



Round Hill Primary School
'Dream, believe, achieve together'
✓ Reflecting
✓ Daring
✓ Persevering
✓ Dreaming
✓ Together

Round Hill Primary School
Foster Avenue
Beeston
Nottingham NG9 1AE
Head Teacher - Adrian Nash *B.Ed (Hons) NPQH*
Tel: 0115 9179262
office@roundhill.notts.sch.uk
www.roundhill.notts.sch.uk

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Dear Parent/Carers with a child in Years 5 and 6

Serious Incident with Online Safety

Sadly, it has been brought to my attention that children in Year 6 have been sending inappropriate messages to each other using social media, in this case via WhatsApp. Some of the messages involved online bullying and racist language. This is by far the worst language from children at Round Hill I have ever read.

As you would expect, we have taken this very seriously and I have spoken to the parents of all of the children involved. Please be assured that all of the parents have been very supportive and I am hoping the children have learned a very valuable lesson. However, whilst investigating how this happened we have discovered some things where we feel all parents need to take action so together we can make sure our children are safe online.

This is where we need your help. This incident related to group chats on, but not limited to, WhatsApp, where children have been able to send explicit text messages, voice messages and picture messages completely unmonitored. This is unacceptable and leaves children wide open to abuse. I implore you to have an open conversation with your child about their online activity and ensure you know what they are saying, who they are in contact with and create a healthy limit of screen time.

Today, we spoke to all Year 5 and Year 6 children and reminded them about being safe on the internet, discussed coercive behaviour and what to do if they see something that they know is wrong. We explained that covering up for someone is something that only leads to trouble, and it can leave children exposed to manipulation by others. Can you please speak to your child about this incident and support them in how to deal with this kind of behaviour if they come across it? Whilst I feel this may not be widespread, it yet again highlights how vigilant we all need to be when it comes to giving such powerful technology to children who do not fully appreciate the implications of their actions. I urge you to check and re-check your child's online activity and have regular conversations with them about what they are viewing and who they are messaging.

Like most social media platforms, there is an age restriction - [click here](#) for more details. For example, WhatsApp is 16+ and TikTok requires its users to be at least 13 years old. It is worth noting there is no robust age verification in place. However, the school position remains clear: the age restriction is 13+ and above for a reason, as children younger than this do not have the maturity to be using it safely – also they are in breach of the terms and conditions of the user agreement. If we find out the Apps are being misused, we will report it to the social media company. Equally, if any laws are being broken we have a duty to pass the content onto the police and/or contact Social Care if this is deemed a safeguarding issue.

Whilst social media networking can be a wonderful tool, there are times when it may be misused. If parents have anything they feel we ought to know about in school then please do let us know. Equally if you see any inappropriate material about pupils or school in general please let us know so we have the ability to respond in the correct manner.

If there are issues between pupils or parents or you have any concerns about online safeguarding please speak to us at school as we may be able to help resolve them. We are experienced in dealing with these matters and can invariably 'nip things in the bud' before they escalate out of control.

Finally, the school website contains a list of top tips for children. You can find out more about '[Online Safety](#)' by [clicking here](#).

Yours faithfully,

Adrian Nash

Adrian Nash
Head Teacher

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