

Tuesday 19th March 2019

Dear Parents and Carers,

Re: Year 6 WhatsApp groups

We have been made aware that a significant number of our Year 6 pupils are on various WhatsApp groups. Some of these groups have had titles such as 'Kill me to get 3million pounds', 'Everyone hates _____' and, '_____ is going to kill themselves'. I have been informed by some pupils and parents that as well as the worrying names, the content on these WhatsApp groups is not always the nicest and that some pupils have made quite nasty comments about each other.

If your child has a phone and uses WhatsApp or other online communication apps such as Snapchat and Instagram then we would recommend that you check their phones/devices periodically to make sure that the content of conversations is appropriate for 10-11 year old children.

In school, we educate the children about E Safety but issues such as this are unfortunately out of our control. Please note that WhatsApp is a part of *Facebook* and their website states:

'As of May 2018, WhatsApp's minimum age of use is 16 years old if you live in the European Union, or a country that has adopted the GDPR, as the UK has.'

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. As parents we must stay in touch with modern forms of communication and make sure our children are safe.

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?

Harassment, bullying and unkindness can follow children literally everywhere that they go, 24 hours a day 7 days a week. This was simply not the case 20 years ago. Make sure that this doesn't happen to your child. Please come in and see school staff if you need any support or are worried about your child's activities online.

Below is a useful article on how to make sure your child is well equipped to deal with using WhatsApp and other platforms on the internet.

I hope this helps.

Yours sincerely

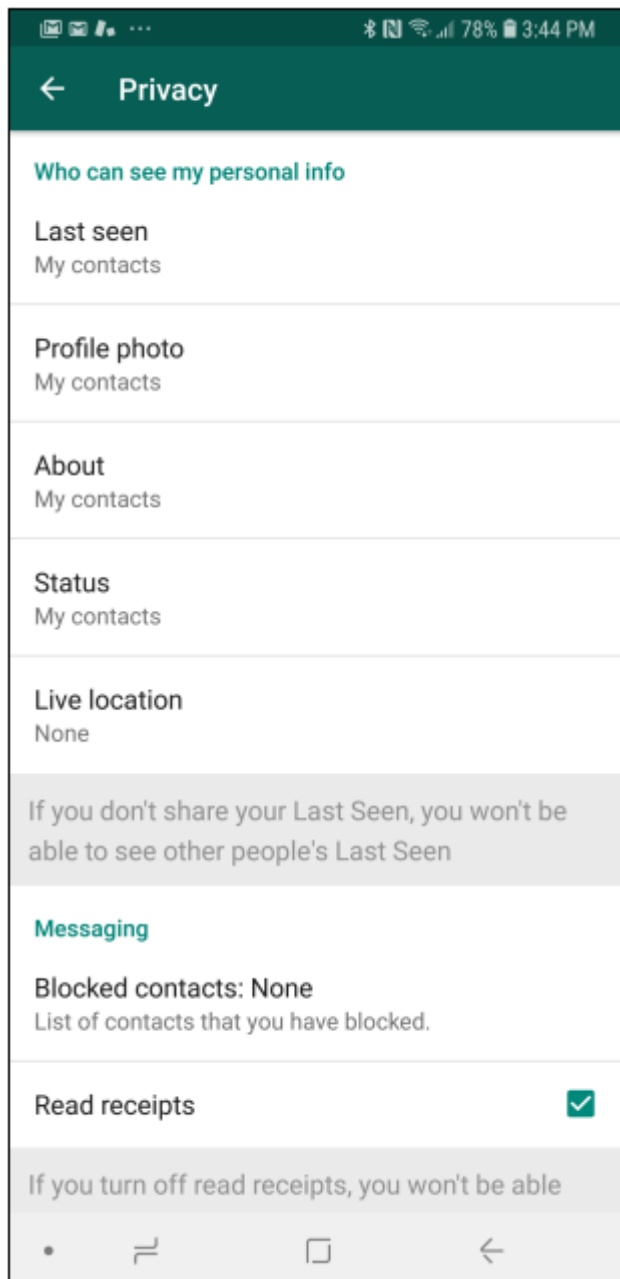
Mr P Rawlings

Headteacher

WhatsApp

Best Practices & What To Look Out For:

1. Together with your child, review the WhatsApp Profile setting and select a picture that your child likes and you approve of. Then to go Account & Privacy. Here, it's super important to at the minimum, set your child's privacy settings to "My contacts." The options here are "Everyone", "My Contacts" and "Nobody".



2. Create a Family WhatsApp Group. It will become our family's private gated online social group. Share pictures, videos, make plans and communicate with family

members. A great way to practice the skills required before venturing out into the online social media world.

3. Writing Etiquette: Is the language and writing style that your child is using to your standards? Consider installing [Grammarly](#) as a keyboard for your child's device.
4. Do you see any bad words being used or anything that could be considered bullying? If so, have a conversation with your child about it. If it is serious bullying, involve your school's Headteacher. Schools are well equipped to deal with these issues.
5. Fake News & Hoaxes: It can spread like wildfire through private groups. Have a conversation with your child about what is real news, what is fake, what to get excited about and what not to continue to spread. While at it, have a conversation about your stance on chain letters as they will also circulate.
6. Teach your child to protect their WhatsApp account. It does not require a password to access so if their phone is unlocked, anybody can go on it and impersonate your child and usually when this happens it ends up being your child accused of sending inappropriate content, bullying or using nasty language.
7. Sexting: A huge topic with 1 in 4 teens *admitting* that they are sexting. [Learn more about sexting](#) and have a conversation with your child about your house rules when it comes to sexting.
8. Pornography: On the internet, there are ways to keep your child safe, (see previous Netherbrook letters) where Google Searches are made safe and pornographic websites are blocked but in the realm of WhatsApp, there is no filter WhatSoEver (pun intended) so have a conversation of what to do if an inappropriate or pornographic image or video is sent to them.
9. Stranger Danger: Getting into a conversation with a stranger on WhatsApp will not happen automatically as there is no method for anybody to search for your child's WhatsApp account since you set the Privacy to "My Contacts" so a stranger will have to be added as a 'Contact' on your child's device. This will require social engineering. Be aware of all the Apps that your child has installed, the websites that your child visits, and especially ensure that there are no Anonymous Chat Apps.
10. Block WhatsApp just before Bedtime & allow it again after breakfast to ensure that your child has a great sleep. Use [Parental Control](#) and setup your child's bedtime schedule during which time the device becomes "bricked."
11. Graduation! Remove the training wheels and stop monitoring your child's WhatsApp account when the time comes. It's important to keep this in mind and have a 'graduation' process. Remind yourself on the potential [horrors of helicopter parenting](#). Our role is to help you have engaging conversations with your child and raise a great digital citizen.

Taken from:

<https://useboomerang.com/2018/04/25/monitor-childs-whatsapp-account-free/>



See the next page for ways to monitor WhatsApp remotely from a PC or Laptop.

How to monitor your child's WhatsApp:

If you want to know more about what is happening on your child's WhatsApp account you can access this and monitor it. This requires the parent to have a computer with a browser

1. Go to <https://web.whatsapp.com/> from your desktop/laptop computer's browser.
2. Now, go to the WhatsApp application on your child's phone and follow the steps in the image below (do not scan the actual QR shown below):

To use WhatsApp on your computer:

1. Open WhatsApp on your phone
2. Tap Menu  or Settings  and select WhatsApp Web
3. Point your phone to this screen to capture the code



[Need help to get started?](#)

Keep me signed in

3. That's it. You are now synced with your child's WhatsApp account and can guide them.