



28<sup>th</sup> February 2023

Dear Year 6 parents,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to bring to your attention to a concerning issue we have recently become aware of at school. We have been made aware of Class Whatsapp groups, where children have been sending messages that are unkind to others, using derogatory language towards each other and behaving in a way that goes against our school's values. We have spoken to a very small proportion of children recently, but my belief is that the issue is much wider than what has been uncovered so far.

At school, we take issues like this very seriously as we believe that every child deserves to feel safe and respected both in and outside the classroom. As a result, we are asking for your help in ensuring that your child is using the internet safely and responsibly, particularly when it comes to messaging apps like Whatsapp. Before half term, we have started to look at online issues in our PSHE lessons and we will continue with this in the coming weeks. This will support children to make links between the world online and apps such as Whatsapp, as I feel that sometimes the children don't see the use of these apps as part of 'The Internet' and online safety.

There are many dangers that children face online, but we believe that the following five are particularly important to be aware of:

- Cyberbullying - The use of technology to bully, harass, or intimidate others.
- Online predators - Adults who use the internet to gain access to children for sexual or other harmful purposes.
- Identity theft - The use of someone's personal information to commit fraud or other crimes.
- Inappropriate content - The risk of children accessing and sharing material that is unsuitable for their age or maturity level.
- Addiction - The risk of children becoming addicted to their devices and neglecting other important aspects of their lives.

We urge you to monitor your child's phone usage from time to time and have regular conversations with them about their online activities. Encourage them to report any unkind or inappropriate behaviour to a teacher or trusted adult and remind them to always be kind, respectful and considerate to others online.

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We appreciate your cooperation in helping us to create a safe and supportive online environment for all our children.

Yours sincerely,

T Hinkley  
Headteacher