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'With God ALL Things are possible' Matthew 19:26

Wednesday 8th November

RE: Year 6 – Concerns about WhatsApp groups

Dear Parents & Carers,

Already this year there have been several incidents related to the misuse of WhatsApp which have involved Year 6 children. These incidents are usually related to WhatsApp group chats which have often involved several Year 6 children. We understand that this has included both sharing unkind comments about pupils (often about children who have not been included in the group) and offensive language being used. This is leading to a lot of upset and is not in line with our school values.

This letter is to make you aware that your child may be using WhatsApp with or without your knowledge and you should be mindful that the **minimum age for WhatsApp is 16 or over**. We ask that you carefully monitor what your child is viewing online, and that they are reminded that they must tell you if they receive anything inappropriate. They should also be reminded that the use of inappropriate language, racist comments and threats may well be reported by the parents of other people in the groups and could involve the Police.

It has, this week, been brought to our attention that several Year 6 pupils are part of a group chat, with a membership of over 100 people, in which children have identified themselves as pupils of our school by naming it. Unfortunately, it is clear that pupils are not aware of exactly who is in the group and who they have now shared this personal information with. This is obviously a safeguarding concern that we wanted to share with you as soon as possible. We are not able to see exactly who is part of the groups that include our pupils and need parents to check with their children by looking at their devices.

We will be speaking to all children in Year 6 to remind them of the work we have done on online safety throughout their time with us, but as these incidents occur out of school hours, we must ask you to support this at home. Unfortunately, some children do not appear to understand that the written comments or voicemails they are sharing online have the same impact and consequences as if they made the comments in person.

Thank you for your co-operation.

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to read 'Val Griffiths'.

Val Griffiths
Head Teacher