



Youth Engagement Team

SW Command Unit

Dear Parent or Carer,

There have been a number incidents in various schools where school children have been posting malicious information about school staff on social media platforms such as TikTok. This may include falsely accusing them of criminal offences involving children. Obviously this is very distressing to staff and their families.

Can you please remind your child that this is a criminal offence under the Malicious Communications Act 1988:

Where a person sends a letter, electronic communication or article of any description which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender

So even if a child writes something about a member of school staff which is false or grossly offensive 'just as a bit of fun' or as a rumour and then posts it on social media – they commit a criminal offence.

The child may then be at risk of being permanently excluded and/or prosecution.

As your safer schools police team, we work hard with your school to avoid school children becoming excluded or criminalised, but sometimes where the level of harm or distress caused is so severe we have little choice but to follow these routes.

Please speak to your child regarding the sensible use of social media. Consider also using parental software to restrict what they can access and monitor where appropriate. We would also advise consideration to not allowing your children to have access to social media in their bedrooms so that this remains a safe space and reduces the opportunities to misuse social media.

If your child does genuinely suspect any adult (school staff or otherwise) of committing criminal offences then they must report this to either a senior staff member, or the police. They can also confidentially speak to Childline or report crime anonymously via the Fearless website.

If you would like to speak further about this I am happy to be contacted via graham.norman@met.police.uk or please speak to your local school's safer schools officer.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Graham Norman", written in a cursive style.

Graham Norman

Inspector for Merton Safer School Police