



Founded in 1598

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INAUGURAL ISSUE WELCOME

This publication includes hyperlinks to both the relevant [AGS Website](#) pages and those of external providers – Look out for these to enhance your overall reading experience.

Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome to the first edition of '**AGS Parent**'. As a school we regularly receive communications from our parents/carers requesting advice and guidance on a number of key parenting issues. In the interests of sharing good practice with you all, this publication has been designed to focus on these issues and to raise awareness. Each issue of AGS Parent will focus upon one particular subject looking at what we are seeing from a school perspective, what we do to support students and parents in those situations and to offer some potential solutions to enable you as parents to be as proactive as possible.

Parenting teenagers can be challenging and there is so much advice out there we thought it would be helpful to share some of the things which we have found to be useful in school. Cases we work with of course usually have some degree of individuality but across the school many parents and students will potentially be experiencing similar challenges. We have an important role to play in supporting you just as you do in supporting us to do our utmost for the children in our care enabling and encouraging them all to **Respect and Aspire**.

IN THIS ISSUE

E-SAFETY: SOCIAL MEDIA & GAMING



GET INVOLVED:

If you have a subject or topic you would like us to feature in a future issue of **AGS Parent** please let us know!

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ARE YOU AN AGS TWITTER FOLLOWER??

- @AGSHeadmaster** (Mr Sturgeon – Official school news, interesting articles and reminders)
- @AGSCommunities** (Mr Dallas – Community & Development news and the home of AGS Parent)
- @AGSLearner** (Mr Singh - Developing students' learning character)
- @AGSDevelopment** (Mrs Cox - Alumni relations and school development)

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SOCIAL MEDIA:

Social media apps and websites can be an excellent means of connecting people electronically concerning a wide variety of subjects and interests. For example in school staff maintain a variety of Twitter feeds in order to keep parents up to date with all the necessary goings on and the Alumni Facebook site allows our Old Aylesburians (OAs) to reconnect with the school and each other. The vast majority of students in the school are also social media users and it is extremely difficult to keep up to date with the latest trends in this area.

The reality is that most people use social media to stay connected with friends and have fun. However, there are many that don't play by the same rules, and instead merely use it as a platform to offend people or cause them harm. What may begin as silly and relatively harmless behaviour can quickly turn into something far more widespread and malicious.

All students have been made aware of our E-Safety policy in school which covers not only their activity in school but also their wider online activity at home. Where negative incidents arise involving groups of students here at AGS or our students interacting with others from schools elsewhere investigating those incidents become part of our jurisdiction potentially in conjunction with our Police Community Liaison officer, PC Nicola Tipping, Aylesbury Police.

WHAT WE HAVE SEEN AT AGS:

- Parents/Carers not knowing which social media platforms their child is using or fully aware of the safeguarding implications and pitfalls for each
- Students using social media platforms with little or no privacy restrictions/safeguards in place
- Students with social media accounts when below the minimum age often either without their parents' consent or with consent under the misconception that 'everyone is doing it'
- Students not being fully aware of the implications of posting images and messages online

THE SOCIAL MEDIA LANDSCAPE IS HUGE AND CHANGEABLE

*How many of these Social Media platforms are you aware of or use yourselves?
Chances are that many of them are sat on your child's phone or device(s) potentially with active accounts.....*



HERE ARE SOME OF THE MOST POPULAR SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS WE SEE AT AGS, BUT OF COURSE THERE ARE MANY OTHERS WHICH FADE IN AND OUT OF POPULARITY:

CLICK ON THE NAMES BELOW TO VIEW THE FULL PARENTAL GUIDES



FACEBOOK: MINIMUM AGE - 13

From Facebook directly.....

'Facebook requires everyone to be at least 13 years old before they can create an account. Creating an account with false info is a violation of our terms. This includes accounts registered on the behalf of someone under 13.'

'If your underage child created an account on Facebook, you can show them how to [delete their account](#). If you'd like to report an account belonging to someone under 13, please [fill out this form](#). Note that we'll promptly delete the account of any child under the age of 13 that's reported to us through this form.'

TAKEN FROM – NSPCC 'NET AWARE' SURVEY

What do children and young people say to look out for:

58% of the children and young people we asked think Facebook can be risky. The top 3 concerns were:

- talking to strangers
- lack of privacy
- bullying or rude comments.

Why children like it:

The top 3 reasons why children and young people liked Facebook were:

- you can communicate with others
- it's fun and entertaining
- you can share with others.



TWITTER: MINIMUM AGE – NONE

Twitter is a messaging service that lets you post public messages called tweets. These can be up to 140 characters long. As well as tweets, you can send private messages. Brands and companies can also have Twitter accounts.

Twitter will not ask for a minimum age upon signing up for an account, but users still need to be aware of privacy settings – see the parental guide.

TAKEN FROM – NSPCC 'NET AWARE SURVEY'

What do children and young people say to look out for:

36% of the children and young people we asked think Twitter can be risky. The top 3 concerns were:

- talking to strangers
- lack of privacy
- inappropriate content.

Why children like it:

The top 3 reasons why children and young people liked Twitter were:

- you can communicate with others
- good for following celebrities
- it's easy to use.



INSTAGRAM: MINIMUM AGE – 13

Instagram is a picture and video sharing app. Users can post content and use hashtags to share experiences, thoughts or memories with an online community. You can follow your friends, family, celebrities and even companies on Instagram.

From Instagram directly.....

Instagram requires everyone to be at least 13 years old before they can create an account. If your child is younger than 13 and created an account on Instagram, you can show them how to [delete their account](#).

If you'd like to report an account belonging to someone under 13 or if you believe someone is impersonating your child who's under 13, please [fill out this form](#). In order to delete a child's account, we'll need to verify that the child is under 13.

TAKEN FROM – NSPCC 'NET AWARE SURVEY'

What do children and young people say to look out for:

29% of the children and young people we asked think Instagram can be risky. The top 3 concerns were:

- strangers
- lack of privacy
- inappropriate content.

Why children like it:

The top 3 reasons why children and young people liked Instagram were:

- you can share with others
- you can communicate with others
- you can follow others.



SNAPCHAT: MINIMUM AGE – 13

Snapchat is an app that lets you send a photo or short video to your friends. The 'snap' appears on screen for a matter of seconds before disappearing. There's also a feature called Snapchat Story that lets you share lots of snaps in a sequence for up to 24 hours.

TAKEN FROM – NSPCC 'NET AWARE SURVEY'

What do children and young people say to look out for:

44% of the children and young people we asked think Snapchat can be risky. The top 3 concerns were:

- lack of privacy
- talking to strangers
- inappropriate content.

Why children like it:

The top 2 reasons why children and young people liked Snapchat were:

- you can communicate with others
- you can share with others.

Did you know there is 'Snapkidz' available and suitable for children aged 8 – 12?



ASK FM: MINIMUM AGE - 13

Ask.fm is a social networking site where you can ask other people questions. It's up to you whether you want to ask the question anonymously or not.

TAKEN FROM – NSPCC 'ONLINE AWARE' SURVEY

What do children and young people say to look out for:

86% of the children and young people we asked think Ask.fm can be risky. The top 3 concerns were:

- bullying and rude content
- anonymity
- talking to strangers

Why children like it:

The top reasons why children and young people liked Ask.fm were:

- you can ask questions
- it's private as you are anonymous
- it's fun and entertaining.

GAMING:

Gaming is a hugely popular pastime for students of all ages and of course things have come a long way from small block-like characters innocently traversing the screen collecting various items. AGS is no different to any other secondary school in that the gaming culture amongst friends and peers is vast. However with most consoles and devices promoting online gaming parents/carers should be aware and take steps to ensure gaming is experienced in a safe and age appropriate environment.

WHAT WE HAVE SEEN AT AGS:

- Parents/Carers not knowing which games their child is playing or fully aware of the safeguarding implications where online content is available or promoted
- Students gaming online with little or no privacy restrictions/safeguards in place often as a console may use alternate browsers of software with separate filters to be used
- Students playing games which have been designed for far older age groups often either without their parents' consent or with consent under the misconception that 'everyone is doing it'
- Students handing out personal details and access to their social media accounts to individuals met in a purely online environment

Gaming is regulated by the [Pan European Gaming Information authority \(PEGI\)](#) and this is the body who provide and explain the age appropriate ratings for every single game officially launched in the same way that the [British Board of Film Classification \(BBFC\)](#) do with cinema and DVD releases. Often it is not just the visual content that is the issue. If games have online content or playability then parents should be aware that these games will potentially be played by their children often in the (online) company of adults around the world. The online chat which often accompanies or is part of these games is consequently unlikely to be suitable either especially in some circles where an 'anything goes' or an 'offending people for the sake of it' culture develops.

[Parental Control Tools](#) - (Click for official PEGI advice)

All gaming consoles, handheld devices and operating systems for PC and Mac are equipped with parental control systems, allowing parents to protect their children's privacy and online safety according to various parameters.

With these control tools, parents can:

- ✓ **Select which games children are allowed to play (based on the PEGI age ratings – see below)**
- ✓ **Control and monitor the use of digital purchases**
- ✓ **Limit access to an internet browser by applying a filter**
- ✓ **Control the amount of time that children can spend playing games**
- ✓ **Control the level of online interaction (chat) and exchange of data (text messages, user-generated content)**



[THE OFFICIAL PEGI WEBSITE](#) INCLUDES INFORMATION ON HOW TO SET PARENTAL CONTROLS FOR ALL THE MAJOR CONSOLES AND OPERATING SYSTEMS – YOU CAN ALSO SEARCH FOR ANY INDIVIDUAL GAME RELEASE AND READ THE EXACT REASONS WHY A PARTICULAR AGE RATING WAS AWARDED

OFFICIAL PEGI GAME DESCRIPTORS



The content of games given this rating is considered suitable for all age groups. Some violence in a comical context (typically Bugs Bunny or Tom & Jerry cartoon-like forms of violence) is acceptable. The child should not be able to associate the character on the screen with real life characters, they should be totally fantasy. The game should not contain any sounds or pictures that are likely to scare or frighten young children. No bad language should be heard.

www.pegi.info



Any game that would normally be rated at 3 but contains some possibly frightening scenes or sounds may be considered suitable in this category.

www.pegi.info



Video games that show violence of a slightly more graphic nature towards fantasy character and/or non-graphic violence towards human-looking characters or recognisable animals, as well as videogames that show nudity of a slightly more graphic nature would fall in this age category. Any bad language in this category must be mild and fall short of sexual expletives.

www.pegi.info



This rating is applied once the depiction of violence (or sexual activity) reaches a stage that looks the same as would be expected in real life. More extreme bad language, the concept of the use of tobacco and drugs and the depiction of criminal activities can be content of games that are rated 16.

www.pegi.info



The adult classification is applied when the level of violence reaches a stage where it becomes a depiction of gross violence and/or includes elements of specific types of violence. Gross violence is the most difficult to define since it can be very subjective in many cases, but in general terms it can be classed as the depictions of violence that would make the viewer feel a sense of revulsion.

www.pegi.info

**ANY COMMENTS ABOUT THE NEW PUBLICATION??
CONTACT MR DALLAS WITH ALL YOUR THOUGHTS AND
IDEAS:**

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