am writing to you all with an issue that, despite all our consistent and considered efforts to deal with, has become most serious.

As a school we have to safeguard all children and we are rightly held to account for that by Ofsted where our actions remain graded as OUTSTANDING. We are however, on a daily basis being taken away from our teaching and learning roles to deal with arguments between pupils. We are being drawn into policing arguments and issues originating outside school for which we cannot be held accountable.

There is a balance to be struck on how we encourage and teach the use of technology for your children to engage with the wider world. That balance is being deeply affected by the persistent and inappropriate use of social media by a group of pupils. This has generated a complex and constantly changing array of ongoing arguments between pupils where 'Chinese whispers' and inaccurate and incomplete stories abound. These are being shared as facts and as such add more and more fuel to the fires being stoked. It must stop - in and out of school.

We have written to you earlier on this very issue. It is part of a 'bigger picture' as we have to demonstrate to Ofsted how we deal with each issue emerging from the inappropriate use of social media. We have to filter immense amounts of hateful '*he said, she said*' conversations taking enormous amounts of precious teaching and learning time and energy. This is a small school, where everyone is being affected and we need your total commitment and support in helping us to deal with it urgently.

It boils down to some pupils who are unable to stop insulting each other in school and online, spreading gossip and using social media to draw others into supporting their 'side' in arguments.

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I will hold several meetings, Monday 18th March, 5pm, Tuesday 19th March, 5pm and Wednesday 20th March 5pm for you as parents to come together and help solve this problem.

These meetings are not for parents to discuss any '*he said, she said*' arguments they may or may not have, following information from children. The desired outcome is an agreement to work together to restore the family ethos of the St Vincent's community.

Please indicate on the form attached your choice of meeting.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J A Patterson', written in a cursive style.

Dr J A Patterson
Principal



ST VINCENT'S SCHOOL

A Specialist School for Sensory Impairment and Other Needs

PARENT/CARER MEETING:

RE: REFERENCE TO LETTER SENT 13TH MARCH 2019

Name: _____

I/We will be attending meeting Monday 18th March, @ 5.00 pm Please tick

Name: _____

I/We will be attending meeting Tuesday 19th March @ 5pm Please tick

Name: _____

I/We will be attending meeting Wednesday 20th March @ 5pm Please tick