

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

*Headteacher  
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Wednesday 24 February, 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope you are all well and staying safe.

I am writing to signpost you to updates to our school website. We continually update the 'Safeguarding' and 'Home Learning/Covid-19 Support' sections with important information. In these pages, you will find useful guides to keeping your children safe online, important government updates and general safeguarding information. Within the 'Home Learning/Covid Support' section, you will also find lots of important advice under the 'general' tab regarding social, family and health issues. I hope you find this useful.

I'd like to draw your attention to a few particular additions.

Firstly, the 'Safe After School Campaign', which was launched to support parents with advice and guidance on out of school activities. Clubs, classes and tutorial sessions offer great ways for children and young people to develop their skills and confidence as well as having fun, but it comes as quite a shock to many parents that they may actually not be regulated. Even people who have committed criminal offences can legally continue to work in roles like children's entertainer or private tutor. This campaign aims to help parents and carers make sure their children will be happy and protected in after school and extra-curricular activities.

Secondly, we have been asked by the Rochdale Safeguarding LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) to warn you that childcare is being offered by strangers via 'nextdoor.co.uk'. Please do **not** use this website - these people have **not** been vetted or safety checked.

Next, one of the online safety guides that has been added to the website is for a site called 'Omegle'. In a nutshell, it pairs random strangers for live text or video chats. Its slogan is 'talk to strangers.' I don't really think much more needs to be said in terms of the potential safety risks that this presents. There are NO age verification measures, a real risk of cyberbullying, the chat is unmoderated, it can be linked to Facebook and access your child's basic information, the content can be adult-themed and the risks of exploitation are very high – you have absolutely NO idea who you are chatting to, or their age. At the risk of sounding like a broken record, please monitor your child's internet usage to ensure they do not access this website, or others that are similar. We have put several guides in the 'online safety' section, but there are many more that you can access by following the link to the 'National Online Safety' website. We also have links to other websites such as 'ThinkUKnow' and 'Internet Matters,' which are both extremely useful. Furthermore, don't forget to regularly check your children's apps/internet privacy settings to further ensure their safety.

Finally, can I thank you for working so hard with your children during remote learning and urge you to encourage your child to take part in as many zooms as possible over the next week and a half and continue to upload their work onto dojo.

Your children, yourselves and the class-teachers have put in such a great effort working as a team over the past two months, thank you! At last, there is light at the end of the tunnel!

Take care and stay safe,

Yours sincerely,

Mr. McGrail

Deputy Headteacher/Designated Safeguarding Lead/Remote Learning Co-ordinator



**DIocese of Salford and  
Metropolitan Borough of Rochdale  
Education Committee**