9th September 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

Our Year 8 scholars have made an excellent start to this academic year. However, I wanted to clarify some of our expectations for Year 8, particularly regarding the use of mobile phones and social media messaging apps.

Specifically, I am writing to inform you of some very serious concerns I have regarding the use of WhatsApp with our Year 8 cohort. Indeed, it has been brought to my attention that there are still a few students using Whatsapp when they should not be. Not all of the students have engaged and adhered to my previous letter last year where they deleted the app. Could I please request that you check your child’s phone regularly, particularly any group chats. The minimum age of use for WhatsApp in the UK is 16 years old and I have included a website link here that gives more information about the use of WhatsApp: [About the minimum age to use WhatsApp | WhatsApp Help Center](https://faq.whatsapp.com/452849394320901)

[Is WhatsApp safe for my child? | NSPCC](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/online-safety-blog/2023-01-12-is-whatsapp-safe-for-my-child/)

The year group have been spoken to as a collective regarding the use of WhatsApp and have also had a general reminder surrounding phone use following an update in our Mobile Phone Policy. A link to our school polices be found here: [Mobile Phone Policy](https://www.beths.bexley.sch.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=5155&type=pdf).

Additionally, I wanted to bring to your attention that over the summer we have had a few students using online gaming inappropriately. This is a gentle reminder to ensure parent controls are active on all devices your child owns including mobile phones. Please check regularly how your young person is using online and who they are ‘chatting’ to online. If they do not know the person online or have a concern someone is pretending to be someone else, you must report immediately to police if you have a concern. Online is increasingly becoming more dangerous for us all, especially our young people. It is vital we are working together to ensure the safety of our young people. Please remember that all mobile phone usage should be monitored by the bill-payer, and as such we ask that you ensure that you take an active role in supporting your scholar in how they use their mobile device.

We at Beths have and will continue to educate Scholars on the dangers of online and how to be safe whilst using it.

If you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to me directly msmonteith@beths.bexley.sch.uk

Yours faithfully,



**Miss G C Monteith**

**Head of Year 8**