

WELCOME TO OUR PARENT SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER

MEET THE SAFEGUARDING TEAM



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Safeguarding links

- Catmose Primary Child Protection Policy - <http://www.catmoseprimary.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Primary-Pupil-Child-Protection-Policy-September-2025-2.pdf>
- Rutland and District Schools' Federation Safeguarding Policy - <https://www.rutlandfederation.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Federation-Student-Safeguarding-Policy-September-2025-2-.pdf>

GROUP CHAT CONCERNS

One of the most frequent concerns we face at Catmose Primary involve issues with group chats via Snapchat and WhatsApp.

While we know that group chats present opportunities to chat, keep in touch with friends and to make plans, we also know that for many pupils group chats are also avenues for bullying, image sharing, isolating people and starting upsetting rumours.

We often have multiple conversations with students about staying safe online and what to do if they are worried. Here is what we say:

- Only accept friends you know in real life, that you have met and you can explain how/where you met.
- Be prepared for chats to go public rather than remain private. Chats can be captured in the form of screenshots and quickly sent to others.
- Leave a chat that has become unhelpful, upsetting or worrying.
- Block and delete contacts. This function is available for a reason and is helpful for keeping people safe.
- Do not share personal information, telephone numbers, email address or screennames with people you do not know. You wouldn't give your personal information to a stranger on the street, group chats are no different if you do not know who people are.
- You are responsible for your own behaviour in group chats. You can be influenced or encouraged by others to behave a certain way but what you do is a choice made by you.

Think about the reasons that you want to be in the group chat. Is the chat fun, enjoyable and safe or are you in the group because you are worried about being left out, losing friends or becoming isolated?



For parents:

- Please regularly check phones including apps such as WhatsApp, Tik Tok and Snapchat.
- Images sent in chats may also be found in the camera roll of individual devices – just because something is deleted from a chat does not mean it is removed from the device altogether.
- Disable apps that you do not understand, which are difficult to navigate or that have options to connect to strangers.
- Place time restrictions on devices to encourage responsible use. For example, specific time allowances for social media platforms or websites. Encourage alternative ways of managing day to day tasks without the use of phones. For example, an alarm clock rather than a phone alarm.
- Utilise parental controls and remote access. For more information, please visit: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/parental-controls/>
- Encourage real world social time and experiences.

Social media and group chats are just one aspect of the online world that we access via our phones and devices. It can be helpful to think honestly about the amount of time children are on devices and how this influences their experiences of the world around them.

Online dangers continue to be prevalent and are not just presented by unknown adults who befriend, groom and exploit children and young people. Young adults and even children themselves can inadvertently facilitate risks online.

The most beneficial steps we can take are working together to have conversations about online lives, parents regularly and carefully check their child's devices and apply parental controls.

