



*Building tomorrow,
leading the way.*

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Friday 26th March 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

Aqueduct Primary School is committed to promoting the safe and responsible use of the internet and as such we feel it is our responsibility to raise this particular issue as a growing concern, due to the increase in inappropriate use of WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook and other texting sites. Many of the issues that have been brought to our attention recently have involved the use of:

- WhatsApp - An instant messaging app for smartphones. The user agreement requires users to be age 16 or older.
- Instagram - an online mobile photo sharing, video sharing and social networking service which enables its users to take pictures and videos and share them on a variety of social networking platforms. You are required to be at least 13 years old before you can create an account.
- Facebook - a social networking site. You are required to be at least 13 years old before you can create an account.

We feel that it is important that you, as parents, know the different types of concerns we are dealing with on a day-to-day basis. Below we have outlined just a few of the 'issues/concerns' that have arisen relating to WhatsApp:

1. Children have been using WhatsApp at inappropriate times with some evidence showing that some of our children have used WhatsApp in the early hours of the morning.
 - We advise that no child has access to any electronic devices within their bedroom, particularly at night time when it is extremely difficult to monitor. Children are most vulnerable when they are using their devices in private areas such as their bedrooms.
2. Children are sending and receiving an incredible a number of messages through WhatsApp and in some cases children are arriving to their device to find that they have over a thousand notifications. Often these notifications are due to private conversations between just two people and/or conversations with no purpose e.g. silly images, singular words and emojis.



Positivity

Respect

Kindness

Safety

Happiness

Learning

- We advise that if children need to contact each other directly that they do so through other means e.g. a text message or a telephone call. We do not promote private conversations in a group format. We have found that these types of group chats lead to arguments and disagreements amongst our children as they become involved with discussions which they should not be part of.
3. Children are misinterpreting some messages that they read and then fall out and have disagreements with their friends. The same message can be read in many different ways; with many different meanings. For example a simple comment such as "I don't want to go!" might be perceived as someone shouting and in total resentment of something when actually the person who wrote it might just be stating that they don't want to go somewhere.
- We advise children are educated in how some messages are misinterpreted; through our computing and PDC lessons we will tackle this subject but we feel that you, as parents and carers could provide some advice to your children too as they become increasingly involved in communication which is not face to face.

WhatsApp is a Social Media app designed for children aged 16+; this means that none of our children should be using it.

Due to repeated incidents surrounding the use of the App, we would like to offer our support in improving social media safety to you at home. Below is a link to the national online safety website which offers a free course called 'WhatsApp online safety guide for parents.'

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

They also offer an online safety APP including courses, webinars and useful guides.

<https://info.nationalonlinesafety.com/mobile-app>

We hope that you find this information useful and recognise the importance of working together to safeguard our children,

Thank you for your continued support.

T. Lockley

Mrs Lockley & Mr Evans

Head Teacher & Computing Lead/Y5&6 Teacher.



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