



ABBOTSWOOD JUNIOR SCHOOL

'Helping **everyone** achieve their best'

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Headteacher: Mr G Moore

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RE: Protecting our Children - the Impact of WhatsApp and Social Media

Dear Parents/Carers,

Although I grew up in a time way before mobile phones and social media, I do embrace technology and realise it can be a fantastic tool if used properly. However, we are deeply concerned about how one specific app - WhatsApp - is being used by many of our pupils at home, especially in Year 5 and Year 6.

We are seeing an increasing trend where many children are arriving (or, in some cases, not arriving) at school anxious, upset and frankly exhausted. When we look for the root cause, it almost always leads back to unsupervised activity on WhatsApp groups. This is now taking up more staff time than all other school issues combined.

I hate to lecture but, having witnessed some of the "conversations", I am becoming increasingly concerned. WhatsApp has a minimum age of 13 yet we know many of our children are using it. This is not just a "school problem" - it is directly affecting your child's mental health and stealing the vital time we should be spending on their education and learning.

The real impact on your child is potentially immense:

- Emotional distress - children at this age are often not ready to handle the pressure of large group chats. Small misunderstandings can quickly escalate into bullying or feelings of isolation.
- Sleep deprivation - these chats are often continuing late into the evening.
- Loss of focus - instead of being ready for school, some pupils are still preoccupied with "who said what" the night before.

I would never wish to preach on how to be a parent. However, from my experience, when school and home work together, the children are always the ones who benefit. As we move forward, please think about the following things when your children are at home:

- Review your child's mobile phone. In fact, does your child actually need a smartphone? If they do have a device, how often do you check their messages?
- Reflect on Age limits. Should your child be using apps (like WhatsApp) that are designed for people aged 13 and over?
- Does your child have free, unsupervised use of their phone in their bedroom overnight?

Lastly, our goal is always to ensure your children are safe, happy and ready to learn. Currently, the "digital noise" from home can make that a challenge.

Thank you for your support in putting our children's wellbeing first.

Yours sincerely,

Glenn Moore
Headteacher