



13<sup>th</sup> October 2023

Dear Parents,

I hope this letter finds you and your families well. I really hope this letter serves as a cautious reminder and is taken in good faith.

As we all know, in today's digital age, instant messaging platforms have become a primary means of communication, and WhatsApp is one such widely used tool. We would like to address some recent concerns related to the use of WhatsApp for class communications, especially in light of a few incidents that breach the safety and privacy of our pupils.

Over the past few months, we have received reports of instances where WhatsApp group chats meant for class-related discussions have led to unsafe and inappropriate use, including the sharing of children's names, discussions of incidents in school and personal data. We understand that these incidents have caused distress and anxiety among some of you, and we take this matter very seriously.

It is important to acknowledge that our control over the use of WhatsApp groups is limited. WhatsApp is a third-party platform, and whilst we encourage responsible use, we cannot directly manage or monitor the content shared within these groups. However, we are committed to taking necessary steps to ensure the safety and privacy of our pupils and families that may use it.

To promote a safer environment for class communication on WhatsApp, we would like to emphasise the following guidelines both for yourselves but also a reminder for your children should they use it.

- **Privacy Settings:** Consider reviewing your privacy settings to limit who can see your profile picture, status, and last seen time. This can help protect their personal information.
- **Group Rules:** It is good practice to establish clear guidelines within WhatsApp groups, emphasising the importance of respectful and relevant communication.
- **Reporting:** If you come across any inappropriate content or behaviour within class WhatsApp groups, please report it to us and WhatsApp immediately. We will take the necessary actions to address the issue and ensure the safety of all.
- **Educate Your Child:** Talk to your child about responsible and safe online communication. Encourage them to report any uncomfortable situations to you or a trusted adult. However, a reminder that the minimum age for the use of WhatsApp is 16 years old.

We understand the value of WhatsApp groups to share ideas and resources as well as reminders of events and timetables. Together, if all members use it safely and appropriately, you can create a secure environment for communication. If you have any concerns or suggestions, please don't hesitate to reach out to us.

Please do report any sharing of personal data to use as we are able to access resources to ensure that any risks caused are mitigated in the appropriate manner.

Thank you for your cooperation. We are confident that, as a community, we can work together to ensure safe and responsible use of WhatsApp and other communication tools.

Yours sincerely,

Trevor North  
Headteacher