



Dear Parents,

Once again, I feel that I need to bring to your attention the issues that we are currently having at school over the group use of social media apps outside of school hours.

Since the children have returned to school, we have been informed of a few issues where children are using abusive and threatening language on social media towards each other. Although this bullying activity is not happening on the school site, it then affects behaviour, anxiety and subsequently lesson time and the learning of pupils in school.

We cannot regulate the online access that pupils have outside school, but if an issue of cyberbullying is report to us, we have a duty of care to inform the parents of the children involved.

There is clear guidance on the appropriate age ranges for certain online apps and I would like to draw your attention to these below.

WhatsApp recently announced a change to their terms and conditions for users based in Europe. **Users need to be 16 to use WhatsApp.**

Nearly all other social media services require users **to be at least 13 years of age** to access and use their services. This includes Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, Instagram, Tik Tok, Musical.ly and Skype.

Whilst there is no age restriction for watching videos on YouTube, users need to be **13 or older** to have their own YouTube account (enabling them to subscribe to other channels, like videos, post comments, share their own content and flag inappropriate content).

The online world is a minefield for children and the situation has changed significantly in the last 10-15 years, as a whole range of unlimited content, both good and bad is a few clicks away. Once something has been posted on social media, it is very hard to get rid of.

I would ask parents therefore, to be vigilant and monitor what children are posting online at this current time when children are not able to take part in their normal social activities. Threatening and abusive content could result in police involvement if a child is over the age of 10.

I would also like to signpost an excellent resource that is available to parents on Purple Mash, called "parenting in a digital world". This is on the parents and home support section of their website and I would encourage all of you to take the time to read it.

Yours Sincerely

Simon Langley

Headteacher