

Safeguarding notices/updates 27/6/17

Dear Parents/Guardians,

There have been concerns brought to our attention recently about online safeguarding issues that could impact upon our students in addition to more traditional 'stranger danger' messages.

- We have recently had a member of the public report a man near Sefton Park acting very suspiciously around the time that students left school. The matter was reported to the police. Please remind your son/daughter to be vigilant if going home via the park and to report any concerns to you, school and/or the police by ringing 101.
- Update to Snapchat – a recent feature has been enabled on this app that allows users to be tracked to their location by friends which has worrying implications. If privacy settings are low many people can see who you are and where you are. Users can switch off the 'track friends' feature. It may also be a useful time to remind your sons/daughters about checking/increasing their security levels and who their friends are on this app and other social media apps too.
- Live.ly is a live stream video platform that works alongside the musical.ly app (another app that has several associated safeguarding concerns). It allows teens to broadcast their lives to the world as it happens, it also initiates group video chats with their friends to hang out virtually. Live streaming "life" can be risky, especially for a young person who may be influenced to share too much personal information or inappropriate content to gain more viewers or likes. The open forum allows users to receive live responses which can potentially mean that inappropriate content is sent to children. The Terms and Conditions specify that users be at least 13 years old but that by using the service, they are affirming that they're 18, which makes little sense. Common Sense Media recommends a minimum age of 16+ for the app. Parents should take extreme caution when deciding if their children should use this app based on the risks. It is advised that parents to talk to their children and assess whether they are equipped with the tools and understanding to deal with these issues before letting them use the app.
- Concerns regarding tv streaming sites : We'd ask that parents/carers review children and young people's access to on-line streaming sites including Netflix and other websites. It has come to our attention that some children may be accessing age inappropriate materials. For example, Netflix currently offers a series exploring teenage suicide which is rated 18 and should only be watched by adults. Watching this may well impact on a young person's well-being especially if they are already low of mood. We'd ask that parents take appropriate steps to safeguard their children so they are only accessing age appropriate materials.

As always, parents should seek advice from their G.P. and school if they are concerned about their child's emotional well-being and mental health.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs O'Neill
(Designated Safeguarding Lead)