



## Parental Guidance: Online Trends & Digital Safety

Social media and online platforms play a significant role in many young people's lives. While these spaces can support connection and creativity, they can also expose students to pressure, misinformation or situations that may escalate quickly offline.

This guide provides practical advice to help families support young people in navigating digital spaces safely, understanding online risks and making responsible choices when using social media.

### Understanding online influence

Online trends and group chats can sometimes influence behaviour beyond the screen. Young people may feel pressure to participate in challenges, share content quickly, or respond to online conflicts.

Helping young people understand how online actions can have real-world consequences encourages more thoughtful decision-making.

### Setting healthy boundaries around devices

Clear expectations can help young people develop balanced technology habits:

- Agree consistent routines around device use, particularly before bedtime
- Establish phone-free times or spaces within the home
- Encourage a balance between screen time and offline activities

Predictable routines can reduce conflict and support healthier habits.

### Encouraging critical thinking online

Supporting young people to pause and reflect before posting can reduce risk:

- Encourage them to think about how content may affect themselves or others
- Discuss the permanence of online posts and digital footprints
- Remind them that not all online trends or messages are safe to follow

These conversations help students develop responsible online behaviour.



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### Recognising warning signs

Some online situations may place young people at risk. Signs may include:

- Increased secrecy around devices or online accounts
- Sudden distress linked to social media activity
- Involvement in online conflicts or group pressure
- Exposure to harmful or inappropriate content

Recognising these signs early can help families intervene calmly and constructively.

### Keeping communication open

Maintaining open, supportive conversations about technology helps reduce secrecy:

- Show curiosity about the platforms your child uses
- Avoid reacting with immediate restrictions where possible
- Encourage your child to speak up if something online makes them uncomfortable

Creating a safe environment for discussion helps young people seek help when they need it.

### Working together with the Academy

If online issues begin to affect a student's wellbeing, relationships or behaviour in school, families are encouraged to contact their child's College Pastoral Team so that concerns can be addressed and appropriate support provided.

### Contacting College Pastoral Teams

Angelou College - [angelou@stationers.latrust.org.uk](mailto:angelou@stationers.latrust.org.uk)

Caxton College - [caxton@stationers.latrust.org.uk](mailto:caxton@stationers.latrust.org.uk)

Hansard College - [hansard@stationers.latrust.org.uk](mailto:hansard@stationers.latrust.org.uk)

Equiano College - [equiano@stationers.latrust.org.uk](mailto:equiano@stationers.latrust.org.uk)

Woolf Sixth Form College - [woolf@stationers.latrust.org.uk](mailto:woolf@stationers.latrust.org.uk)