

Dear Year 6 Parents and Carers,

I am writing to remind families about the importance of online safety, particularly as our Year 6 pupils become increasingly independent in their use of mobile phones, messaging apps and social media.

Recently, we have seen how quickly disagreements between children can escalate when group chats and social media platforms are involved. Whilst many of these interactions take place outside of school hours, they can have a direct impact on friendships, wellbeing and behaviour within school.

As children approach secondary school, it is vital that they are supported to use online platforms responsibly and safely. Apps such as WhatsApp and Snapchat can be positive ways to communicate; however, they can also create situations where misunderstandings, peer pressure or unkind behaviour escalate rapidly - particularly within large group chats.

We would strongly advise parents to think carefully about allowing children to participate in large chat groups. In our experience, larger groups can:

- Increase the likelihood of conflict or "pile-on" behaviour
- Make it harder for children to leave a conversation once it becomes negative
- Create pressure to respond quickly or take sides
- Lead to messages being screenshotted or shared beyond the intended audience

Where messaging is appropriate, smaller, monitored groups are generally safer and easier to manage.

We would also encourage parents to:

- Regularly monitor their child's online activity and group chats
- Ensure privacy settings are secure
- Remind children never to share personal information or images
- Discuss appropriate language and respectful communication
- Set clear expectations around group calls and messaging
- Be aware that many platforms have a minimum age requirement of 13

Attached to this email are two information guides for parents regarding Snapchat and WhatsApp. These provide practical advice about safety settings, age guidance and how to manage concerns should they arise.

In school, we continue to teach online safety through our Computing and PSHE curriculum, including discussions around digital responsibility, respectful communication and the long-term impact of online behaviour. However, parental oversight remains crucial.

Our shared aim is to ensure that children feel safe, make responsible choices and understand that their behaviour online should reflect the same values we expect in school: respect, kindness and responsibility.

If you have any concerns about online behaviour that may be impacting your child's wellbeing in school, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Thank you for your continued support.

Kind regards,
Ricky McCurdy
Assistant Principal