

# YSGOL BRYN ALYN

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Headteacher: Mrs Adele Slinn, B.A. (Hons.) NPQSL, NPQH



26<sup>th</sup> November 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian

It is a great shame that I should have to be writing this communication to you but it is of great importance. It is essential that you read through this letter fully and speak with your son/daughter about all of these issues.

We constantly remind students about how to use the internet to ensure that they protect themselves, but also to ensure they don't bully, offend or break the law. It is very disappointing that in today's society we have certain social media sites, such as TikTok and Instagram, which allow people to actively encourage children to engage in causing offence to other students and staff.

We are aware of recent trends being pushed through TikTok, which mean that students are encouraged to steal from school; damage property at school; smack a teacher; slap a student etc. There many more trends which don't involve school but are highly inappropriate encouraging students to engage in criminal acts.

I am pleased to report that in the case of the majority of these trends, we haven't had to deal with many issues, however, we have had some damage and items stolen from school which have coincided with the timing of these trends on TikTok.

Unfortunately, we are now having to deal with a few students who have taken part in the latest trend which is to set up a fake school account on TikTok or Instagram and ridicule members of staff. Not only is this completely unacceptable, it is illegal, and will not be tolerated.

The staff within the school have done and always will do their best for our students. We must be allowed to come to work and do our job without fear of being publicly humiliated on a WORLDWIDE or any other platform. Creating a site/account to impersonate another person or organisation to defame or provide a false statement which discredits a person's character or reputation is illegal.

It is my duty to ensure that staff and students feel safe and supported; and as a school we will continue to educate students about internet safety but also ensure the consequences of such actions are there to try to prevent this from happening.

The police WILL be involved in any such activity and students face PERMANENT EXCLUSION. Staff will be encouraged to use the legal representation provided by their union to pursue claims for defamation of character.

It is important for me to stress that no matter what punishment is put in place, the damage is already done! No one can stop these pictures and videos from being seen on the internet for the rest of our lives and our children's lives too.

Many of the videos which have been created are not seen to be funny by everyone, and particularly by those individuals, families and friends concerned, none of whom have been asked. Some of these have been created from photos found involving their families, and in their homes. Due to Lockdown, we have all put ourselves out there to try and cheer up students by doing Christmas videos etc. We did these for our students and these have now also been used, and in some cases, manipulated. We didn't come into teaching to be publicly humiliated. It saddens me to know that we can't stop this from happening. It is therefore essential that we do our utmost to prevent these things from happening to staff and students. I am hoping that in the majority of cases, educating them of the harm that is caused will stop students from doing such things. But unfortunately, for those students who choose not to act on advice, the promise that the Police will be involved, students will face permanent exclusion and the possibility of a libel law suit, will stop this.

We have attached some documents which can help you as parents/carers to support your child.

I have to stress the importance of checking your son/daughter's phone on a regular basis to help them keep safe. Please look through their phone this evening, to check who they are communicating with and how, what sites/apps they are accessing, what content is appearing on their feeds and channels, what photos and videos are they receiving and sending etc.

As parents/carers it is our duty to look after them and help them.

We are here to support and if you need any help then please do contact us at school.

What has been heartening through this is the support from many students who have let staff know about the sites, empathised with them and shown both concern and shock.

We are now looking for your support to prevent social media causing serious harm to staff and students.

Thank you

Yours sincerely



Mrs Slinn  
Headteacher