



Friday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

We have had a quite a few messages from parents about the use of social media and WhatsApp groups being used by our year 3/4 pupils. These groups become platforms for unpleasant comments, which in turn, spill into the school day even before it has begun and continue after the end of the school day.

We are currently spending time, which could be better spent on teaching and learning activities, sorting out such problems.

The legal age any child should have an account on WhatsApp is 16 (this changed from 13 in January 2022). Pupils are maybe using parents accounts to create groups and then engage in chat.

Parents are able to monitor this if they check regularly and if the messages are not deleted. We would like to respectfully ask parents to:

- Consider allowing their child no access to Whatsapp/Facebook etc at all even if they are accessing an adult account
- Checking more regularly and being aware that chats are often deleted so the full picture is not seen as different children are in different chats so parents may not see all of the comments.

We are continuing to work with the pupils in their e-safety lessons around appropriate online behaviour and encouraging children to talk about how things affect them.

As a duty of care, we will investigate and inform you of any inappropriate use of social media that is reported to us. This also means that we might have to report any underage usage straight to the company, citing the accounts being used for minors and attaching the screenshots of inappropriate comments, soundbites and pictures sent.

There are useful resources on our school website around staying safe online. This can be found by clicking <https://www.leenmillsprimary.co.uk/childrens-area/internet-safety/>

Thank you for your support with this.

Yours,

Mrs Goldson