

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School

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Dear KS2 Parents and Carers

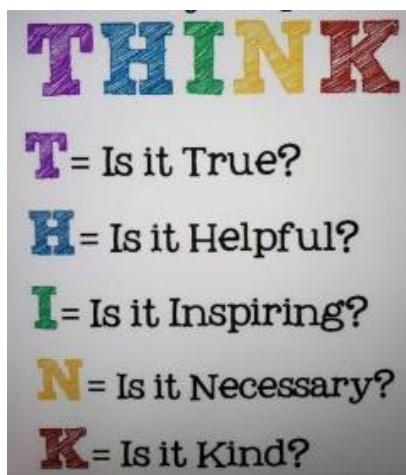
As you know, we take the issue of internet safety very seriously and talk about it regularly in school. I am writing to you today about recent concerns on this subject, and in response to several conversations with parents on the matter.

The issues raised are specifically related to Whatsapp, TikTok and Roblox.

Whatsapp: The minimum age for using WhatsApp is 16 years old. It had previously dropped to 13 years old but in April 2018 returned to 16, as a response to data-protection legislation.

Whatsapp can be a useful tool for families and friends, but it can also be problematic! Anyone can be added to the groups in which your child participates, even if they are not included in their own contacts. Everyone in the group can see every message and unkind messages or comments can thus be perpetuated.

We have been discussing how we need to **THINK** before we speak to one another, and before we post messages on social media, either to one person or to a group.



When message posted are not **true, helpful, inspiring, necessary and kind**, issues arising often spill over into school, and I am aware that they also sometimes spill over into direct communications between parents.

Chair of The Board of Directors: Mr Paul Concannon

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Please can I request that you support the social, emotional and mental wellbeing of your child by modelling for them the most appropriate use of social media platforms such as Whatsapp? Please help them to understand that we all need to be mindful of both the content and language which we post, and the impact that it may have on those who see it. If you can show them how you **THINK** when messaging others, or indeed speaking to them, then your child will follow your lead. Please also check your child's phone regularly to monitor the messages which they are both sending and receiving.

Tiktok: Tiktok requires participants to be at least 13-years old. If you have permitted your child to access TikTok, please check that their account settings ensure the maximum privacy possible. Details of how to do this can be found here.

<https://parentzone.org.uk/article/tiktok-everything-you-need-know-about-video-production-app>

Roblox: Some children talked about playing this on-line with people they do not know. We have reminded them that people who try to befriend others on-line are not always who they seem to be. We would ask you to check your child's account to see who they are contacting through Roblox and monitor this regularly. Please ensure that parental controls are in place.

If your child is gaming on-line, please listen in regularly to see what is being said, and who they are playing with. If you would like further advice about managing your child's access to social media and on-line gaming for these, and other apps such as *Fortnite*, you may find the following websites useful:

<https://parentzone.org.uk/advice/parent-guides> (includes advice for parents on social media and on-line gaming)

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/staying-safe-online/>

<https://medium.com/kidsnclicks>

If you are concerned for the on-line safety of any child, please contact me directly, or Mrs Doda or Mrs Skerchly, as we are the Designated Safeguarding Leads for the school.

Thank you for your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Mrs M-C Hardie
Headteacher

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