



ST JOSEPH'S ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Dear Parents and Guardians

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Use of Video Games, Social Media and Keeping Children Safe

Please find attached some useful information about the most popular apps used by young people today:

Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube and WhatsApp

This information has been collated by the Children's Commissioner and we draw your attention to the following:

- **All** the apps have a minimum age limit of 13 years
- With most of the apps, the user's rights ('your rights') list is much shorter than the rights of the organisation ('our rights')
- In agreeing to use the apps, the user may be giving permission for all of the information on their phone to be accessible
- Information shared on an app, even within a 'private' group, could be shared outside of the group and may even be given to other organisations

Disputes about social media outside of school are now causing a number of issues within school. This is completely unacceptable and unnecessary as children of primary school age should not be using these apps.

The latest trend for live streaming provides another platform for paedophiles and other perpetrators to search for and groom vulnerable young people. It is widely reported in the media that some children are being coerced into online sexual activity and others are being recruited to inappropriate groups that promote radical and extreme views.

Parents are encouraged to monitor their children's use of social media and to take an interest in what children are doing on their phones and tablets. Further advice and guidance for parents is available from:

www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents

www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety



Children are also playing video games that are completely inappropriate for their age and they can become involved in 'online chat' associated with these games. We advise parents to be vigilant about this type of online activity and strongly recommend that you consider the official age rating on a game before you allow your child to play it. The ratings are applied for good reason as it is clear that young people should not be playing games containing violence, criminal activity or sexual content.

Parents and guardians are very welcome to meet me to share concerns about their child's use of social media or any other online activity.

Yours sincerely

Mrs B Studd
Education Support Manager