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Part of Perry Hall Multi-Academy Trust
Company Number:
08566185

9th March 2020

Dear Year 6 parents/carers

We have had a number of concerns raised by children and parents today regarding online chats and group chats used by the children. The issues from outside school are beginning to impact on learning in school.

The main issues raised are that children are saying nasty things about other children, sending messages at all hours of the night, making and removing groups, re-adding children who don't want to be in the group, excluding children from groups and generally being unkind.

The issues are mainly through What's App, Tik Tok and Xbox. All of these have an age restriction above the age of your children and the responsibility remains with parents to 'police' their child's use.

In school, we have seen an increase in arguments, which have continued or stemmed from comments sent in the group, and an increase in tiredness – children have told us that they are messaging or receiving messages throughout the night. Some children have experienced distress because of things said or seen online. This is not healthy for the well-being of our children.

Whilst we can support and educate our children about online conduct and cyber-bullying, we are powerless to stop it happening without parental support.

Please monitor the use of chats to prevent any further upset or stress.

Please do not allow children to use their phones during the night – they need a good nights' sleep!

Please remove unknown members of groups and unnecessary groups.

We understand that there is only so much control we have on what the children access at home but we urge you to be extra vigilant of your child's use of social media in its many different and ever growing forms.

Additional information about WhatsApp (and other apps) can be found here:

<https://www.netaware.org.uk/networks/whatsapp/> and www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Although we are constantly educating children about the importance of using the internet safely, we do not have the resources or the jurisdiction to resolve every issue that takes place out of school hours. In order to maintain the safety of our children, it is vitally important that we work together to raise awareness and increase understanding of the potential dangers in this area.

Primarily, these occurrences and reported incidents of misuse of social media sites happen at home, after school hours when children have access to web sites that are blocked in school.

Although we cannot govern matters occurring out of school hours which is parental responsibility, we will take action (such as reporting under age profiles) if a problem comes to our attention that involves the safety or wellbeing of any of our pupils. This includes reporting the use of inappropriate images of young people to the police, as this is a legal matter. This also refers to inappropriate text messages.

Please talk to your child about their online activity.

If you have any questions or queries then please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Yours sincerely

Mrs S Barnes
Headteacher