



# Our Lady Catholic Primary School

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Headteacher: Mr. R. Curry

18<sup>th</sup> January, 2023

Dear Parents/Carers of children in Year 6,

I am writing to you because this week, an issue has arisen with regards to a number of WhatsApp groups that some of the children in Year 6 have been using. The children raised a number of things that were worrying them about this group:

- There has been a high volume of messages sent/received by the members of the group;
- The children are unable to keep up with the volume of messages;
- Seeing such a high number of unread messages makes them feel anxious;
- 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, and this has been discussed on the playground;
- Worries about inappropriate content;
- Adding children to groups without consent.

To begin to address these worries, I spoke directly with the children in Year 6 earlier in the week. I began by broadly talking about E-safety, with a particular focus upon use of social media. I talked why there are age restrictions in place for social media. During the talk, the children were able to recognise that the worries that had been voiced, were indeed legitimate worries and reflect upon them. They were also able to make the link between responsibility, maturity and the age restrictions that are imposed upon them, with regard to social media.

I would just like to draw your attention to the following extract from WhatsApp's website:

- *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.*
- *If you live in any other country except those in the European Region, **you must be at least 13 years old** (or such greater age required in your country) to register for and use WhatsApp.*

*Note: Creating an account with false information is a violation of our Terms. Registering an account on behalf of someone who is underage is also a violation of our Terms.*

I would like to draw to your attention that the children in our school should not be using WhatsApp, as, due to their age, it is a violation of WhatsApp's terms and conditions. In addition to this, I feel that the worries that were brought to the Year 6 team's attention were legitimate and, in our opinion, the children do not need to have additional anxiety caused due to a messaging service.

I would implore you to discuss this with your children and carefully consider removing access to WhatsApp and other social media services from your children, for the good of their mental well-being.

With thanks for your consideration in this matter,

Richard Curry