

MESSAGE FROM OUR COMMUNITY POLICE TEAM - ONLINE SAFETY CONCERNS

Dear Parents/Guardians

Southwark Police have contacted all Schools on the borough to make them aware of two current areas of concern regarding online safety and we would like to make you equally aware so that you can review your children's online use, security settings and have an open discussion with your children around online use and any concerns they have.

The first area of concern is what appears to be a growing issue of Viral Child Pornography which appears to be sent via different Social Media Apps.

These videos are highly distressing and if your child tells you that they have seen something like this you must call Police on 101.

PLEASE REASSURE YOUR CHILD THAT THEY HAVE DONE NOTHING WRONG AND ARE NOT IN TROUBLE.

PLEASE DO NOT VIEW THE VIDEO YOURSELF.

PLEASE DO NOT ATTEMPT TO SAVE THE VIDEO IN ANY FORMAT.

PLEASE MAKE A NOTE OF WHAT YOUR CHILD HAS REPORTED TO HAVE SEEN

POLICE WILL ATTEND AND ASK QUESTIONS AND MAY NEED TO SEIZE THE DEVICE IF REQUIRED.

The second area of concern is social networking Apps that allow users to talk/video chat with strangers selected by the site. The main one highlighted to us recently is an APP called OMEGLE but there are a host of others such as **SHAGLE, CHATKI, ANONYCHAT, OMEtv, HOLLA, STRANGERCHAT** and more can be downloaded from app stores.

These sights are rated as being suitable for '**Mature Users' 17+** but the Apps do not appear to have any checks to verify user age and suitability. I logged onto one of them and it lets you connect straight away without any questions/filters.

Some of these sites display from the opening page an obvious sexualised appearance and suggestive of the nature of its use. This makes them **unsuitable for anyone under the age of 17** or older if vulnerable to suggestion.

If your child has used one of these sites, please delete the app from their device and have a conversation with them about it. If you are concerned about safeguarding issues for your child around use of these kind of Apps with any noticeable change on your child's behaviour, please contact your school and Police re safeguarding intervention and advice.

Please also note the following information about minimum age requirements for social media Apps.

The following Apps require the user to be 13 and over;

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Snapchat
- Instagram
- Pinterest
- Tumblr
- Reddit
- Secret
- Musical.ly

The following Apps have an older Minimum Age Requirement:

- WhatsApp – 16+
- Vine – 17+
- LinkedIn – 14+
- Viber – 16+
- Air – 17+
- YouTube – 18+ (13 if parent approves use)
- Flickr – 18+
- Kik – 18+
- Periscope – 17+ (13 if parent approves use)
- MeetMe – 18+ (13 if parent approves use)

This list is not exhaustive but clearly illustrates that most young people are not old enough to use social media and this is why we as parents need to be aware of what they are doing online.

Kind regards

PC Chris Chapman 179MD

Southwark Police School Engagement Officer