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Mobile phones - a great way for children and young people to stay connected, especially as they begin a new school year.

However, issues may arise if they share their mobile phone number with other pupils in their new school year group, as they perhaps join 'WhatsApp' group chats.

This can lead to their mobile phone number being additionally shared, perhaps without their permission, and in other social media group chats.

The reality of this is that they may not all know each other. They will all have various levels of online awareness. They will most likely be seeing messages, images and even video footage shared in the group which you, as a parent or carer, would not like them to see but which is out with your control.

This situation can be difficult to manage and could be distressing in relation to what is read or seen.

[Learn about inappropriate content online | Internet Matters](#)

Coupled to this, peer pressure could lead to bullying.

[Cyberbullying facts and advice | Internet Matters'](#)

WhatsApp is one of the most used messaging Apps allowing users to send instant messages to contacts within their WhatsApp group.

Only users who have a WhatsApp account can send and receive messages through the app. Messages can be sent 'one to one' or within a 'group conversation' and for all messages sent, WhatsApp sends "read receipts" letting the sender know if the message was **delivered, read or seen.**

These settings can be changed by the user - see the 'how to guide for parents' link below for more information on this.

In relation to a group chat on any social media platform, you have no control what will be sent, seen or shared so, it is worthwhile having that awareness and having a conversation with your child or young person, so they understand they might see and read things which could be distressing.



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The following link to the Parent Club, from our partners at the Scottish Government, provides insight for parents and carers of children from ages of toddlers to Pre-teen and teenager year groups.

[Online Behaviour & Safety | Parent Club](#)

We understand peer pressure or other forms of coercion can lead to people of any age doing something they otherwise would not do, online or offline, so this awareness, especially during your child or young person's early years is particularly important.

Our partners at Internet Matters have created information resources below to inform you of how the social media platform "WhatsApp" operates, and awareness on the app's security features and settings.

[WhatsApp safety: a how to guide for parents - Internet Matters](#)

[Guide to monitoring apps for parents | Internet Matters](#)

[Social media advice hub | Internet Matters](#)

If you have been a victim of crime, and it is not an ongoing emergency, you can report this to Police Scotland on 101.

Police Scotland Cybercrime Harm Prevention Team

All information correct at time of distribution.

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