



Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2025

Dear Parents,

I wanted to take this opportunity to write to you about WhatsApp. Despite the school's work with the children on appropriate use of the internet and online interactions, it has been brought to our attention that an increasing number of our children have access to WhatsApp and are members of chats containing inappropriate language.

WhatsApp is a feature of our daily lives and it is easy to become blasé about the dangers it poses. Adults often find it difficult to manage and can easily fire off negative messages without thinking about the consequences. This problem is multiplied for children who, in some cases, have not yet developed the social awareness to moderate their interactions. It is for this reason that **there is an age restriction of 13 years and older for children to use WhatsApp.**

Ultimately, it is your choice as a parent as to whether you allow your child to have access to WhatsApp. The school's position is that we strongly recommend that it is not appropriate for primary aged children. However, if you decide that you wish for them to use it, I would like to make some suggestions:

- 1) Check your child's WhatsApp chats to understand the nature of their group chats;
- 2) Change the settings in WhatsApp to prevent others from adding them to a group. This can be done by going to Settings > Privacy > Groups;
- 3) Have a conversation with your child about the use of language in group chats. Is there anything on there which is inappropriate or upsetting?

With the sections of conversations we have seen in group chats containing a large number of our Year 6 children, we feel that many parents would be shocked by the use of language. Our children are polite and well behaved but social media creates an environment for these standards to slip.

Mobile phones are a fact of life and an essential part of the modern world. However, it is important that the children can enjoy a childhood free from the stresses and difficulties caused by phones and social media. It is very difficult as parents to navigate a path between protecting our children from the dangers posed by mobile phones and not wanting them to miss out. Often acting in their best interests means making decisions our children don't like. I hope that as a parent community we can support each other to feel confident when making difficult decisions regarding limiting the use of mobile phones and social media such as WhatsApp.

Best wishes,

Mr M Aggus

Principal



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