Dear Parents and Carers,

Monitoring Social Media

We have recently been dealing with an increasing number of issues arising from children using social media platforms. As ever, technology develops at a rapid rate, so monitoring your child’s usage is essential. It is a real challenge as a parent to keep ahead of these changes, and often children are one step ahead of us!

As a school, we are expected to ensure that online safety has a high profile both within the curriculum, and by sharing information with parents. The critical question is: “Do you know exactly what your child is doing online or on their phone” and the challenge is: “How best to monitor this”.

We have had feedback from parents that their child is claiming that “everyone else has a phone or access to Apps”, but in fact this does not appear to be the case, so please do not give in to your child.

WhatsApp age limit

WhatsApp requires everyone to be at least 16 years old before they create and use a WhatsApp account. If your child is younger than 16 and has created an account, it is recommended that you delete the App. If you continue to allow your child access to WhatsApp please monitor the messages sent. Children are responsible for the words and actions used within the chat, and these are recorded for all to see. If WhatsApp learns that identifiable information of a child under 13 has been collected on the WhatsApp Site or WhatsApp Service, then WhatsApp may deactivate the account.

Group Chat

Group conversations usually take place between friends and messages can be seen by the whole group. A group chat should not be used to direct unpleasant messages to members of the group - messages are never truly deleted!
What is the impact on the children?

As children are not allowed to use their phones in school, we are dealing with the behaviour of the children on devices and Apps they use at home. However, issues arise at school, which take staff a large amount of time to resolve, and this inevitably impacts on learning time. As part of online safety guidance, we discuss with the older KS2 children the fact that, over the past few years there have been a number of “celebrities” and important figures who have lost jobs/roles due to unkind words posted when they were younger. Teaching your child only to write something they would happily say in front of you or to the person themselves, is a good stepping stone.

If you do allow your child access to social media Apps such as WhatsApp, we would advise you to closely monitor what they have written and received. As adults, it is important that we guide and control what the children are exposed to. We cannot do this alone; as a school we need you, parents and carers, to be active partners to ensure that the children are safe online.

Please find below the link for Safer Internet Day February 4th 2019

https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/safer-internet-day/2019

Kind regards

Samantha Sandle and Caroline Barriball

Acting Co-Heads of School