



12th January 2023

Dear Parents and Guardians of Y5 and Y6

I would like to take this opportunity to inform all parents and guardians that it has come to my attention again (since my letter - last academic year) that a **high number** of pupils regularly use 'WhatsApp' and 'Snap Chat' and other social media platforms including Tik-Tok. Primary school children should not be using these platforms.

On a number of occasions last academic year, I have had to talk to Year 5 and 6 in particular about the content of their messaging including the posting of Tik Tok videos! Miss Lucas has informed me that some of these conversations on social media are again causing problems in school especially in Year 6.

The children can all tell me the age limitations and about the dangers associated with adults posing as children but they continue to use these platforms in spite of the warnings and education surrounding this at school. There is a high level of peer pressure to be in groups so please encourage your children to leave these chats. Consequently, please can you have conversations with your children about their social media use on all platforms including gaming applications. In light of this fact, I thought it would be advisable to share the latest guidance and recommendations for these platforms.

'WhatsApp' - the legal age is recommended as **16+ years of age**. All other forms of social media recommend that children are at least 13 years of age before using these platforms including Tik Tok. Consequently, I would like to recommend that all Y5-Y6 pupils refrain from using 'WhatsApp' as a form of communication. This link offers advice for parents about all Chat Apps

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/social-media/chat-apps/>

"Does WhatsApp have any age restrictions?"

*As part of its Terms of Service, WhatsApp's **minimum age of use is 16 years old**. By using WhatsApp, a user agrees to provide certain personal information such as their mobile phone number, billing and mobile device information.*

*Likewise, as with all social media, caution is advised over your **child's digital footprint**, particularly the content (photos, videos and messages) they choose to share via WhatsApp. **Once shared, it can be copied then re shared and posted anywhere online***

Group chats - advice

*Although users cannot control who adds them to a group chat, **they can always control their own participation within it – they can leave whenever they want to.***

'It is a good idea to advise your child that if they are in a group chat with someone they don't know and are uncomfortable with, they should exit the group and speak to you about it.'



I would like to **strongly** suggest that your child has a discussion with you about their use of social media and about Apps/on-line games they currently use regularly. I would also advise that parents check their children's phones regularly to ensure they are using their phone responsibly.

This link offers advice on the use of Tik Tok for parents:

<https://parentzone.org.uk/article/tiktok-everything-you-need-know-about-video-production-app#:~:text=Like%20most%20social%20media%20platforms,robust%20age%2Dverification%20in%20place.>

Another App has come to my attention – DISCORD age limit 17+. This is a gaming app and groups can be public and private. Last year's Y6 children admitted to using this app and being in groups with people not known to them. Please talk to your children about this app as it is not appropriate for 10 or 11-year-olds – I am sharing this message again.

Please could you support the school and ask your children **not to message** each other using these platforms in order to safeguard the pupils from inappropriate use. Please remind children that once **anything is 'posted,'** it is **'out there' forever for all to see (including TikTok videos)** even if they think they have deleted it – a screen shot is a powerful and dangerous tool easily used by all your children.

NSPCC – offers lots of advice of how to keep safe on all forms of social media.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/online-safety-blog/is-snapchat-safe-for-my-child/>

This is the link, which gives you information about how you can keep the children safe on 'Snapchat', but once again, the age restriction is given as 13+.

Please help us to ensure that our pupils know how to use the internet safely and responsibly.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Mrs. Jones'.

Mrs. Jones

Head Teacher (and Designated Safeguarding Lead)