

23rd June 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

The 'W' App

I am writing to inform you about an online app that we have become aware of being used by children across our schools.

The 'W' App (please see the app icon below) allows users to set up anonymous polls about any topic they like and allow people to vote on this. Whilst the content of this app is nothing new, we are concerned about the 'data farming' that is undertaken by signing up to this app. As part of our duty to safeguard your child/children, we need to inform you of the risks posed to your child, and others through the use of this app.

During the sign up phase, the app presents their terms and conditions in German, with no way of translating to any other language so that it is possible for the user to see what they are agreeing to. This is important, as without this, there is no way for the user to understand how the data they are providing the app with, will be used. This highlights several significant concerns for us to make you aware of:

1. The app collects the user's full name and school that they attend. By providing this information, your child will have unknowingly provided two key pieces of information about themselves that make them/you easily identifiable and a potential target for scams and fraudulent activities.
2. The app requests permission to provide access to your child's phone information and contacts that are held in their phone. This allows the app to use the details of other people in your child's contact list who have not signed up to the app. They are then contacted and asked to join the app with a personal invite.
3. The anonymous polls are not monitored by the app and can encourage unkind behaviour and cyberbullying incidents, which can escalate and cause distress. We wish to deter our young people from involving themselves in such incidents.

We urge you to check your child's device(s) for this app and have a conversation with them about the wider risks and concerns it poses. For the reasons outlined above, we recommend that if your child has this app on their phone/electronic device that you delete it immediately.



The W App logo

If you have any questions regarding this matter please do not hesitate to contact your child's school directly.

Yours sincerely,

Adrian McLean

Trust Director of Personal Development, Wellbeing and Belonging