

Dear Parents and Carers,

### **Use of Social Media by Pupils**

Recently, we have become aware of an increasing number of children that are using certain social networking sites. With this in mind, we wanted to provide some advice that is intended to help safeguard your children and make them aware of the possible consequences of using these sites.

Most social media sites set age restrictions. For example, the minimum age of use for WhatsApp is 16 years old. In recent years, the school has dealt with instances of online abuse and cyber-bullying that have taken place on sites such as this, outside of school. We are extremely concerned that pupils as young as 10 and 11 years old are using these sorts of platforms and do not recommend primary children use them.

Unfortunately, some pupils have received unkind or abusive messages while using the group chat function within **WhatsApp**. This allows up to 256 people to chat in one conversation stream. Anybody in the group, even if they're not one of your child's phone contacts, will be able to see messages that your child posts and likewise your child will be able to see theirs.

Unkind or abusive comments that are made while online can lead to serious problems for children when they come to school. It is important for children to realise that there is no difference between making unkind remarks either in-person or via the internet.

Although your child might not be able to control who they talk to in a group chat, they can always control their own participation within it – they can leave whenever they want to.

If you have allowed your child to use social networking sites such as **Whatsapp**, please monitor their conversations closely. Make sure they know what the risks are and what they can do to be safer.

Further information and advice for parents regarding the use of social media can be found at:

[www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

Many thanks for your cooperation in this important matter,

**Mr T Head**

**Assistant Head Teacher**