



Plymouth Cast Academy Trust
St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School

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27th November 2020

Dear Year 6 Parent / Carer,

Recently there have been several incidents related to the misuse of WhatsApp and Facetime by members of Year 6. WhatsApp is a chat application which can be used on a mobile phone or tablet, it lets you send messages, images and videos to friends. You can have one to one and group conversations. Facetime is a part of Facebook that lets you video call your friends.

There have now been a number of incidents involving several Year 6 children being part of chat groups. Issues relating to these groups include:

- Messages have been arriving at all times of the night and into the early hours of the morning.
- Not all children have been included in the group, leaving some to feel left out, whilst other children have been added by their peers without their consent.
- Worries about use of unacceptable language.
- Links to other sites and apps which may include inappropriate material (e.g. TikTok).
- Other family members joining the call so that it is not just a 'peer to peer' chat.

This letter is to make you aware that your child may be using such apps without your knowledge and you should be mindful that the minimum age for WhatsApp is 16 or over and Facebook is 13 years or older.

This is particularly relevant at the moment as a recent questionnaire in school has shown that 8% of pupils say that their parents do not know what they are doing online, and 24% of parents only sometimes know what they are doing online (KS2 questionnaire).

We ask that you please carefully monitor what your child is viewing online and consider when they actually need access to their phones, especially without supervision. We strongly advise you to remove the chat groups involving other children.

Please visit the National Online Safety website for information about messaging apps
<https://nationalonlinesafety.com/hub/view/webinar/online-messaging-apps>.

We also attach an information sheet regarding 'What's App'.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions regarding online safety or regarding any particular apps or games.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Hodson

Mrs Lewry

The Year 6 Team

Safeguarding Lead

Online Safety lead

Mrs Olsen & Mr Bacon