

Nascot Wood Junior School

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Christina Singh

Headteacher

7 October 2019

Dear Parents,

I am writing to you because this morning, an issue was brought to my attention, with regard to a newly formed WhatsApp group 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 (in the hundreds) 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

To begin to address these worries, this afternoon, I held an assembly with the Y6 cohort. I began by broadly talking about e-safety, with particular focus upon Social Media. I talked about the reason behind age restrictions, initially for things such as driving, buying paracetamol and drinking alcohol, and then more specifically about age restrictions for social media.

During my assembly, 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.

Today, I used the following extract from WhatsApp's website in my assembly:

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.*
- *Please refer to our Terms of Service for more information.*

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 my attention were legitimate and, in my professional 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,

Simon Watts

Deputy Headteacher

