

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

*Headteacher
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Tuesday, 9th February 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope you are all well and staying safe.

I am writing to remind you to continually monitor your child's internet usage, particularly in regard to apps that involve social interaction. As I have said previously, the internet is a wonderful place, a rich database of information, educational and otherwise, and full of a wide variety of games. However, we all know the potential risks to children via inappropriate sites and also interaction with strangers through social media. There is often the misconception that social interaction is only possible through apps such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and Snapchat, to name a few. However, a massive number of apps/games that children use can involve chatting to complete strangers. Unfortunately, there is no way of knowing who these people are, or their ages. There have been countless cases of adults posing as children online, in an effort to befriend children, encourage them to share images and personal information and even meet them. Obviously, this is something that we don't want and so I urge you to regularly check your children's apps/internet privacy settings to ensure they are not chatting to strangers and monitor their usage regularly. Recently, we have had many children saying they have been playing on an app called 'Among Us', a space-themed, social deduction game. As the description suggests, it is a social platform where players can interact with each other. Please look carefully at the privacy settings if your child uses this app.

Can I also signpost you to our website, where we have uploaded a variety of guides from the National Online Safety organisation, including one for 'Among Us', and have also provided links to 'Think U Know', which is an education programme from CEOP - Child Exploitation and Online Protection. These can be found by visiting our website and following: [Home Learning.... Online Safety](#).

It is great to see so many children engaging daily in Zoom lessons. These are so important as this is where the main teaching takes place and difficulties with the work can be addressed here. We have produced a 'Zoom Protocol' document, which outlines rules the children/household need to follow when taking part in remote Zoom lessons. This can also be found in the [Home Learning.... Online Safety](#) section.

I know that several parents have decided to use personal tutors for their children in addition to the mandatory remote lessons from school. The safeguarding lead from the LA has stressed the importance of proper safeguarding procedure if you decide to do this and has provided a useful document to assist you. This is on our website. Please follow: [Our School.....Statutory Information.... Safeguarding](#). There are also other useful safeguarding documents in the same section.

Once again, can I thank you for working so hard with your children during remote learning. All the staff know how difficult and time-consuming it is for you to sustain this, especially for those of you who have several children and those working from home. Can I urge you to encourage your child to take part in as many zooms as possible and also continue to upload their work onto dojo so that the teachers can assess your child's progress and make any necessary changes in the work that is set for them. Our staff are working unbelievably hard to ensure that as full a curriculum as possible is taught during this difficult time, and with your ongoing support, your children will continue to progress.

Take care and stay safe,

Yours sincerely,

Mr. McGrail
Deputy Headteacher/Designated Safeguarding Lead



**DIOCESE OF SALFORD AND
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF ROCHDALE
EDUCATION COMMITTEE**