



Beeston Primary School

Town Street, Leeds, LS11 8PN

"Engage, Enjoy, Enrich, Excel"

21/03/2024

Dear Parents/Carers

I am writing to the parents and carers of all Year 5 and 6 pupils to make you aware that a significant number of the year group are using the WhatsApp messaging service, a site not recommended for their age group. In Europe and the UK, the minimum age of use for WhatsApp is 16 years old.

Within these groups, we have discovered numerous and extensive 'chats' relating to bullying, homophobia, explicit sexual comments regarding their peers, swearing, and inappropriate racial language.

Please ensure as a parent you are fully aware at home of your child's online activity, regularly checking their phones to ensure they are using age-appropriate sites and the language and the images they post online are not offensive or inappropriate. **If you should discover any misuse, please consider whether your child is ready for a mobile phone or social media.**

How is the school going to support this problem?

The school teaches online safety throughout the curriculum. In Year 5 and Year 6, we focus heavily on teaching what inappropriate online content is, how the children can report this, and how they can keep themselves safe.

All incidents of inappropriate online use brought to our attention will be followed up on, whether inside or outside of school. If required, the school may seek support from the police, children's social work services, or the Local Authority Education Safeguarding Team.

Whilst we are aware that not all pupils have currently experienced these risks, these concerning WhatsApp groups were extensive and children were repeatedly adding and forwarding negative messages. We believe, as a parent, you would want to be informed of the ongoing risk.

Mobile phones are now part of our lives and we need to educate our children to use them responsibly.

Thank you for your continued support.

Best wishes

Mrs S Knowles
Pastoral leader/ Designated Safeguarding Lead