



ST MARY'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

a Catholic Voluntary Academy

Newbold Road • Upper Newbold • Chesterfield • S41 8AG

Headteacher: Mrs M Dengate M.Phil

Telephone: 01246 201191

Email: enquiries@stmaryschesterfield.org.uk

www.st-maryshigh.derbyshire.sch.uk

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Dear Parents/Carers

Safeguarding Letter

Our school recognises our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all our pupils. Social media is now a well-established feature of our young peoples' lives. While it can be a force for good regarding friendships and accessing information, it can also put young people at risk. You will no doubt be aware of high profile cases about teenagers meeting strangers on social media sites with devastating outcomes. We are keen to help protect our students from unscrupulous people online and we offer practical advice via assemblies and ICT lessons, however, we would appreciate your support too:

- Please check that your child has the full security setting on all social media accounts and apps. This will ensure that only the friends that they accept can see their private information and updates.
- Make sure that they have checked the terms and conditions of different sites and apps to ensure that what they post is protected and safe.
- Talk to them about who they accept as friends and encourage them to go through their friends lists and delete anyone that they would not interact with face to face.
- It would also be helpful if you could have a quick check of what they are posting to ensure that the content is appropriate. Young people can be drawn in to unsavoury and unkind 'chats' about other pupils, which can then have repercussions in school. We constantly remind our pupils about maintaining our expectations of conduct in and out of school.
- We would also advise a social media 'blackout' for at least two hours each evening. By removing the distraction of a mobile phone or tablet, we believe that pupils will work more productively on homework tasks and revision. We appreciate that this will not be the most popular measure, but the outcome could make a real difference to your child's progress and achievement. We strongly suggest that this is put in place for students preparing for external examinations.
- Read through the two attachments from DCC that include an easy guide to the current Apps and an excellent *Online Safety 12 days of Christmas*.

Thank you as ever for all your support and if you have any concerns regarding your child's safety please do contact the key safeguarding staff in school as below.

Yours faithfully

Mrs M Dengate
Headteacher

Mrs S Cain
Deputy Headteacher

Miss H McKay
Senior Assistant Headteacher

Live, Love and Learn in the Light of Christ

Useful Websites

Internet Watch Foundation: www.iwf.org.uk

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre: www.ceop.gov.uk

Stop It Now! www.stopitnow.org.uk

Key Safeguarding Staff

Designated Senior Person for Safeguarding & Child Protection - Mrs S Cain

Designated Deputy Person for Safeguarding & Child Protection – Miss H McKay

Traci Good
THE ONLINE SAFETY HUB

What is it called

What does it look like?

<p>ROBLOX</p> <p>The self-proclaimed 'Imagination Platform'. Roblox allows its users to create their own or play millions of online games. It is available to download as an app on both Android and IOS. It has a chat facility.</p> <p>Age restriction; 7+</p>	
<p>MINECRAFT</p> <p>Set in infinitely-generated worlds of wide open terrain - icy mountains, swampy bayous, vast pastures and much more - filled with secrets, wonders and peril! Create your own worlds in Creative mode, or try to survive the monsters in Survival mode! You can also join other players in their created worlds and work together to defeat the monsters or create a beautiful world to live in.</p> <p>Age restriction; 7+</p>	
<p>INSTAGRAM</p> <p>A photo-based social media platform, which much like Facebook, you can share your memories with your friends, view their photos and interact on posts. Instagram profiles can be set to private, so that only your followers can see what you post. Live stream capabilities.</p> <p>Age restriction;; 13+</p>	
<p>SNAPCHAT</p> <p>A messaging application used to share photos, videos, text, and drawings. There is one feature that makes Snapchat different from other forms of texting and photo sharing: the messages disappear from the recipient's phone after a few seconds. There has been a lot of controversy surrounding snapchat and its now-infamous 'snap-maps' allowing users to see exactly where their friends are. Live stream capabilities</p> <p>Age restriction; 13+</p>	

GRAND THEFT AUTO / CALL OF DUTY

GTA and COD are very popular amongst young players, even though the both games feature graphic violence using guns, and actively encourage players to be as destructive as possible. GTA also features prostitutes, strip-clubs and 'secret' gang meetings.

Age restriction; 18+



FORTNITE

Pitting players against 99 others in a frantic fight for survival, where the last gamer standing is the winner. Its bright, cartoon-like graphics prevent it from descending into bloody violence, however many parents have reported children being highly addicted to the game, and becoming obsessed with the dances, add-ons and updates. Children can buy, and be gifted, skins (gaming enhancements).

Age restriction: 12+.



TWITCH

Twitch is an online live-streaming platform for gamers, where you can join your favourite twitch users and watch them play their favourite games, or live stream yourself playing your favourite games. Its free to use and free to stream, and millions of people use it everyday.

Twitch has a sign up age of 13, and you must have parental permission to use the app until you are 18.



DISCORD

Discord is a free voice, video and text chat app for teens and adults ages 13 and up. People use Discord to build private, invite-only groups. All conversations are opt-in, so anyone not interested in chatting can leave the group or block out certain people.



<p>TIK TOK</p> <p>TikTok is a free social media app that lets you watch, create, and share videos, mostly of lip-syncing to their favourite songs, but also for dancing, or even just talking. Tik Tok now has a feature where you can 'collaborate' with people on a song - these can be strangers that you may not have spoken to before. Live stream capabilities.</p> <p>Tik-Tok requires users to be 13+, but commonsensemedia.org recommends users to be 16+. Parental guidance is advised.</p>	
<p>YOUTUBE</p> <p>YouTube is a video sharing website, where users can post their own videos, or watch their favourite YouTube 'influencers'. Its free to use and offers a whole host of things to the users. Teens love YouTube especially as they can explore things they are interested in and find whole communities of people who share those same interests. You can watch YouTube from any age but should be 13+ to have an account. You can try Kids YouTube for under 8's. Live stream capabilities.</p>	
<p>OMEGLE</p> <p>Omegle is a website that allows you to chat with a random stranger via video or text (much like Skype, but you do not know who you are connecting with). Omegle is not suitable for young people. When you use Omegle you do not identify yourself through the service, you are just identified as 'stranger', however there are no moderations stopping you from sharing personal information.</p> <p>Age restriction: 13+</p>	

This is a general guide of some of the most popular apps that children and young people are currently using. This list is not exhaustive and changes regularly.

For further information about keeping children safe online please contact me directly. traci@onlinesafetyhub.co.uk

12 DAYS OF ONLINE SAFETY

Traci Good @ The Online Safety Hub



On the first day of Christmas, Online Safety gave to me; On the fourth day of Christmas, Online Safety gave to me;

PARENTAL CONTROLS - Parental controls can be used to block upsetting or harmful content and apps, control purchases and manage how long your child spends online. For more info on how to set up parental controls visit <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keepingchildren-safe/onlinOnlineSafety/parentalcontrols/>

On the second day of Christmas, Online Safety gave to me;

PEGI RATINGS FOR GAMES - Age ratings for games are extremely important for ensuring your child isn't exposed to violence, sex and drug use during gameplay. By making sure your child is either on or below the age rating given, you are only giving them access to appropriate content.

On the third day of Christmas, Online Safety gave to me;

DEVICE CHECKING - Along with using Parental Controls, regularly checking your Childs device for inappropriate google searches, adverts and messages between friends, you can sleep easy knowing your child is using the internet wisely.

NO TECH AT BEDTIME - Using Tech devices before bed will delay your body's internal clock and it will be more difficult to fall asleep.

On the fifth day of Christmas, Online Safety gave to me;

BEHAVIOUR GROUND RULES - if your child starts acting differently, is more grumpy or gets angry when they aren't allowed their devices, this is a good time to STOP, REMOVE the device, and work with them to find out the cause of the changes. about apps, games and social media.



On the sixth day of Christmas, Online Safety gave to me;

HELP AND ADVICE - Reaching out to a professional for help or doing some research on your own can help give you a better understanding of what you can do to be the best teacher for your child. There's tons of information on <https://www.net-aware.org.uk/> about apps, games and social media.

On the seventh day of Christmas, Online Safety gave to me;

LOOT BOX AWARENESS - Loot boxes are like treasure chests for in-game improvements. Often containing better (and rarer) armour, weapons and accessories. Most loot boxes cost anywhere from £1.50 to £100! More information can be found on <https://parentzone.org.uk/article/what-are-lootboxes>

On the eighth day of Christmas, Online Safety gave to me;

IN-APP PURCHASES — Many games and apps have an option to buy in-game coins, game expansions, character upgrades (and so much more!) to make your game play more fun and interesting, but if your child is using in-app purchases, you could find that they spent £100+ on the app without realising what they are doing. You can turn off in-app purchases using your parental controls.

On the ninth day of Christmas, Online Safety gave to me;

OVERSHARING ONLINE - at Christmas, many children get overexcited, and want to let all their friends know exactly what they've been given, and what they plan on doing with it. Now, this is good and fine... as long as their posts aren't PUBLIC. You need to double check that your Child's social media profiles are locked down, so only their friends can see. You wouldn't announce that you keep your car keys right next to an unlocked front door, and you wouldn't want your child to announce that they have a shiny new iPhone to dozens of strangers online.

On the tenth day of Christmas, Online Safety gave to me....

Online Reputations - Many parents nowadays post their baby's scan picture and photos of their kids. Children themselves are starting to share personal information from a young age, and by the time they are in high-school, they will have a pretty long history behind them, which will affect their reputation both online and in school. It is important that you keep a track of the posts, to find out how best to do this, visit: <https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/online-reputation/learn-about-it/>

On the eleventh day of Christmas, Online Safety gave to me;

HAPPY MEMORIES! - As long as your children are being safe and sensible, sharing a few photos from Christmas with the family is a lovely thing to do. With FaceBook having a time-capsule showing you what you posted on that day in different years, it can be lovely to look back each year at Christmasses past!

On the twelfth day of Christmas, Online Safety gave to me;

THE PASS TO BE IMPERFECT - Bringing up kids can be very difficult, and you often may feel lost, especially in the age of the internet. It's important to remember that things might go wrong, and if they do, that is what we (as Online Safety professionals) are here for! There's very little we haven't seen before, and no situation is too difficult to work out. Set your ground rules, keep a close eye, but if something goes wrong - Don't panic!

Traci Good - The Online Safety Hub
www.onlinesafetyhub.co.uk

