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Dear Parents/Carers,

Social media use outside of school

We are writing to advise you of a few concerns that we have regarding children's use of social media outside of school during evenings and weekends. There are several large groups of year 5 and 6 pupils using social media inappropriately over platforms such as Snapchat and WhatsApp.

Unfortunately, these platforms can create conflict between children. It can lead to some children feeling isolated and uncomfortable around comments made on the platform between groups of children.

Most social media apps are for pupils 13 years and over. Snapchat has an age recommendation of 13 years and WhatsApp 16 years. If you do allow your child to access social media platforms, we ask for your vigilance. Just like their interactions in person, online interactions require supervision and support. What is right will vary from family to family but some strategies that are known to be successful include:

- monitoring their phones for the apps that are downloaded
- enacting parental controls on phones and consoles
- reviewing the messages they send on platforms and apps – making monitoring part of a daily or weekly routine
- setting expectations about what space (preferably communal) and times they have access to devices
- encouraging them to share or discuss with you what they are doing.

Whilst we appreciate the benefits (and prevalence) of these forms of communication, we are seeing an increased number of issues arising in school as a result of these social media groups. Therefore, we would appreciate your help and support in keeping our children safe and happy.

Additional work in school will be completed with year 5 and 6 pupils on 'How to keep safe' when using social media. Please visit <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/social-media/> if you require further information on 'How to keep your child safe' whilst they are on the internet. We have also attached a copy of 'Child Safety Online: A practical guide for parents and carers whose children are using social media' - which you may also find helpful.

Thank you for your continued support,

Miss S Cartwright
Assistant Head
Leominster Primary School

