



Friday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are writing to you regarding keeping your child safe online and the use of WhatsApp within Year 6.

Firstly, we have been made aware today of a child's phone having potentially been hacked and used to send inappropriate messages to other children. This has been referred to the police. What they have advised me to tell you as parents is to:

- Be aware of what your child is doing online.
- Check their messages and WhatsApp regularly.
- Teach them not to open any links or attachments from numbers they do not know as this is quite often how hackers get into other people's phones.
- Do not answer numbers that are withheld, unknown, from overseas or begin with 09.
- If you are concerned a child's phone has been hacked, take it back to the provider (EE, Vodafone etc) and ask them to carry out an antivirus spyware check. They should be able to change your child's number for free, if it has been compromised.

You can check if a number is from a potential unsafe source by visiting [www.who-called.co.uk](http://www.who-called.co.uk) and you can also visit the Anti Fraud website which will give you information about keeping your child safe online.

Alongside this, we are aware that groups of children have been setting up chats and using them to discuss members of the class, sometimes unkindly. In some cases, the children use blocking and unblocking as a way of upsetting individual children. The amount of messages of an inappropriate nature means that we have recorded the incidents as online bullying.

The whole of Year 6 have been spoken to by both Miss Price and myself. The seriousness of these actions has been made very clear. We are now asking you as parents to ensure that suitable parental controls and checks are in place on your children's devices including mobile phones. WhatsApp has a minimum user age of 16 although we are fully aware that younger children use it. Please make sure you know what your child is doing online and when on their phone.

As a school we ensure that internet safety is taught annually at an age appropriate level. The children are regularly reminded that they should be speaking to an adult if they see or hear anything which worries them or they know is wrong when online. We would really appreciate your support in providing an environment for our children that enables them to stay safe and ensures that their own behaviour is acceptable when online.

**Address** Nicholsfield, Loxwood,  
West Sussex RH14 0SR  
**Telephone** 01403 752207  
**Email** [messages@loxwoodschool.com](mailto:messages@loxwoodschool.com)  
**Headteacher** Miss F Dowley

Accreditations:





We have put some links below which have lots of helpful online safety advice. Please do come and see us if you have any queries or concerns – we want to ensure all of our children feel safe both in school and online.

<https://www.internetmatters.org/>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/our-services/working-with-schools>

<https://www.childnet.com/help-and-advice/parents-and-carers>

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-safety-online-a-practical-guide-for-parents-and-carers/child-safety-online-a-practical-guide-for-parents-and-carers-whose-children-are-using-social-media>

Kind regards

Fi Dowley  
Headteacher