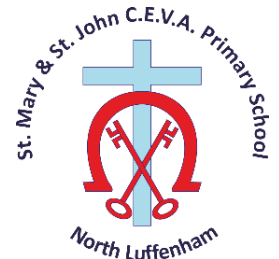


# St. Mary & St. John

## Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

### North Luffenham, Rutland



Headteacher: Mrs Fiona Wilce

6 July 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

#### **Staying safe and being a good friend on apps, sites and games**

A quick online safety refresher before we break for the summer. Children and young people have spent much more time on devices than ever before during lockdown, so as we approach the summer holidays, here is some information about staying safe online and principles you can help remind your children about.

There is a handy and helpful fridge flyer attached which you may want to keep. ([toptipscorona.lgfl.net](http://toptipscorona.lgfl.net))

Please do not worry too much about screen time - think instead about screen quality, balance and mental health. The Children's Commissioner has provided a framework called the 'Digital Five a Day' with five things to think about each day to help put that into practice.

Children's  
COMMISSIONER



Digital 5 A Day  
Simple steps to a balanced digital diet and better wellbeing

It is really important children get the opportunity to chat to friends, so it's great to hear that many of them have been chatting online during lockdown. We are sure that this will continue over the summer, so please help reinforce some key messages about appropriate behaviour to keep everyone safe and happy.

There is the potential for children to be a victim of and/or upset by bullying on chat apps or indeed to be a perpetrator of bullying and unkind words. There is also the potential for exposure to some very distressing images being shared between friendship groups. This can usually be avoided if we remind children and young people to look out for their friends, not say anything that they wouldn't like to hear themselves, and always stop or stand up for others if someone gets upset.

Please remember that the increasingly popular TikTok app with our older children 'requires that users be at least 13 years old to use the full TikTok experience. Anyone under the age of 18 must have approval of a parent or guardian.' Please be aware that content is mostly uncensored, much like YouTube. 'YouTube, and other tech companies like Facebook and Snapchat, bar children under the age of 13 from using their services because of The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA). The platform says in its [terms of service](#) that it's not for children; users must be 13 or older. It has a separate platform, YouTube Kids, for family-friendly content.'

When a game, video, website or app is rated 15 or 18 years, it is not because it requires an increased level of intelligence or maturity to use it, it is because the content is violent, graphic, perhaps of a sexual nature and includes inappropriate language for children. E.g. Call of Duty. If you allow your child to play on these games, you are saying that you approve and that it is ok. If a child discloses they are playing on these or watching YouTube videos, it raises a safeguarding concern and may lead to questions being asked of parents/guardians.

Please remind your children never to share scary or rude images, even to complain about them. If they do see something that worries them or that might be wrong, all they need to do is ask for help from a trusted adult. They could talk to you or to us, or they may feel more comfortable talking anonymously to Childline. If you or they are concerned about an adult's behaviour towards a child online, report them to [CEOP](#). And as a parent, you can also contact the NSPCC - O2 advice line on 0808 800 5002.

One more thing - this may sound like more relevant to older children, but the very youngest children need reminding not to get undressed or changed online. There's a fun song to get this message across at [undressed.lgfl.net](http://undressed.lgfl.net) (plus background information for you).

I will leave you with this question - Do you know what your child has *actually* been doing online in the last 24hours?

Thank you for your support - do let us know if you have any questions.

Yours faithfully,



Fiona Wilce  
Headteacher

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Church Street, North Luffenham, Nr. Oakham, Rutland. LE15 8JR

Telephone: 01780 720184 • Email: [office@northluffenham.rutland.sch.uk](mailto:office@northluffenham.rutland.sch.uk) • Website: [www.northluffenham.org](http://www.northluffenham.org)

*Let your light shine* Matthew 5:16

