



THE PRIORY ACADEMY

LSST

20th November 2018

Dear Parent/Carer

Many thanks to those parents who volunteered to join our Online Safety Group last module. Overall seven parents have joined the group and much of the content in this newsletter has come from their input.

Firstly, I would like to make parents aware of some apps which have come to the attention of our E-Safety Group recently:

Tik-Tok: This is the new name for Music.ly an app that was mentioned in a previous newsletter last year. Users can record short videos of themselves, usually with music, and post these easily to a public audience. There are only two privacy settings on the app:

- Private: where only the creator can watch their videos
- Public: anyone on the app can see the creator's videos

Given most people sign up to Tik-Tok to share videos it is no surprise most users have a public account. The accounts are also set to public by default. The app has been downloaded more than 150 million times globally.

Reasons to be concerned:

- If a user has a public account they can be messaged by anyone including strangers.
- There have been reports of users sharing videos that promote self-harm and other life risking activities as well as sexually suggestive content.
- It is very easy for someone to make an anonymous account and send another user messages which means there is a high risk of bullying.

Funimate: This app is very similar to Tik-Tok. Users record themselves doing karaoke and post this to a public forum where anyone can comment. There is an option for a private mode but like Tik-Tok most accounts are public. This app has the same concerns as Tik-Tok. There is also an added concern as users can find adult content via the built in search function.

Blendr: This is an online chat app that encourages users to chat online before meeting to date. It is meant to be for over 18s only, but no age verification is required.

Yubo: An app that was mentioned in a newsletter last year but remains popular with young people. It was previously called Yellow. Known as the teenage version of Tinder. You can add friends by swiping left or right on a picture of them. With add ons this will also lead to the users becoming friends on Snapchat and Instagram. Again no age verification is required with this app.

Calculators: There are a series of apps that look like a normal calculator app, but will be password protected and have a place to hide photos, videos and files.

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Live.me: This is a live streaming video app. Users can stream themselves live to the world showing what they are up to at any given moment. It also shares the location of the person broadcasting themselves live. It has been linked to cyberbullying with many users being abused through the comments people can make on their videos. Users can also message other users so the bullying continues even when a stream has ended. Users get rewards from other users for their videos. This has led to many users daring the broadcaster to do something in return for a reward. This has led to some users completing life-risking activities or sexually suggestive activities in return for rewards and popularity on the app.

The two most popular apps with students at The Priory Academy LSST continue to be Snapchat and Instagram. A bit of advice for both these apps would be to ensure your child only enters conversations with people they know and ensure their accounts are private and that they know all of their followers. There have been incidents recently relating to Snapchat accounts with names like 'Lincoln Rumours' or 'Lincolns Worst' where students post rumours about other students which are then seen by hundreds of followers. These often involve several students from schools around the city. We have advised students not to follow such accounts and to report them. We are also working with Snapchat to ensure these accounts are removed quickly.

A great piece of advice I read the other day is to 'always be on the apps your child uses'. Then, using this insight, have sensible conversations about use of the app with your child. Or alternatively have your child teach you about any new apps they want to download. Then do some research on your own to determine if the app is safe for your family to use.

In my previous newsletter I mentioned that Apple have now improved child controls for their devices. They have now produced guidance on how to use this which you can find here: <https://support.apple.com/en-gb/HT201304>

There is also some excellent guidance here for all parents on digital wellbeing which covers a variety of topics for different age groups: <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/blog/digital-wellbeing-%E2%80%93-guidance-parents>

Yours faithfully,



Mr G Sleight
E-Safety Lead and Assistant Headteacher