

Ref: SMU/dc



3 October, 2024

Dear Parents/Carers

We have been made aware that a significant number of our students are members of various WhatsApp groups. Unfortunately, some of the content on these WhatsApp groups is not always appropriate and can be unpleasant for the students involved to receive.

If your child has a mobile phone and uses WhatsApp or other online communication apps such as Snapchat and Instagram, we recommend that you check their phones and devices periodically to make sure that the content of conversations is appropriate for your children.

In school, we educate your children about E Safety but issues such as this are unfortunately now more commonplace, and we would encourage you to make us aware of any situations which you are concerned about. Please note that WhatsApp is a part of Facebook and their website states:

“If you live in a country in the European Economic Area (which includes the European Union), and any other included country or territory (collectively referred to as the European Region) you must be at least 16 years old (or such greater age required in your country) to register for and use WhatsApp.”

Please be vigilant and monitor your child’s activity on the internet and their phones. It is not an invasion of their privacy; you will be helping them to stay safe. It is important that everyone in our school is aware of modern forms of communication and that we all work together to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all our students. The following questions are important for you 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?

Harassment, bullying and unkindness can follow children everywhere that they go, 24 hours a day 7 days a week. Please take the necessary steps to ensure that this does not happen to your child.

Please contact the school should you have any concerns regarding bullying. Please also feel free to contact us should you require any support or if you are worried about your child’s activities online.

We wish to work with parents/carers to ensure that their children feel happy, safe and confident enough to report anything that they may be worried about.

Yours faithfully

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