



## Principals Newsletter

# **BOWER PARK** ACADEMY

**Friday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2024**

Dear Parent/Carer,

### **KS3 Cycle Confident**

This week students across KS3 took part in the Cycle Confident course. Students' behaviour was impeccable and we hope that the course provided them with lifelong skills and confidence to ride their bikes to school. Our thanks to Cycle Confident Team for providing the course.

### **Parent Information afternoon**

Thank you to all of the Parents/ Carers that attended our first Parent Coffee afternoon on Wednesday. It was good to have the opportunity to meet with Parents and discuss our Academy's role in your child's education. If you were unable to make this event, we will be running our next one on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> November at 4pm.

### **Student Behaviour in the Community**

It has been brought to our attention that a small minority of our students are not conducting themselves in an appropriate manner in and around our community. One of our core values at Bower Park Academy is Respect. This value is central not only within the walls of our Academy but also extends to our everyday interactions within the community. Respect means more than just words – it is about how we conduct ourselves. Whether in the Academy, on public transport, or within the local area, we must show respect for our environment, for others around us, and most importantly, for ourselves. By doing so, we contribute to a positive and supportive atmosphere where everyone can thrive and be their best. We all have a shared responsibility to work together to foster a community that is safe, respectful, and inclusive for all. Those students who are found to not respect our community will be sanctioned accordingly.

### **Gold!**

We are delighted to announce that Bower Park Academy has achieved the School Games Gold Mark Award for the 2023/2024 academic year. The School Games Mark is a government-led award scheme, launched in 2012 and facilitated by the Youth Sport Trust, to reward schools for their commitment to the development of competition both within the school and the local community. We are thrilled to have been recognised for our success this year. Thank you to everyone for your hard work in helping us achieve this award.

## GCSE Mock Exams

Year 11 will be undertaking their GCSE Mock Examinations in around 8 weeks' time. To further support this process, all students are involved in weekly Form time interventions in Maths, English and Science - across the year, this will equate to approximately an extra 25 hours of guided learning outside of normal lessons. It is essential, therefore, that your son/daughter arrives on site at the correct time to fully engage with this provision. After-school interventions have also started this week in English and Maths. This is a targeted intervention; again, we would appreciate your support in ensuring that if your son/daughter has been invited, that you stress to them the importance of attending.

## Year 6 Open Evening

This is a reminder that on **Thursday 3rd October, students will be dismissed from the Academy at 1:20pm** to allow staff to set up for Open Evening. As a result of this, on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> October, all students will start at the later time of 9:25am and go straight to form at 9:30am and their period 2 lesson at 9:55am.

**Have a lovely weekend!**

Yours faithfully,



Mr E Aylett  
Principal

# Outstanding October

## Can you get 100% attendance and 0 lates?



A prize/voucher for every year group!

- Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> October – Friday 18<sup>th</sup> October
- Be in school and on time every day
- Be **OUTSTANDING** in October



# What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

# INSTAGRAM

AGE RESTRICTION  
**13+**

Instagram is a highly popular social media platform with over 2 billion active monthly users. The app is continuously updating and adding new features to meet the wishes of its audience, allowing them to upload images and videos to their Instagram feed, create interactive 'stories', go live, exchange private messages or explore and follow other accounts that catch their eye.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### ADDICTION

Many social media platforms, Instagram included, are designed to keep us engaged on them for as long as possible. They encourage scrolling often and scrolling more in case we miss something important – in essence, a fear of missing out. On Instagram, young people can lose track of time when aimlessly scrolling and watching videos posted by friends, acquaintances, influencers and possibly strangers.

### UNREALISTIC IDEALS

Children sometimes compare themselves to what they see online: how they look, how they dress, and the way their life is going in comparison to others on social media. However, most people only share the positives about their lives online and many use filters when sharing pictures of themselves. A constant comparison with unrealistic ideals can lead to insecurity over one's own appearance and lifestyle.

### GOING LIVE

Livestreaming on Instagram allows users to connect with friends and followers in real time. Risks increase if the account is public, because that means anyone can watch the broadcast, which could result in further contact from strangers. Additional dangers of going live include an impulse to act inappropriately to draw more viewers, as well as being exposed to harmful content or offensive language.

### INFLUENCER CULTURE

Social media influencers are sometimes paid thousands of pounds to promote products, services, apps and more. When celebrities or influencers post such content, it often says 'paid partnership' above the post. In April 2024, Ofcom found that over a quarter of children (27%) believed in influencer marketing, accepting their endorsement of products wholeheartedly. So it's perfectly possible for young people to be taken in by this kind of content.

### PRODUCT TAGGING

Product tags allow users to tag a product or business in their post. This tag will take viewers directly to the product detail page on the shop where the item can be purchased. Children may also be encouraged by influencers to purchase products that they advertise.

### EXCLUSION & OSTRACISM

Youngsters are highly sensitive to feeling excluded, which comes in many forms: not receiving as many 'likes' as expected; not being tagged in a friend's photo; being unfriended; not receiving a comment on their post or a reply to a message they sent. Being excluded online hurts just as much as offline. Young people have reported lower moods and self-esteem when excluded in this way, feeling as if they don't belong and aren't valued.

## Advice for Parents & Educators

### AVOID GOING PUBLIC

If a young user wants to share their clothing style, make up or similar and use product tagging to show off the items in their post, they may be tempted to change their settings to public. This leaves their profile visible to everyone, which carries the risk of strangers getting in touch with them. Set a child's account to private and explain the importance of keeping it this way.

### HAVE AN OPEN DIALOGUE

Talk to children about the positives and negatives of social media, including the risks involved and how they can view or create content safely with family and friends. Explain how safety settings will ensure only followers can view them, and why this is so important. Also, if you find a child continuously uses filters on their photos, ask them why and impress on them that they don't need it.

### MANAGE LIKE COUNTS

Due to the potential impact on mental wellbeing, Instagram allows users to hide the total likes on their posts, to prevent people from obsessing over that number in the corner. Users can hide like counts on all the posts in their feed as well as on their own posts. This means others can't see how many likes a person gets. This can be done by going into Settings > Notifications > Posts > Likes > Off.

### USE MODERATORS

Instagram Live has implemented a mechanic called 'Moderators', meaning that creators can assign a moderator and give them the power to report comments, remove viewers and remove the ability for certain viewers to comment at all. Consider this if a child in your care wants to go live on the platform. It's also recommended to keep devices in communal spaces so you're aware if a child does go live or watch a livestream.

### FOLLOW INFLUENCERS

Following influencers will allow you to monitor what they're sharing as well as being able to discuss anything which you deem inappropriate. Talk to children about who they follow and help them to develop critical thinking skills about what the influencer is trying to do. For example, encourage the child to ask themselves if an influencer is trying to sell them a product when they make a video endorsing it.

### BALANCE YOUR TIME

Instagram has a built-in activity dashboard that lets you control how much time is spent on the app. Make sure children sign in to the platform with the correct age, as Instagram's 'Teen Accounts' afford much more control for parents and carers over how long they can use the app each day. Talk with young users about how much time they spend on Instagram and work together to set a healthy time limit.

## Meet Our Expert

Dr. Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant at BCyberAware. She has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety workshops and policies for schools in Australia and the UK. Claire has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviours of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College