

5th June 2020

Dear Parents / Carers,

Group Chats and Social Media

Group chats can be a great way for a number of students to stay in touch during lockdown. Like everything online, group chats can be used in ways that are both helpful and harmful. This letter considers some of the harmful aspects of group chats that can lead to nasty behaviours, exclusion, bullying and how to guard against them.

Firstly, treat the online world just as you would any other aspect of your child's life. Set limits and know what they are doing online. This means talking to them and getting them to show you what 'conversations' they are involved in online.

Encourage them to apply the following principles to their use of social media and group chats:

- Keep group chats positive, supportive and helpful
- No name calling, abuse (some of which can be vile), arguments, rumours or whinging about someone else
- Remember the contents of the chat can be shared with people outside of the group
- Leave a chat if they (student) feel uncomfortable
- Nasty or inappropriate behaviour is cyber bullying

Students in years 7 and 8 are particularly vulnerable to unpleasant behaviour in group chats, and a number of incidents have been recently reported to the school.

This web page <https://www.net-aware.org.uk/> from the NSPCC provides links to privacy and parental settings for a number of social media apps, as does this site www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/

If you have any concerns or questions, please do contact the Academy using parents@holbrookacademy.org

Yours sincerely,

Mr A Clarke
E-safety Lead

Mr G Anstee-Parry
Assistant Headteacher / SENCO