

9th October 2026

YEAR 6 WHATSAPP USE, ONLINE SAFETY AND PARENT WORKSHOP

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are writing to share some concerns regarding the use of WhatsApp and other social media platforms among some of our Year 6 pupils.

This week, we have been made aware of a small number of concerns linked to WhatsApp group chats and online messaging. Whilst these interactions take place outside of school, they can sometimes have an impact on children's friendships and wellbeing. We would therefore like to share some guidance and support for families around online safety.

As children approach adolescence, it is natural that they become increasingly interested in technology, social media and online communication. However, it is important to recognise that Year 6 children are still developing the emotional maturity and judgement needed to navigate these spaces safely. Written messages can easily be misunderstood, and online interactions can quickly have a negative impact on friendships, wellbeing and self-esteem.

We would also like to remind families that WhatsApp's minimum age requirement is 13 years old. As primary-aged children are below this age threshold, we strongly encourage parents to consider carefully whether access to such platforms is appropriate.

Supporting Your Child Online

Online activity outside of school is ultimately a parental responsibility. We encourage all families to take an active role in supporting their child's online safety by:

- Regularly checking phones, tablets and other internet-enabled devices.
- Knowing passwords and login details for devices and apps.
- Reviewing group chats and online interactions.
- Discussing appropriate online behaviour and digital citizenship.
- Reminding children that messages, photographs and videos shared online can be copied, screenshotted and shared, even if they are later deleted.
- Encouraging children to speak to a trusted adult if they see or receive anything that makes them feel uncomfortable or upset.

You may also wish to review privacy settings within apps such as WhatsApp. Within **Settings > Privacy > Groups**, you can restrict who is able to add your child to group chats.

Parent Online Safety Workshop

To support families with these increasingly complex challenges, we are pleased to be welcoming **PC Cornall** to school on **Tuesday 10th November at 9.00am** for a parent workshop focused on online safety.

The workshop will provide practical advice and guidance on social media, online communication, cyberbullying, digital wellbeing and the growing influence of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

PC Cornall will also be working directly with the children to help them understand the risks associated with social media and AI, and to equip them with the knowledge and skills needed to make safe and responsible choices online.

At St Mary's, we are committed to helping children become confident, respectful and safe digital citizens. Through our Computing and PSHE curriculum, we teach children about online safety and the consequences of unsafe online behaviour. However, this is most effective when school and home work together in partnership.

Thank you for your continued support in helping us ensure that all of our children remain safe, happy and well, both in school and online.

Yours sincerely,



Amy Butterfield
Headteacher