

St Matthias Church of England Primary School

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20th May 2024

Dear parents and carers,

It has come to our attention that lots of pupils are using Snapchat and WhatsApp to communicate with their friends, whilst away from school. While it is good that pupils are able to speak to their peers, it is important that they communicate online safely, with respect and in an age-appropriate manner.

It is important to note that people are NOT allowed to have a Snapchat or WhatsApp account until they are 13 years old. Additionally, users aged 13-17 must have permission from a parent or legal guardian to use the apps.

Below are some of the reasons as to why pupils in primary schools should not have access to social media platforms like Snapchat and WhatsApp:

- Contact from potentially harmful strangers
- Being part of larger groups, where you don't know all of the people
- Seeing inappropriate content
- Bullying, harassment or hate from both friends and strangers
- Disappearing messages, which can make it hard to collect evidence in case of bullying or similar behaviours

We strongly advise against pupils having access to these social media sites; however, if you, as parents and carers, allow your child to have access, we strongly recommend the following:

- For parents and carers to read the following:
[Snapchat Guidance](#)
[WhatsApp Guidance](#)
- Regular monitoring of online communication
- Using the Family Centre on Snapchat to monitor usage ([Instructions for Family Centre](#))
- Regular open conversations with your child about staying safe online
- Encouraging children to **tell a trusted adult, report and block** any inappropriate content
- Encouraging children to speak about difficulties with peers face to face, resolving conflict in a respectful way

As a school, we will continue to speak to pupils about staying safe online and will work with external agencies, such as Young Hackney, to support pupils to understand the benefits and potential risks to being part of online communities.

Many thanks,

Ms Martin
Deputy Headteacher