

18th September 2018

Internet Safety Update

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we begin another academic year I wanted to send an internet safety update. Each year our children hear all about how to keep themselves safe online during their computing lessons but as the digital world evolves before us we all need to be aware of how to keep our children safe online.

Social networking sites, games and apps allow our children to interact with each other, express themselves using video, photos, music and chat as well as creating and playing a wide range of games. Many websites and apps have age limitations and it is important that these are adhered to for the child's safety.

Most of us have heard of Facebook, Whats App and Instagram, but here are some sites and games to be aware of.

Live.ly & Musical.ly (age 13+)

An eight-day investigation by Channel 4 News revealed that children as young as nine are being and bombarded with sexually explicit messages on the social media app 'Musical.ly' and the streaming site 'Live.ly'. For more information see: <https://www.channel4.com/news/children-bombarded-with-sexually-explicit-chat-on-musical-ly-and-live-ly>

Blue Whale Challenge

The online game 'Blue Whale Challenge' from Russia could be heading to the UK. It is reported to involve people being set a series of tasks to complete over 50 days, some even involving self-harm and suicide. A number of teenagers have already taken their lives as result of this game. The following links provide more information but please be advised that you may find the content distressing:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4446556/Police-warn-Blue-Whalesuicide- game-heading-UK.html>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsbeat/article/39718654/police-issue-warning-aboutblue-whale-game-targeting-vulnerable-people>

Yellow (age 17+)

Yellow, is available to download on Apple and Andoid smartphones and it is growing in popularity among school-age teens who use it to chat and send pictures to friends and strangers. It has been described at the 'Tinder of Teens.' It allows people to connect with others based on their location and you can swipe to accept or decline talking to someone based on their profile picture. Getting onto the site is reportedly very easy, you only have to make up an age and there are no steps taken to verify this.

Snapchat (age 13+)

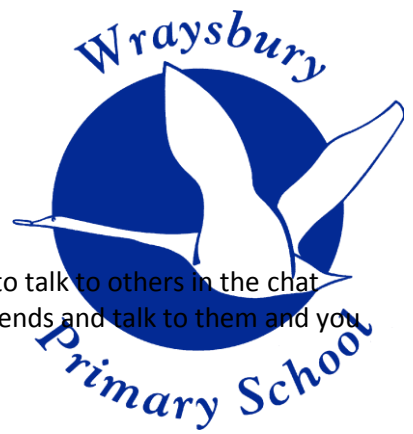
Snapchat have now launched 'Snap Maps' which gives users the ability to view a map showing the exact location of where you are and also their 'friends.' This is concerning as it is an automatic update for anyone who already has the app and could make their whereabouts known to strangers. If your child does have Snapchat then please monitor their friends list carefully as anyone on this list will be able to see their location. If you switch on 'Ghost Mode' then we have been advised that it should disable this facility. Snapchat Snap Map support

<https://support.snapchat.com/en-GB/article/about-snap-map2> and

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/Documents/Thinkuknow%20Parent%27s%20and%20carers%20%20guide%20to%20Snapchat.pdf>



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Movie Star Planet (age 4+)

'Movie Star Planet' is an online game where you can create a famous movie star character to talk to others in the chat room, play games and watch videos. It poses risks as it enables strangers to add them as friends and talk to them and you can't tell who you're really talking to and some people pretend to be people they are not.

Pokemon Go

Pokemon go has launched a new feature 'Pokemon Raids.' It is where 20 Pokemon Trainers meet up in one 'real life' location, to defeat more powerful Pokemon called Raid Bosses, in order to win rewards. This means that players who do not necessarily know each other and may not be the same age, will be brought together to battle.

Parents Guide to Pokemon Go <http://parentinfo.org/article/pok-mon-go-a-parents-guide>

Should you allow your child to have an online profile, then you can monitor it in a number of ways:

- Set up a profile of your own so you understand how the site works and get your child to accept you as a friend;
- Look at the parents' information section on each social media site you permit your child to use;
- Check your child's profile is set to private and that only their real-life friends can see any information they post;
- Monitor how your child communicates with others.
- Make sure your child knows how to report or block a user.

Please be aware that many sites and apps have age restrictions on them and use 'targeted' advertising and therefore your child could be exposed to adverts of a sexual nature, depending on the age they stated they were when they registered. If they pretended to be older, there is an increased risk that they will be exposed to age-inappropriate content and materials. Social media sites cannot and do not verify members, therefore, anyone can lie about who they really are. Underage users might be less likely to keep their identities private and being untruthful about their age can expose them to further risks regarding privacy settings and options. Photographs shared by users are NOT moderated, exposing children to inappropriate images and encouraging them to post their own.

The following websites provide more information on keeping children safe online:

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

www.net-aware.org.uk

www.getsafeonline.org

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/share-aware/>

Parents Guides to apps and social media sites - <http://parentzone.org.uk/advice/parent-guides>

Many thanks for your continued support,

Miss D Whitrod
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