



Tuesday 05 September 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

Important Online Safety Alert: WhatsApp 'Add Everyone' Group Scam

I am writing to make you aware of a concerning online safety issue that has been reported to schools across the country, involving WhatsApp groups.

What is happening?

Children are being added to WhatsApp groups without their consent by strangers. Once added, they may be:

- Exposed to inappropriate or harmful content
- Contacted by people they don't know
- Targeted for exploitation or scams
- Pressured to share personal information or images

This is often done through a feature that allows anyone to add phone numbers to groups, particularly if privacy settings are not properly configured.

What you can do to protect your child

We strongly recommend that you take the following steps with your child:

1. Check privacy settings together

- Open WhatsApp > Settings > Privacy > Groups
- Change the setting to 'My Contacts' or 'My Contacts Except...' rather than 'Everyone'
- This prevents strangers from adding your child to groups

2. Talk about what to do if added to an unknown group

- Leave the group immediately
- Don't respond to any messages or engage with anyone in the group
- Take a screenshot if possible (without sharing any content)
- Tell a trusted adult straight away
- Block and report any suspicious contacts



3. Review who can see their information

- Check settings for profile photo, about, status and last seen
- Consider limiting these to 'My Contacts' only

4. Have an open conversation

- Make sure your child knows they can talk to you if something online makes them uncomfortable
- Reassure them they won't be in trouble for reporting concerns
- Discuss the importance of not sharing personal information online

Important reminder about age restrictions

WhatsApp's minimum age requirement is **13 years old**. If your child is using WhatsApp and is under this age, we encourage you to consider whether this is appropriate and to ensure you have appropriate parental controls and oversight in place.

What we're doing at school

We are:

- Updating our online safety lessons to include messaging app safety
- Making sure all staff are aware of this issue
- Reminding children about how to stay safe online and who to speak to if they have concerns

If your child has been affected

If your child has been added to a suspicious group or has been contacted inappropriately:

- Report it to the CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command) at www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre
- Contact us at school so we can provide support
- Consider reporting to WhatsApp directly through the app

Further information and support

For more guidance on keeping your child safe online, please visit:

- UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk
- NSPCC Online Safety: www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety
- Internet Matters: www.internetmatters.org

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact a member of our DSL Team (Mrs Hawkins, Mrs Margerison, Mr Smith) or your child's class teacher:

- DSL's – safeguarding@highwycombecombined.bucks.sch.uk
- **Class teachers**
- EYFS – Reception EYFSPHASE@highwycombecombined.bucks.sch.uk
- KS1 – Year 1 and Year 2 KS1Phase@highwycombecombined.bucks.sch.uk
- LKS2 – Year 3 and Year 4 LKS2Phase@highwycombecombined.bucks.sch.uk
- UKS2 – Year 5 and Year 6 UKS2Phase@highwycombecombined.bucks.sch.uk



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Thank you for your support in keeping our children safe online.

Yours sincerely



Celine Hawkins
Headteacher

