



# Bengeworth CE Academy

An Exceptional Church of England School

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Dear Parents/Carers,

## Online Safety

Online-safety is an integral part of children's education in today's digital world and is embedded in their learning here at Bengeworth CE Academy. We also want to help our parents and children improve their own understanding of online-safety issues so they can learn to use the internet and all digital media in a safe and secure way.

One of the best things we can do to educate children about being safe online is to engage in conversations with your children regarding their use of the internet while at home. Here are some conversation starter ideas from [www.childnet.com](http://www.childnet.com)

- *Ask your children to tell you about the sites they like to visit and what they enjoy doing online*
- *Ask them about how they stay safe online. What tips do they have for you, and where did they learn them? What is OK and not OK to share?*
- *Ask them if they know where to go for help, where to find the safety advice, privacy settings and how to report or block on the services they use*
- *Encourage them to help. Perhaps they can show you how to do something better online or they might have a friend who would benefit from their help and support*
- *Think about how you use the internet as a family. What could you do to get more out of the internet together and further enjoy your lives online*
- *What should children do if they come across something unfamiliar or suspicious online? Who should you tell?*

We strongly believe as a school that children do not need to fear or avoid technology and the internet, but instead be educated on how to stay safe online and be responsible technology users.

Some of the current concerns that have appeared in the news and online recently are outlined briefly below and if you require any more information on any of these websites or online materials please speak to Mr Satterley or Mrs Snowden. A Google search will also provide a huge amount of further information. Please be vigilant with your children about what they are looking at online and have open and honest conversations about this and also what to do when children are faced with this.

- **Momo** - being branded as a 'game' whereby children are spoken to by a haunting figure of a woman with grotesque features who asks children to carry out a series of challenges ranging from bullying to self-harm. This has made news headlines recently as a young boy from Manchester aged 7 fell victim to this. It is important to note that the avatar for this game clearly asks children not to speak to parents.



- **Fortnite** - A cartoon style graphic game whereby the aim of the game is to be the last character standing after 'killing' the other characters. This has made headlines recently due to a number of things. The time spent playing online and children becoming 'addicted' to the game, increases in negative behaviours and acts of violence becoming more frequent after children spent a substantial amount of time playing this game. **The minimum age for this app is 12.**
- **Tik Tok** - This is an app created by the creators of Musical.ly, another popular app used by many children which has now become offline with Tik Tok taking its place. It offers the user the ability to watch musical clips, create short clips up to 60 seconds and add special effects to them and upload them online. Parents have raised concerns over some inappropriate content being available online for anyone, including children, to watch and also are wary of who can see the videos their children upload as by default, all accounts on this app are public. There is a restricted mode you can access and you can also set up the account to become 'private' and therefore inaccessible to anyone except known contacts and friends also using the app. **The minimum age for this app is 13.**

### **Social media:**

If your child is a user of a social networking site or social media app, please ensure that you and your child are aware of the age restrictions by the site/app. It is essential that your child has the most secure settings and privacy restrictions set up and that you monitor your child's posts, messages and social media usage. Current age restrictions are as follows:

**Facebook** - 13 years of age

**Instagram** - 13 years of age

**Whatsapp** - 16 years of age

**Youtube** - 13-17 years of age (with parental consent), 18 years of age if not

**Snapchat** - 13 years of age

**Video messaging/Facetime/Skype** - recommended from 13 years of age however with parental consent this is only a recommendation. Please monitor usage of messages and facetime closely and be vigilant if faced with undesired material/usage.

If you or your child has any concerns regarding online-safety or any of the concerns raised in this letter, please contact Mr Satterley or Mrs Snowden.

Many thanks for your ongoing support with promoting a safe and happy online environment and for helping to educate our children on how to be safe and responsible users of technology in this fast-paced, ever-advancing technological World.

Yours sincerely

Greg Satterley  
Computing Lead