



We are an Operation Encompass School

Wednesday 9th December 2020

Whatsapp

Dear Parents/Guardians,

WhatsApp is a chat application which can be used on a mobile phone or tablet, it lets you send messages, images and videos to friends where you can also have one to one and group conversations. Recently, there have been several incidents related to the misuse of WhatsApp across a number of classes in the school. Many of the incidents, despite happening outside of school, are now causing issues inside school and is impacting on children's learning as they are being carried into the playground/class. Children are becoming upset due to children writing unkind messages / removing others from groups or they are being exposed to inappropriate language and in some cases images. There are other potential risks associated with WhatsApp and these include cyberbullying, connecting with strangers and scams. Likewise, as with all social media, caution is advised over your child's digital footprint, particularly the content (photos, videos and messages) they choose to share via WhatsApp. Once shared, it can be copied, re shared and posted anywhere online.

I would like to remind parents and children that the age rating for this app in this county is 16 and over. I would ask all parents to familiarise themselves with the reasons for this and visit:

<https://nationalonlinesafety.com/guides/whatsapp-online-safety-guide-for-parents>

We ask that you carefully monitor what your child is viewing online, and that they are reminded at home that they must tell you if they receive anything inappropriate from any application. This will reinforce the messages/lessons we deliver in school with regard to internet safety and cyber bullying. We are also aware that there are children currently posting/writing inappropriate content and deleting them so these can't be seen at a later time. We have spoken to children about taking screenshots so these can be shared with parents and trusted adults and these can then be acted on.

As a school, we strongly advise you to remove the chat groups involving other children as this can cause issues in and outside of school and we urge all parents to keep an eye on their child's mobile phone or online activities involving social media.

Yours Sincerely

Mrs Steele
Acting Headteacher

