

*ST MARY'S R.C.
PRIMARY & NURSERY
SCHOOL*

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Monday 11th October, 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope that this letter finds you and your families safe and well. As the Designated Safeguarding Lead, I am writing this letter to ask for your support on a number of issues. It has come to our attention that a number of children are watching TV programmes, on channels such as Disney+ and Netflix, which are completely unsuitable for their age, with many being a 15 or 18 certificate. TV programmes are age-certified to ensure that your children are not exposed to scenes of adult nature. I therefore urge you to check what your children are watching and ensure that you block shows and movies by adjusting your Netflix/Disney+ parental control settings. Can I also ask you to monitor their viewing on YouTube. You can **set YouTube parental controls** to make sure your child only watches appropriate videos. On a web browser, you can enable YouTube Restricted Mode, which hides mature content. You can also download the YouTube Kids app and allow pre-approved content or block specific videos.

Furthermore, can you please discuss with your child what they are watching. Very often TV programmes seem to have very innocent names, which you may believe to be child-friendly, but they are not.

I appreciate that this can be a difficult issue, as children will want to watch certain programmes, but we have to ensure that the children are watching content that is age-appropriate. Can I also take this opportunity to remind you to monitor their gaming. Games often involve interaction with fellow players who they do not know. With most games having chat functions, or the capacity to speak directly to one another, this means they can be communicating with complete strangers. Sometimes, the games facilitate live video streams too. From a safeguarding point of view, all this is extremely concerning. The children have no idea who these strangers are, and if they are actually adults posing as children. Please ensure that you know who the children are playing against, who they are communicating with, and stress the importance of not displaying their image through live streaming, videos or photos. It's also very important to monitor their social media, such as TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, WhatsApp and Twitter, which are all aged 13 years upwards - i.e. not primary-aged. This is for a reason, that being to keep your children safe online. Can I direct you to further information and parental guides on the school website in the 'Online Safety' page, which can be found under the 'Home Learning' tab.

Finally, can I also urge you to remind your children not to send photos/videos of themselves on social media chats/text messages unless you, as a parent/carer, are fully aware of the content and exactly who they are sending it to. Once a photo has been sent, it cannot be unsent!

I am extremely sorry if the advice in this letter seems draconian! However, our endgame is to keep our children safe and I know we have your continued support with this.

Thank you, as always.

Yours sincerely,
Mr. McGrail
DSL/Deputy Head

