



GREAT HOLLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Dear Parents/Carers

Great Hollands Primary School is committed to promoting the safe and responsible use of the internet and as such we feel it is our responsibility to raise this particular issue as a growing concern, due to the increase in inappropriate use of WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook and other texting sites, as well as gaming platforms such as Among Us and Roblox.

Many of the issues that have been brought to our attention recently have involved the use of: WhatsApp: An instant messaging app for smartphones. The user agreement requires users to **be age 16 or older, this means none of our children should be using it.** WhatsApp is a chat application which can be used on a mobile phone or tablet, it lets you send messages, images and videos to friends. You can have one to one and group conversations.

This letter is to make you aware that your child may be using WhatsApp without your knowledge and you should be mindful that the minimum age for WhatsApp is 16 or over. To protect the well-being of all of our children we ask that you carefully monitor what your child is viewing online, this includes the WhatsApp messages they send and receive.

We would like to remind you that the harm and stress children can receive through these apps far outweigh any positives of keeping in touch on 'group chats'

As a school we strongly advise you to:

- **Ensure Apps are age appropriate.**
- **Have strict rules about, monitoring your child's use of their phone and what they are saying and receiving.**
- **Never to let your child use their phone / device in their bedroom or anytime alone.**

We advise children are educated in how some messages are misinterpreted; through our PSHE lessons we have been and will continue to tackle this subject but we feel that you, as parents and carers could provide some advice to your children too as they become increasingly involved in communication which is not face to face, as this form of communication is becoming unkind and inappropriate at times and upsetting for many of the children. If your child is involved in a group chat we strongly recommend that you discuss what is being said, and the impact this is having on them and their peers.

Additional information about WhatsApp (and other apps) can be found here:
<https://www.netaware.org.uk/networks/whatsapp/>
www.thinkuknow.co.uk
www.childnet.com

Please remind the children that they must tell you if they receive anything inappropriate from any application, and continue to follow your rules to stay safe online.

Thank you for your continued support in this matter.

Miss Baillie and Miss Hawkins