



1st February 2017

Dear Parent/Carer

IMPORTANT SAFEGUARDING ISSUE – PLEASE READ

After receiving a letter from another school yesterday warning all schools across the county about the online safety of children using the App Musical.ly and Oovoo, I became aware of a serious issue with some of our children here at Delapre who have been using the Musical.ly App.

I have been made aware that conversations have been instigated by 'followers' and quite quickly resorted to both inappropriate images being sent and highly concerning questions being asked of the children. The speed in which the conversation moved towards these requests is frightening and the individuals making the request do so in a manner that often can lure the children in whilst making them highly vulnerable (grooming).

Schools have been informed that the Oovoo App has been widely used by paedophiles, but would also point out that all the issues within our school have been linked to Musical.ly.

The images the children received were highly inappropriate and involved naked images and a women defecating. I am sure that you would agree that no child should have these images sent to them and must be made as safe as possible. The images have been reported to the Police and to the Local CEOP Representative.

We continually try to educate the children at Delapre to the potential dangers they may face online and give them the tools to protect themselves. I have personally visited every class in Year 4, 5 & 6 this morning to reiterate the message we teach. Whilst I do not want to scare the children, I do want them to understand the real risks. I understand the school and parents are unable to police and monitor in full the children's online activity, but it remains vital that we work together to keep them as safe as possible. Therefore, I would like to reiterate that some Apps are not appropriate for children **under the age of 13** and request that guidance is followed. I have included brief information about Musical.ly, Instagram and Snapchat below.

We would ask that you take the time to talk to your child about this incident, reiterate the online safety message and that the behaviour mentioned in this letter is clearly grooming. Statistics show that online grooming takes only 20 minutes before a young person is taken in by the perpetrator.

If you identify that your child may have been contacted in this manner, we advise that you keep any evidence on the mobile and contact the Police on 101. Your child should not have any further contact with anyone behaving in this manner. For further advice and support for Parents and Carers from CEOP please visit: www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours faithfully


H Portrey
Headteacher



What is Musical.ly?

Musical.ly is a free app to download and is available on the App Store, Google Play Store and Amazon App Store. In its terms of service, it states that it is not to be used by anyone under the age of 13.

How can I delete my account?

There appears to be no method at this time, however, if you inform Musical.ly that the child is under 13 years of age, the account should be removed.

INSTAGRAM

Instagram has a minimum age of 13, but Instagram doesn't ask users to specify their age, and there are many younger children who use the service, often with their parents' permission. Whether Instagram is "safe" depends more on how it's used than on the age of the user, but Instagram will delete underage accounts if they're notified and can verify the users are under 13.

What are the risks in using Instagram? Though there's nothing inherently dangerous about Instagram, the main things parents worry about are typical of all social media: cyberbullying and inappropriate photos or videos. <https://www.net-aware.org.uk/networks/instagram/>

SNAPCHAT –

Snapchat has a minimum age of 13, but when you download it, Snapchat asks for your date of birth, and—if your birth year tells it you're under 13—you're redirected to the children's version, called "SnapKidz." SnapKidz users can't add friends or share anything, and the app doesn't send any information to the company. Instead, childrens' photos and videos are saved just to their devices' "camera roll." If you're a child, that means you can only play with the photos, etc. in SnapKidz on your own device—not share them.

What are the risks in using Snapchat? Though there's nothing inherently dangerous about Snapchat, it's often referred to as "the sexting app." There's no research showing that's true and plenty of anecdotal evidence that it isn't the focus for teens, but—like any media-sharing service—Snapchat can be used for sexting, harassment, etc. It can be particularly hurtful if that happens, because Snapchat is typically used among friends (or at least people who have each other's username or mobile numbers).

<https://www.net-aware.org.uk/networks/snapchat/>