

King Edwin Primary School

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Thursday 22nd January 2026

ONLINE SAFETY

**Do your children actually need these Apps?
How safely are they negotiating the online world?**

Dear Parents Carers,

Online Safety is such an important part of keeping children safe at our school and whilst we feel we are reasonably successful at teaching our KingEdwinners about the positive and negative elements of new digital technology, **we do have significant concerns about recent growing trends that we are observing with our young KingEdwinners.**

Obviously, children can accidentally be exposed to unwanted or unpleasant content or comments online. We are all faced by issues surrounding peer pressure; ease of access to devices and of course; the very fact that children are learning and will naturally make mistakes as they explore the digital world.

Recently we have established a growing concern around inappropriate use of social media. We feel it is our responsibility to draw attention to these concerns and ask all parents to be much more aware of the issues children are faced with.

Many of you will know that I am quite an open, honest and frank person and I am afraid that on this occasion, I am going to have to 'say it how it is' in order to get this very clear message across to our parents.

Put simply, our children are being exposed to Apps that they are not legally supposed to be accessing and that they may not be mature enough to use safely and appropriately.

Many of the issues that have been brought to our attention recently involve the use of:



WhatsApp – an instant messaging app. **13 or older**

TikTok – a social media app that lets you watch, create and share videos. **13 or older**

Facebook - Facebook is an online social media platform that has over 2 billion users. **13 or older**

Facebook Messenger - Facebook Messenger is a communication and chat application which is part of the wider Facebook platform as well as a standalone app. **13 or older**

Snapchat - an instant messaging app. **13 or older**

Instagram - a photo and video sharing social network. **13 or older**

Discord- a community social network. **13 or older**



WOODLAND
TRUST



Children across school are often creating 'groups' whilst on these App' of which others are joining and they are consistently 'misusing' the Apps, which is flowing back into school , creating further unnecessary issues.

These occurrences and reported incidents of misuse of social media sites **happen at home, after school hours**. With this in mind, and in response to concerned parents, we feel it important to point out the risks of unregulated use of such sites and Apps.

This will allow you to make informed decisions as to **whether to allow your child to have a profile or not** and when and how to monitor their use, particularly in the evenings. We **strongly advise** a device free bedroom policy after bedtime to allow for uninterrupted sleep and rest.

The use of social media occurs outside of school but any negative repercussions often impacts the children in school and it's usually me that ends up resolving issues , not the parents. This should not be the case when we are not promoting the use of these Apps.

The risks are real and we are not exaggerating the issues experienced in our community. **Without wishing to scare parents, there have been incidents of grooming, abuse, bullying, accidental observation of inappropriate material, sexting and other concerns of a serious nature (sometimes with police involvement).**

We want all of our KEPS families to work together on this particular matter. We value your support and we will continue to make online safety a key priority through lessons, assemblies and other avenues. We aim to provide children with an awareness and knowledge so they can respond appropriately to any dangerous activity, bullying or unlawful cyber behaviour.

In response to the recent concerns we have we have attached the age restrictions for different media platforms for your information - <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/social-media/>

As a school, we also publish many weekly links on our own social media pages from NOS (National Online Safety), an organisation that we subscribe to in order to help deliver the essential messages to children and families in our community.



As a parent myself, I can strongly recommend that all KEPS parents download the free NOS **WakeUpWednesday** Mobile App. Children are spending more time than ever online. As adults, we need to do everything we can to keep them safe in the digital world. But with new apps, games and platforms emerging daily, how can you stay in the know?

The **WakeUpWednesday** mobile application is created by experts and has all the online safety knowledge available at your fingertips, empowering parents and teachers to understand and address online safeguarding risks – anytime, anywhere. It is described as the world's most comprehensive online safety app, packed with insightful courses, explainer videos, webinars and guides on topics that will help you protect the kids you care about when they're online.



[#WakeUpWednesday – Apps on Google Play](#)

[#WakeUpWednesday on the App Store](#)

Kind regards,
Mr Callaghan-Wetton

