

Holly Hill Primary School

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Years 5 and 6 – Use of apps and social media

Dear Parents and Carers of Years 5 and 6,

We are becomingly increasingly concerned about the use of apps and social media amongst the Year 5 and 6 children, particularly Whatsapp. We are aware that there are groups formed on Whatsapp that have lots of children in them and have had issues raised with us such as:

- High numbers of messages being sent/received by the members of the group
- Messages arriving at all times of the night and into the early hours of the morning
- Not all children included or allowed in the group, and this causing social problems in school
- Sharing of inappropriate content, particularly bad language, prejudice views and unkindness about other children

We do lots of work in school in relation to online safety including the impact of the misuse of social media and we know that some children and parents are taking these online safety messages very seriously.

Whatsapp has a legal age restriction of 16 and most other social media apps are 13 years and over so these issues could be eliminated entirely if these guidelines were followed.

If you do allow your child to access social media, we ask for your vigilance. Just like their interactions in person, online interactions require supervision and support. What works best will vary from family to family but some strategies that are known to be successful include:

- Monitoring their phones for the apps that are downloaded
- Enacting parental controls on phones and consoles
- Reviewing the messages they send on platforms and apps – making monitoring part of a daily or weekly routine
- Setting expectations about what space (preferably communal) and times they have access to devices
- Encouraging them to share or discuss with you what they are doing.

You can find lots of additional information online to support with online safety at home. Everything moves so fast that it can be hard to keep up and the children often know more than we do. These two documents are particularly useful:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cKRyq3w-YM7KQnuX02CqJPiw8SeMjhsX/view>

<https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/>

It is our collective responsibility to help and support the children to make sensible and safe decisions in the modern world and their happiness and well-being must always take priority.

Thank you for your support with this matter.

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