

Friday 25th November 2022

Dear Parents/ Carers,

We are writing to you as, at times, we are seeing the detrimental impact of the some of the older children in school being involved in various WhatsApp groups.

Whilst not disputing the undoubted benefits and fun of the children being able to communicate with each other using these apps, there are clearly negative consequences that stem from this and from our privileged position of working with the children as a cohort, staff perhaps see this reality more than most. The purpose of this letter is not to preach; merely to add the school perspective to a conversation that has in all likelihood already taken place within your four walls.

Our most substantial concerns are that arguments and fallings out that may sporadically take place in school are at times continued and exacerbated outside of school, electronically. We sometimes then see children worrying about a situation more than they perhaps would had it been finished and dealt with in school. Other children can be drawn into the matter when they don't need to be. Year 6 is challenging enough, with the children preparing for high school transition as well as managing increased academic workloads, without adding social media related worries to the mix.

Potentially, the time that children spend processing and rationalising the volume of information generated from WhatsApp in particular can be a challenge and one which may hinder their ability to 'switch off' once they are home from school. To try and make this period of the children's education smoother, we urge you as parents to regularly check and monitor your child's mobile. This way, any conversation threads that are heading down a less than positive route can be stopped sooner.

As you may be aware, WhatsApp have recently introduced a privacy measure to prevent people unknown to you adding you to groups. If you are to allow your child to use WhatsApp then we would suggest you follow the instructions below to ensure that the privacy settings are set up to prevent your child being added to groups and receiving unwanted messages:

- Open the WhatsApp icon on the phone
- Go to the settings (usually in the right-hand corner of the phone) cog
- Account
- Privacy
- Groups – at this point it should be set up as 'My Contacts' only



Since May 2018, the minimum age for using WhatsApp has been **16 years** but by following the above instructions your child should only be connected to trusted contacts.

Regular Year 6 E-safety lessons take place on a half-termly basis as a minimum with a continued focus on the appropriate use of mobile phones. We have spoken with the class very recently on this theme and we will be doing so again after the Christmas break.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you wish to continue this conversation. Of the 'Issues from out of school that get brought into school' category, this is generally the most common problem that we deal with and in partnership, we can seek to support the children in enjoying increased independence with safety and peace of mind.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. Warrener and Miss Robinson



CONFIDENCE
LEARNING
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