

**Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2017**

Dear Parents and Carers,

### **Internet Safety and Use of Apps**

This letter has been put together using language appropriate for parents. Please, after reading this, discuss on-line safety with your child in a way you feel is appropriate to their age and level of maturity. The icons for the apps mentioned have been included to make it easier for you to identify apps which may pose a threat to your child's safety whilst on-line. Please be aware that other, similar apps, exist and we strongly recommend that you check your child's on-line usage regularly.

It has been brought to my attention that a growing number of students are accessing apps on mobile devices and I would like to take this opportunity to remind you of the great importance of internet safety. Many of these apps appear harmless, but they pose a serious risk to the children using them. Please see below the main apps to watch out for at the moment:



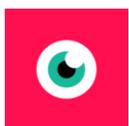
**Musical.ly** - Users upload live videos of themselves lip-syncing and or dancing to music with the objective of gaining likes & followers. This app is incredibly popular with young people. But there are underlying risks including grooming and cyberbullying, as well as inappropriate sexualised or self-harm content. Children often upload videos in their school uniforms, providing an easy means for predators to locate them.



**Meetme** - Users create an account to communicate with other random users anywhere in the world. The app currently has 129k daily active users. Young people are at risk of being contacted by predators, being bullied by other users and there is also the incentive to make in app purchases in order to boost their popularity on the app.



**Yellow** - Often dubbed "Tinder for teens", users swipe left or right on profiles. Yellow has made the risks on Snapchat worse (where teens are sharing sexting images thinking they will disappear when they are actually being screenshotted and shared). Matches are automatically provided with a platform to chat and link to each other's Snapchat accounts, to increase their Snapchat followers.



**Live.ly** - Users upload live videos of themselves doing anything and everything with the objective of gaining likes & followers. The freedom users have to upload anything they want results in a huge risk of young children viewing highly inappropriate content such as nudity and self-harm.



**Twitch** - Users broadcast themselves playing video games for other users to watch. Users can also chat with each other. Twitch's online community promotes a pack mentality among users who are mostly young males. Users who don't agree with this attitude are ridiculed heavily.

As you can see, these apps can expose children to a serious amount of harm and I would urge you to make sure your child is only accessing appropriate and safe apps.

If you would like any further information, the below website is very useful. It is an Australian website, but the information applies to the U.K. too.

<https://www.familyzone.com/blog/five-risky-apps-children-chat-share-videos>

Alternatively, if you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Academy office on 01977 670370.

The information in this letter has been provided by the Wakefield & District Safeguarding Children Board. Their website can be found at [www.wakefieldscb.org.uk](http://www.wakefieldscb.org.uk)

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. Wynn

Head of Academy