



Plumcroft Primary School

Plum Lane Campus

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Headteacher: Mr Richard Slade

Deputy Headteacher: Mrs Annette Graney

11th March 2020

Dear Parents & Carers

Sadly, I've had to exclude a Year 6 child for writing some horrible things about another child on a WhatsApp group chat. This is a severe form of bullying and will not be tolerated.

Despite it being illegal for any child under the age of 13 to actually have a WhatsApp, Facebook, TikTok, Instagram or almost any other social media account, I'm aware that many parents have allowed their children to create accounts. It would also seem that some parents are completely unaware of how their children are using mobile phones and the internet or what online accounts they have created. I have spoken to all children in Year 6 today and made it very clear that any further inappropriate language or comments will be dealt with in a very straightforward way. This also applies to all other year groups. It will start with an immediate 3-day fixed term exclusion and could ultimately lead to a permanent exclusion.

What is particularly upsetting is that there are many other Year 6 children who are part of the various group chats and rather than challenge horrible comments, many simply join in. I would ask that all parents review their child's use of a mobile phone, ipad, tablet or PC and implement appropriate controls to prevent adult content and restrict use to normal waking hours. We're finding that children are on TikTok and other social media at 2am in the morning and other inappropriate times. This means their sleep patterns are severely disturbed and this will negatively affect their physical and emotional well-being. It will also make it more difficult for them to learn at school and interact normally with others.

As a parent of 4 boys who are all now teenagers or older, I've been through the whole process of educating, monitoring and restricting use of social media and the internet. I even got to the point of literally throwing my youngest son's PS4 out of his bedroom window when Fortnite was taking over his world !!! I know how difficult it is to keep ahead of things in the virtual world but we have a duty to help our children navigate it all in a safe, open and thoughtful way. It's our duty as parents to sometimes simply say 'No' and then hold our nerve. Our child might be annoyed at us for a while but they do actually appreciate having guidance and limits (even if they will never quite admit it).

If you are struggling to keep up with your children when it comes to the internet and mobile phones then feel free to contact me and I'll be happy to talk it through with you and your child so we can agree a productive way forward that helps...

Yours sincerely,

Richard Slade
Headteacher

