ONLINE SAFETY

Children feel enormous pressure online
Ofcom research found:
70% of children using social media or messaging apps feel pressure to be popular online at least sometimes.
33% feel this pressure all or most of the time.

WhatsApp Groups

This pressure often appears as:
Being included or excluded from chats.
Fear of missing out (FOMO).
Pressure to respond instantly.
Anxiety about what others are saying when they're offline.

Things reported to School

- Children removed from group chats.
- New groups created to exclude specific children.
- Mean comments made late at night.
- Screenshots shared around friendship groups.
- Pressure to join conversations they don't understand.
- Exposure to inappropriate language.
- Arguments that begin online and continue in school.
- Anxiety about checking phones.
- Children losing sleep because of notifications.

We encourage all parents and carers to:

- Regularly monitor their child's online activity and messages.
- Check age ratings before allowing access to apps and platforms.
- Ensure privacy and safety settings are enabled.
- Encourage children to speak openly about any online concerns.
- Report and remove inappropriate content where necessary.

TikTok

WhatsApp - 13+
TikTok - 13+
Instagram - 13+
Snapchat - 13+
Facebook - 13+
YouTube - 13+ to hold an account (supervised viewing options are available for younger children)

For a child, being deliberately excluded from a friendship group can feel as painful as a physical injury.

When we give children access to group chats, we are giving them access to friendship dynamics that many adults find difficult to manage.