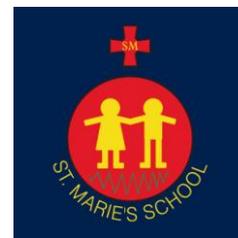


ST MARIE'S SCHOOL, A Catholic Voluntary Academy

Fulwood Road, Sheffield. S10 3DQ
Tel: 0114 2301904 Fax: 0114 2303509
Website: www.st-maries.sheffield.sch.uk
Email: enquiries@stmarieslearning.co.uk
Headteacher: Mr J Fernandes



Our Ref: SB/JJ
13th April 2017

Dear Parents/Guardians of Children in Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6,

Parent information about the use of 'Instagram' and 'Musical.ly'

It has come to our attention that a number of children in Year 5 and 6 have **Instagram** and **Musical.ly** accounts on their iPod, iPad, iPhone, or android phone. **Instagram** is a photo and video sharing app which allows users to connect with one another through comments, captions and hashtags on photos and videos. **Musical.ly** allows users to create and share music videos which they can lip synch to.

We would like to advise parents that both **Instagram** and **Musical.ly** are for users aged 13+ and in the case of **Musical.ly**, the end user license and terms of conditions state that:

'by using the Service, you affirm that either you are at least 18 years of age or have been authorised to use the Service by your parent or guardian who is at least 18 years of age.'

By default, both applications have their account settings as public. This means that potentially anyone can hover over your child's profile and view their information, unless the settings are changed to private. Many applications, including **Instagram** and **Musical.ly**, store personal information about the user, including messages, photos and videos. The following is taken from **Instagram's** Privacy Policy:

'Instagram, its Affiliates, or Service Providers may transfer information that we collect about you, including personal information across borders and from your country or jurisdiction to other countries or jurisdictions around the world. If you are located in the European Union or other regions with laws governing data collection and use that may differ from U.S. law, please note that we may transfer information, including personal information, to a country and jurisdiction that does not have the same data protection laws as your jurisdiction.'

Social Media Risks

Instagram and **Musical.ly** are social media platforms, therefore, your child can potentially become friends with strangers posing as another child. **Instagram** users have the option to "follow" others in the "Popular" section. This is one of the ways they can potentially come into contact with strangers. Some children may feel that they gain status by following many people, in a way which is similar to collecting "likes" on Facebook. It is important to check your child's friend lists to make sure you know the people they are communicating with.

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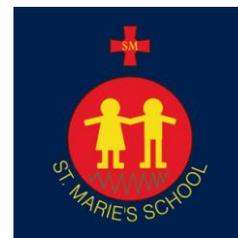
Mission Statement: Each child has a divine beginning and an eternal destiny. We help him or her on that journey.

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As well as the risk of adding to their digital footprint, children are also at risk of bullying when using applications which encourage the sharing of videos and photographs. Many applications, including **Instagram** and **Musical.ly** allow users to change their pictures and this can potentially lead to problems with self-image. A current trend on **Instagram** is to rate girls according to their looks. There has been reports (luckily not in this school) of pictures being posted and rated in online beauty contests, or 'cyber-pageants.' You can find more information about this at: <https://www.common sense media.org/blog/how-girls-are-seeking-and-subverting-approval-online>

Keeping your child safe online

We encourage parents to oversee their child's internet use. You might consider using the parental control tools available on the Apple App Store or Google Play Store. These allow parents some control over the applications which their child can download and offer some degree of protection.

Mobile phone/ camera use in school

We again ask parents to remind their children that they are not permitted to use their mobile phone in school and they must keep it in their locker during school time. Cameras should not be used because children cannot give consent for their image to be shared by others.

Please contact school if you need any more information, or if you have any concerns about your child's online activities.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs S Borland

Year 4 Teacher and Online Safety Coordinator

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