



Barrowby Church of England Primary School

March 2023

Dear Parents/Carers of children in Year 6

This week I have become aware that a small number of our Year 6 children have access to WhatsApp, whilst at home and have joined, set up or have been added to chats between other children in their class.

**WhatsApp is a social media platform for 16 years or older,
this was raised from 13 years old to 16 years old in 2018 due to data protection laws.**

Unfortunately, the chat that we have been made aware of includes a small number of children responding to content in an aggressive/hurtful tone with derogatory language being used. This has caused upset to some of the children and families involved.

It is important that as children become older and they gain more independence using technology that they understand how to conduct themselves while online.

I would urge parents to remember that our Year 6 children are only 10 or 11 years old and are not necessarily well equipped or emotionally resilient to deal with difficult conversations or situations they find themselves in, while online on Whatsapp or other social media apps.

As a school, we recommend that any primary age pupils, working on-line at home access 'age appropriate content' and should be monitored by parents while using any internet-based communication service e.g. iPad, iPod, X-box, e-mail, text, smartphone.

In light of this recent e safety issue I would like to advise that parents review particular E Safety Newsletters that the school has published:

- WhatsApp: group chats (January 2023 edition)
- Online Games with chat (December 2022 edition)
- setting Parental Controls (April 22 edition),

You can find these by [CLICKING HERE](#).

Parents should also consider how they can keep their child safe at home, while they are online. Our advice would be for you to:

- **supervise any and all internet access, while at home, by a pupil of our school (4-11 years old) e.g. while children are on-line they should be in the same room as the adult;**
- monitor the applications your child is downloading/using e.g. from iTunes, Play Store
- limit the amount of time pupils have access to technology to avoid excessive usage of age appropriate on-line gaming and internet access
- inform your child/ren that you will periodically check Whatsapp chats, internet search histories and follow through e.g. monthly
- regularly monitor and review access to: age appropriate chat rooms e.g. Kik, Moshi Monsters, and other social media

We recommend that, prior to children accessing the internet through:

- Mobile phones
- Laptops/Games Consoles
- Tablets



Parents should

- ensure up to date security software/protocols are installed and enable any:
 1. Fireguards and anti-virus software
 2. Parental controls and
 3. Filters before use by children

and discuss with their child/ren what they would do, if someone:

- e-mailed or verbalised
- or text using derogatory language
- or sent inappropriate images
- or posted content

they deemed inappropriate or hurtful **or** they had not given permission to be used i.e. report to parent and/or teacher and appropriate action taken; **or** what they would do if they were asked for personal details e.g. name, age, school, address etc. from someone they did not know i.e. no personal details should ever be shared on-line.

This week, Miss Lees has discussed with Year 6 the issues around keeping themselves safe online, whilst at home. I am reassured that the children have a good awareness of strategies they would use to keep themselves safe while working on line.

I would encourage all parents to continue the conversation tonight with your child/ren when they come home and possibly review what your child has access to online, on their tablet, laptop or mobile phone, if needed.

As a school, we would like all our children to feel happy at school. Unfortunately, due to the nature of this e safety incident, which occurred out of school, this is not the case at the moment.

Thank you for your support and I hope that we will be able to avoid e safety issues of this nature in the future.

Yours sincerely



Mr L Batey
Headteacher