

Newchurch Community Primary School
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Headteacher: Mrs J Narraway

15th January 2025

Dear Parents/Carer,

As you know we take our safeguarding duties very seriously at Newchurch and therefore we need to make you aware of some incidents that are occurring locally, and indeed within our community.

Attempted Abduction

You may or may not be aware of the incident yesterday whereby there was an attempted abduction of an 11 year old child on the way to school in the morning. Thankfully, the child was able to get away from the man and women who attempted to take her and the Police are dealing with the incident.

Whilst we do not wish to cause anxiety or alarm, and even though this incident happened in Irlam, it would be foolish not to be concerned for the safety of the children at Newchurch. We recognise that some children walk to school and just wanted to alert you to the incident in case you had not become aware of it. You may wish to think about systems to ensure that your child reaches school safely each morning if they are walking alone.

Please be assured that we will always contact you should your child not arrive at school and we have not heard from you either by phone or email.



WhatsApp and Snapchat

We have been made aware of a WhatsApp group titled 'Add people'. The group contains hundreds of children and young people and has very inappropriate content such as naked images of AI adults. It is believed that children as young as 7 years old are being added to this group, and as the title suggests the aim is to add as many other children as possible to the group.

We urge that you please check your child's phones for this group and generally monitor their social media usage and talk to them about what to do should they receive such a message. We believe that



this spans across the whole town, and potentially the whole country, so we also wanted to make you aware so you can protect your child. We have been informed that this has also been reported to the Police. Should you find that your child has experienced this, we urge you to report this to CEOP - <https://www.ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre/> and the local Police via 111.

We have also been made aware of similar incidents on Snapchat where children are being requested to send inappropriate images of themselves following being added to the social media platform without their consent.

Keeping your child safe

In September, we communicated our concerns that some children are making use of platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook and Snap Chat to communicate with one another – in some cases inappropriately. Whilst such platforms are great for keeping connections between people, they can create a safeguarding issue for children and as a school we are requesting that you support us in keeping your child safe when online.

The current age requirement for WhatsApp is 16+ although it had previously been 13. This was changed due to new data protection legislation enacted in Europe (GDPR) - this is because of some of the information WhatsApp will collect about users such as phone number and information on what device you are using.

The school educate the children on the dangers of such platforms and the age restrictions of them but we are sure you can appreciate that the school cannot enforce that they do not use them, particularly if parents are condoning them. Therefore, it is the responsibility of parents and carers to ensure they safeguard their children by adhering to the age restrictions and the older children understanding that they may now be of an age where they can be prosecuted for inappropriate use of such platforms. Should you require any guidance on keeping your child safe online, we would recommend the following website: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

Just in case you are not aware of the age restrictions, please see the image below which outlines what they are. It is clear that no children of primary school age should be accessing such platforms.



Should you require any further guidance and support, please do not hesitate to contact either myself, Mr Duckett or Mrs Sizer.

Yours sincerely,

Jayne Narraway

Headteacher

