



*Equity, Excellence, Evolution*

*The Five Islands Academy is an all-age, multi-site, Church of England Academy,  
serving the island communities of Bryher, St Agnes, St Martin's, St Mary's and Treasco.  
It is part of the Leading Edge Academies Partnership.*

Friday January 16th 2026

### **Use of digital online platforms and mobile devices**

Dear Parents

We are writing to you to highlight an area of concern that has come to light through recent conversations with our pupils (and one that concerns schools up and down the country). Your child is at an age where they may have independent access to a phone, tablet, computer or games console and whilst this opens up a range of positive opportunities, it also comes with an increasing number of dangers and areas of concern. We wanted to write to you to raise your awareness of these so that you can best support your child's use of these digital devices.

#### **Key Areas of Concern**

We have become aware of the following issues involving pupils from our school. These take place outside of school time but can sometimes affect relationships within school. They mostly affect children from Year 5 upwards. These issues include.

- Recent reports of being unkind when communicating with others on underage Whatsapp groups or other messaging platforms (including gaming platforms). This can include name calling, blocking people and deliberately leaving others out of groups (and making this obvious to the excluded person).
- Discussing other people within these groups and perhaps saying unkind things about them.
- We have had specific cases in previous years of the sharing of inappropriate or sexual content that can be very harmful to young children.

Other areas of national concern that the use of this technology can bring for all ages can include:

- Cyberbullying: According to recent studies, a significant increase in cyberbullying cases has been observed among school-aged children. Cyberbullying can have severe consequences on mental health, leading to anxiety, depression, and even, in extreme cases, self-harm.
- Impersonating other people to either get that person in trouble by posting inappropriate content or leaving unpleasant messages anonymously.

*All aboard! Navigating together*

[www.fiveislands.scilly.sch.uk](http://www.fiveislands.scilly.sch.uk)

- Deleting or altering content that others have created on gaming platforms (e.g. Minecraft).
- Excessive Screen Time: Research warns against excessive screen time, as it has been linked to issues such as sleep disturbances, decreased physical activity, and impaired academic performance. Smartphones and social media contribute significantly to this concern.
- Accessing porn or racist, homophobic and misogynistic language: Despite various safeguards, children can be exposed to or redirected from gaming sites, YouTube or messaging platforms to very harmful content. This exposure can impact their psychological development.

### **What we are doing in school**

We work hard in school to educate children about how to use technology appropriately. This includes lessons each year on e-safety as part of the computing and PSHE curriculum. Our use of technology in school is extensive but carefully managed. We have clear systems for monitoring and filtering of device use and will add further restrictions where there are concerns about pupil conduct.

When negative behaviours take place outside of school hours, it will always be very difficult for us to police these and respond. Whilst we will get involved to mediate and remind children about how best to behave through digital forums, and to communicate with parents, we do not have the ability to investigate to the same level and apply sanctions as we would if it had happened whilst under school rather than parental supervision. Where a bullying complaint is made, this will be treated in line with our anti-bullying policy procedures.

In the summer, we ran a series of parent workshops for different age groups, in partnership with Children's Services and the Isles of Scilly Police. We are looking into setting up further online safety workshops this term; please do let us know if there are any specific topics that would be helpful to you.

### **What you can do at home**

Managing children's access to devices and online content can be challenging but it is imperative that as parents and carers you prioritise this in order to protect your child/ren and others that they come into contact with. The following are seen as essential to this:

- If buying a new device, build in parental control at this stage. This will give you the ability to control and monitor what your child accesses. Doing this at the start will make it easier in the future.
- Look at the tools your broadband and mobile phone providers have in place to support you.
- Be prepared to say no. There is no expectation that children should be able to have a phone before going to secondary school or access chats (and our general view is that they should not). In many cases, the apps that many children access are restricted to ages older than theirs (see below). We are very pleased to see that an increasing number of Scilly families are choosing to say no to underage social media use, and that there is positive discussion of the benefits of phone-free childhood. You can join this conversation on the parent-run [Scilly Kids Online Safety Facebook](#) page.
- Foster an open line of communication with your child. Encourage them to share their online experiences, both positive and negative, without fear of judgement.

- Establish clear rules and boundaries regarding screen time and appropriate online behaviour. Regularly monitor your child's digital activities to ensure their safety and conduct.
- Stay informed about the latest apps, social media platforms, and online trends. This knowledge will empower you to guide your child effectively and recognize potential risks.
- Visit the '[Online Safety](#)' Section on our website for advice.

### Age Restrictions for Social Media Platforms



We hope that you find this information useful and are grateful for your continued support with this. If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours faithfully

Adam Jewell  
Year 6 Teacher

Rachel Lewin  
Interim Headteacher  
Five Islands Academy