



St Mary's Farnham Royal Church of England Primary School

We aspire to grow as a community through FAITH as a FAMILY.
Thriving for all our FUTURES enabling us to FLOURISH

Thursday 2nd May 2024

Dear Parents,

I am sure you are very aware that the need to keep our children safe online is vitally important in the world we live in. The growing number of concerns and incidents being reported and investigated indicate that many children are not being kept as safe as they could be and in particular are gaining access to social media platforms and online gaming sites that are not suitable to the age of our children.

I am sure that we are all aware that there are **age restrictions** on social media and that these are there for a reason. (These age restrictions can be seen in the picture below). However, there are many children in our school that are using these platforms – Tik Tok, What's App, Snapchat and Discord in particular – as part of groups with friends or friends of friends and this has caused them to become open to online bullying, inappropriate language and images. These groups may seem harmless at the beginning but we have seen a rise in the number of pupils using these groups that are reporting concerns, worries and incidents of bullying and inappropriate language and even threats – **Please do the responsible thing and remove access to these platforms for your children until they reach the appropriate age recommended.**

Age Restrictions for Social Media Platforms

What is the minimum age for account holders on these social media sites and apps?



We are also aware that there are some pupils that are not only spending hours and hours playing online but that they are accessing games that are not age appropriate and are being exposed to inappropriate language that would not be used in an open social setting and incidents that are spilling over into the 'real world' that are being seen in school.

Many parents already monitor their children's online game play and that is the responsible and safe thing for us all to do. Removing access may not be the correct action but having agreed time limits and boundaries around games and friends we interact with online is more likely to develop an open and safe culture where children will be open about their lived experiences.

We are here to help and, in that light, have many useful resources on our SMFR website that can help parents to understand further how to keep children safe and protect them. I have added an excellent virtual NSPCC Parent Workshop that is a particularly useful watch for us all. Please take a look at this when you can.

<https://stmarysfarnham.ovw3.juniperwebsites.co.uk/page/?title=Digital+Wellbeing+%26amp%3B+Online+Safety&pid=187&action=saved>



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These are also some useful links for parents to be aware of.

Websites

[www.https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/) Vital resource for all parents
www.thinkuknow.co.uk – Visit the “Parent/Carer” Section and use the “Click CEOP” button to seek advice

www.childnet.com – Visit the ‘Know It All’ Section for an interactive guide about online safety

www.getsafeonline.org – Free up-to-date Security advice, age specific advice

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/webwise/0/> - This is an archived site from the BBC

<https://www.common sense media.org/> - Excellent advice about Internet Safety

[www.https://www.stmarysfarnhamroyal.org/digital-wellbeing-online-safety/](https://www.stmarysfarnhamroyal.org/digital-wellbeing-online-safety/) - Digital Wellbeing and Online Safety section of the SMFR website.

We are always here to help moving forward so please do make contact if there are any particular concerns you may need help with.

Thank you

Mr J Farmer
Deputy Head Teacher



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