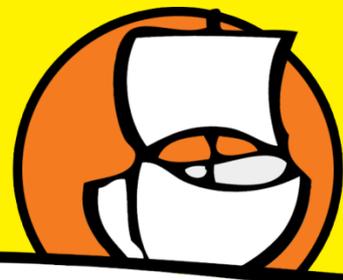


Penpol School

2 St George's Road, Hayle, Cornwall, TR27 4AH



Dear Parents/Carers,

I wanted to bring to your attention a number of concerns that have been raised regarding the use of social media apps at home.

Many of our older children are using **Whatsapp**, designed for users aged 16 and over, to communicate with their peers. Whilst the app in itself can seem harmless enough, it can easily provide a platform for inappropriate and sometimes harmful behaviours to take place.

We are also speaking with a lot of pupils using **TikTok**, aimed at users 13 and over. This app, originally known as musical.ly, provides users with access to other users' videos which often include inappropriate or graphic content. Whilst there is a child-friendly mode, this can easily be overridden with a simple change of birth date, leaving the user vulnerable to exposure to harmful videos.

One of the reasons that these apps are not aimed at children of primary age is because these pupils are not always ready to conduct themselves safely, kindly and legally online without close supervision. In some of the instances we have been exploring at school, children have used images of peers without their consent. In others, pupils have sent unkind or explicit messages to groups of peers. These kinds of behaviours can be catastrophic for the mental health of those affected.

We regularly discuss with the children the importance of being 'Internet Kind' in all of our online activity. Further information about this can be found here: https://beinternetawesome.withgoogle.com/en_uk. We also remind our pupils that, whilst they may be the technology experts at home, you are the safety experts. Therefore, Regular and open conversations about your child's internet use are a vital part of keeping them safe.

We strongly recommend that your child removes themselves permanently from any groups causing any concern and, where possible, avoids using these apps altogether.

If you have any questions about this at all or would appreciate further advice, please do not hesitate to get in touch. We will be hosting some more E-safety parent workshops after Easter – look out for information coming your way soon.

Very best wishes,

Chris Chislett

Headteacher

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