



## \*\*\* Access to Social Media & Smart Phones \*\*\*

An important message from the headteacher to Madrasah parents.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى

Currently, the single biggest threat to the morality, virtue, innocence, character and integrity of our children is unrestricted access to Social Media (usually via a smart phone).

Parents are providing access to a variety of gadgets (including iPads, tablets, iPods etc), often bowing down to pressure from the child. Parents really need to wake up to the harms, evils and immorality of the various forms of Social Media.

Some points to ponder upon are:

- ✓ Today, young children and teenagers have access to smart phones, and it is treated as a toy, as a perk for the child (even a “status symbol”). Even if a child does not have a smart phone, some parents very casually let their offspring ‘play’ with their own phone.
- ✓ I have personally witnessed scores of innocent children, who without a smart phone would never have received exposure to sexually explicit and other graphic content.

Does a child really need a phone? Do they really need a gadget worth several hundred pounds?

How can a child be expected not to 'explore' the various social media apps that are so easily and freely available, are we that naïve to assume the opposite?

- ✓ We as parents would NEVER give our child nude pictures / videos, but this is exactly the type of content 80% of children are accessing.
- ✓ Would we let a stranger enter our child's bedroom? Of course not, – the very thought makes our blood turn cold. The amount of contact children with phones have with the opposite gender is extremely disturbing, and some extremely naïve parents even “allow” this – saying “I know about it”. This is the first step towards the door of indecency and immorality.
- ✓ OK! So, your child is very sensible, or you assume your child is such. Your child is also very mature, or you assume this, however can you expect the inquisitive mind of a child to remain passive and not explore the smart phone and associated apps? Before you know it, they very quickly learn about new apps from their friends and what is happening “out there”. Children when they get together talk, exchange information, and very quickly your child has access to communication / social apps which most parents have not even heard of.

- ✓ Moreover, children are very clever at “hiding” all this on their phone. How many parents out there know the passwords to their child’s phone? If you do not, then you can only access the content of your child’s phone when he or she obliges.
- ✓ Some Apps like Snapchat does not show the user history. It is thus impossible to monitor what is going on. These types of Apps also show the location of the user, opening the potential for physical stalking, cyberstalking and more.
- ✓ Although some Apps like Snapchat claim to “delete” user content, this is not the case. Experts are unanimous that once something hits the Internet, especially these Apps, it is there forever.
- ✓ Most of us are so careful about our children mixing with the wrong crowd. We keep an eye on our children ensuring they do not rub shoulders with the wrong crowd. However, via the smart phone we give our children access and exposure to more than just the wrong crowd; we totally unzip all immorality and hand it to them on a plate. In addition to all this, Social Media also causes anxiety within our children, as the entire focus is on your image, number of friends etc.
- ✓ As the headteacher of a Madrasah with over 380 pupils, I carry out regular checks to ensure children do not bring such items into the Madrasah. Of all the smart phones I have “come across”, I have never seen a child who is simply using their phone as a “mode of communication”. Regrettably, I have seen amongst many things: nude pictures, shameful and obscene language, lewd and vulgar exchanges with the opposite gender, exposure to very foul language, rebellious music and adult (immoral) content. Some children have been spending 2+ hours a day just sending and receiving messages.
- ✓ What is even more regrettable is the laissez faire approach of some parents, who after undeniable evidence still wish to ignore the “elephant in the room”. This in my opinion is a very “dangerous” approach with severe consequences, as a lack of action from parents further emboldens the child. There is also a growing trend where parents simply accept what a child says, without any sort of further investigation.

The aim of this message is to raise awareness within our parents, and to create a culture where our children are not given these gadgets at all and neither do, we promote a “craving” for these gadgets. There are scores of other things our children can engage in, which have far better educational, spiritual and healthier outcomes.

Concluding, we all want the best for our children, especially currently where immorality, indecency and obscenity are at an all-time high and are embedded in every aspect of society. Let us work together and try to build a better future for the next Muslim generation, but by doing it in a manner where we address root causes of immorality and vice.

Mohammed Farook Kazi (Headteacher)  
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