



**Bickley Primary School**  
Nightingale Lane, Bromley BR1 2SQ

*All Different, All Equal, All Achieve*



Headteacher: Ms Elizabeth Blake BEd (Hons) NPQH  
Deputy Headteacher: Mrs Cara Moon BEd (Hons)

Telephone: 0208 460 6790  
Email: [admin.office@bickley.bromley.sch.uk](mailto:admin.office@bickley.bromley.sch.uk)

22<sup>nd</sup> March 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

### WhatsApp

Please can I remind you once again that the minimum age of use for WhatsApp is 16 years old. There are many reasons for this.

Although we talk constantly to children about being kind to each other, we all know that children are – sadly – sometimes unkind. We continue to work hard to make sure that any incidents of unkindness are few and far between in school, and if they are brought to our attention, we deal with them promptly. We give children strategies to respond to unkindness by telling them to say ‘please don’t say / do that – it’s unkind’ and to tell a member of staff if they need to, so that they can support them.

However, children of Primary School age often don’t think of the impact that unkind messages online can have. We talk to children regularly about the difference between looking at a written message over and over again, knowing that everyone else on the group has seen it, compared with hearing something said to you once. We talk to children about not pressing ‘send’ for any message that they wouldn’t want to receive themselves. However, unkind messages are still sometimes sent once children are at home.

As adults, we know the impact of feeling left out of a group, or reading messages that we don’t like. Children who are in Primary School will find this very difficult to handle. It is an additional pressure for them growing up in a stressful world, and one that they don’t need.

There are two ways to stop this happening:

- 1) Stop children from being unkind in the first place. This is something we will never stop trying to do. However, when children are at home, they are their parents’ responsibility – not ours. We will continue to alert pupils to the potential dangers of social media and how they should behave when on it, but we cannot monitor what they do at home. Only you can do this.
- 2) Don’t let your child use WhatsApp or other social media messaging sites until they are older and more emotionally mature. This is obviously your decision – you will know when your child is ready to use WhatsApp. If you think they are, please monitor their use closely.

As with all social media, caution is advised over your child’s digital footprint, particularly the content (photos, videos and messages) they choose to share via WhatsApp. Once shared, it can be copied, re shared and posted anywhere online.

Some schools refuse to follow up on any online unkindness that happens after school. We will continue to reinforce online safety education for the children, but would really appreciate your support in monitoring what your child does online, and to tackle any unkindness you may find with your child.

Many thanks for your support.



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