

Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2023

Dear Year 6 parents,

**Re: Mobile phone apps and online safety**

I am writing to you to reiterate the school's approach to the misuse of social media.

In recent weeks, we have had a significant increase in incidents relating to messaging services and apps such as WhatsApp and Snapchat where children in Year 6 specifically are not demonstrating the school values of kindness and respect towards each other and as a result this is having a huge impact on the learning of individuals during the school day

From our investigations, most of the inappropriate use of mobile phones is done from home or on students' mobile devices during evenings and weekends as well as school holidays. This makes it very difficult for schools to investigate and take action and while we are happy to assist, this takes up an incredible amount of school leaders' time.

The responsibility for monitoring a child's use of social media, or indeed the internet in general, must lie with parents/guardians. We strongly encourage you to discuss issues around this with your child. It is also worth noting the age limits for WhatsApp, Snapchat, TikTok, Facebook and Instagram, further information regarding these can be found on our website: <https://www.woodhillschool>.

Most of these apps have age ratings of at **least 13+** with some of them having ratings of **18+**. **While we understand that parents are keen to develop their child's independence, we ask that any parents who are allowing use of these apps:**

- monitor their child's phone daily
- link the apps to their own device
- actively encourage their child to interact positively with their peers
- report any misuse to the school
- remind your child that their actions online leave a digital footprint which will follow them through their lives

If your child is the victim of inappropriate use then we strongly recommend that you, as a parent/guardian, report the matter to both the social media service and to the police. However, to support you and your child the school will:

- Continue, through circle times and assemblies, to educate students of the dangers of inappropriate use of apps and mobile phones
- Continue to monitor the use of any form of ICT in normal school hours
- Refer anything that we believe could be defined as, or could potentially lead to, a Child Protection issue to the appropriate external agencies





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- Consider involving the community police to providing an extra layer of education for children who repeatedly misuse their mobile phones. For example, when the protected characteristics are involved
- Continue to support parents with advice on how to tackle inappropriate use either by their own child or others.

I hope that you find this information useful and by working together, as outlined in this letter, I trust that we can keep all our students safe and well.

Thank you for your support with this matter

Mr O Phillips  
Headteacher

