



Our ref: RS/EAC

11 March 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

We have, this week, been dealing with an increasing number of issues arising from children using social media platforms. Whilst we appreciate that this does not concern every child, it is important that all parents are aware that this is happening. As ever, technology continues to develop at a rapid rate, so monitoring your child's usage is essential. It is a real challenge as a parent to keep abreast with these changes, and it is often the case that children are one step ahead of us.

We feel that it is important that you, as parents, know the different concerns we are dealing with on a day to day basis. Below we have outlined just a few of the issues and concerns that have arisen:

- Children have been using Snap Chat and WhatsApp at inappropriate times, with some of the messages we have seen being sent late at night and during the early hours of the morning.
- Some children are sending messages that include really bad language and derogatory comments. This has been extremely upsetting for some of the children that these have been written about.
- Children are misinterpreting some of the messages they read and then fall out and have disagreements with their friends.
- In a few cases we have seen, inappropriate photos and images have been sent to all members of a group chat.

As an Academy, we are expected to ensure that online safety has a high profile both within the curriculum, and by sharing information with parents. As children are not allowed to use their phones or other devices in the academy, 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 have discussed with the 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.

O:\Reynolds\Office\2020-2021\LETTERS TO PARENTS\#YEAR 5\Whats App Letter_Year 5_20.05.21.docx

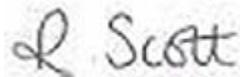
If you do allow your child access to social media Apps such as WhatsApp, Snap Chat and Tik Tok, I would advise you to closely monitor what they have written and received. As adults, it is important that we guide and control what the children are exposed to. We cannot do this alone, as an academy; we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

Although we cannot govern matters occurring out of school hours which is parental responsibility, we will take action (such as reporting under age profiles) if a problem comes to our attention that involves the safety or wellbeing of any of our pupils, including reporting the use of inappropriate images of young people to the police, as this is a legal matter. This also refers to inappropriate text messages.

Additional information can be found at: <https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/parents-guide-to-support-a-z/parents-guide-to-support-social-media-and-the-internet/>

If you have any further questions or queries then please do not hesitate to contact the academy.

Yours faithfully



Mrs R Scott
Principal