

Dear Parents and Carers,

Once again, I feel that I need to bring to your attention the issues that we are currently having at school over the group use of social media apps outside of school hours and the inappropriate use of gaming.

We have been made aware that a significant number of our pupils are on various WhatsApp and Snapchat groups and that some of the messages have extremely unkind and worrying content, including children swearing and using sexualised language. What we have seen, is far removed from our school values and what we expect of children attending our school.

In school, we educate the children about Online Safety, through dedicated weekly sessions, but issues such as the above are unfortunately out of our control. **Please note that the minimum age for use of WhatsApp and Snapchat is 13 years.**

Please be vigilant and monitor what your child is doing on the internet or their phones. It is not an invasion of their privacy, you will be helping them to stay safe. We are also aware that some of our children are on devices very late in the evenings – some even the early hours of the morning!

Some questions that you may want to consider:

Q) Does your child keep their phone on charge next to their bed? If so, is anyone messaging them through the night? Are they accessing inappropriate websites?

Q) Are there specific times every day when phones are switched off to give them a break?

Q) Are your home and phone internet filters and privacy settings robust?

Research is showing that the mental health of our children is being negatively impacted on through unhealthy online activity. We know that there are benefits to online use, but our children are still at an age where they need the help and guidance of trusted adults to navigate and process the online world safely

We have also been made aware that some children in school, as young as 5 and 6 years old are playing inappropriate games such as 'Call of Duty' and 'Grand Theft Auto' which are certified for adult use 18+ years. As a result we are then seeing this violent and aggressive play being transferred into the children's play on the playground.

I would also like to signpost an excellent resource that is available to parents on Purple Mash, called "parenting in a digital world". This is on the parents and home support section of their website and I would encourage all of you to take the time to read it. We also email out our Online Safety Newsletter monthly and these can also be found on our school website. They have lots of advice and tips for parents on how to keep your child safe online.

If you need any support or are worried about your child's activities online there is a lot of support out there, but please contact us if you need any help or advice.

Yours Sincerely



Mrs Dani Brayshaw – Headteacher