

1 February 2017

Dear Parents / Carers

We are writing to you to share with you some unsettling information about current 'trends' on the internet. We have recently been made aware of some new websites that young people have been accessing which have put them at risk of harm.

As you know the internet is constantly evolving, making it extremely difficult for services to monitor and 'police'. Some of our young people are sadly unaware of the potential dangers of some of these sites and how their online behaviour could put them or others in danger.

We are working with the Police and Social Care services to try to access up to date information to share with you at this time. We are leading assemblies to raise awareness and we are reviewing the PSHE curriculum to try to keep ahead of new websites and apps but we need your support to help discourage students from accessing these sites at home.

The websites we have recently been made aware of present themselves as 'friendship sites - ways to make new friends, but they are essentially dating sites for children and young people. This is clearly very worrying as they sadly do not just attract other children and young people.

These are some of the websites that we have been made aware of in the past week or so;

- **Kik** is an instant messaging app. It lets you create your own username and message others without using your mobile number. You can share photos, organise events, share games, news and anything of interest to you from the internet.
- **Chatroulette** is a website which lets you talk to another person anywhere in the world. When you go onto the site, Chatroulette connects you to someone at random. You can talk to people via video or text.
- **Omege** is a social networking site that randomly connects you to another person who's on the site. It lets you talk to them in a one-to-one audio or video conversation. You can both appear as anonymous, unless you decide to share your personal information
- **The live.ly app**. There have been some national warnings issued to schools and parents - especially where there is the use of 'live streaming' as part of the website. This has caused young people to be exposed to live sexual acts. Children using the live.ly app are being warned to be on their guard after the serious sexual offence was committed in front of a group of primary school children online.
- **Yellow & Periscope** are new sites which appear to be similar to 'Tinder' dating sites for adults but aimed at young people.

You can check out any website or app via the NSPCC site Net-aware <https://www.net-aware.org.uk/>

We have also been provided with this film link from a school in Leicestershire. This film is based on the true story of Kayleigh Haywood from Oct/Nov 2015. She chatted with a man she met online and then only 13 days (during which they'd exchanged over 2000 messages) later was found dead after being held against her will and sexually assaulted. The man was grooming 2 other girls at the same time, but it was Kayleigh who agreed to meet up with him.



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The film has been made with the approval of the girl's family and is going to be shown in cinemas before films through 2017. **It does carry a 15 rating** but it is meant to be effective in its message.

<https://leics.police.uk/categories/kayleighs-love-story-film>

We would urge parents to check whether their children have downloaded any of these 'apps' to their phones and ensure they are deleted. Please take this opportunity to talk to your children about the importance of telling you if someone's online behaviour made them scared or uncomfortable. Anyone with concerns about a specific incident should report it to local police via 101 and contact the safeguarding team in school.

This website provides information on how to setup filtering at home on your router to ensure every device in the home has some basic web filtering applied.

<https://www.opendns.com/home-internet-security/>

We appreciate that this may increase anxiety for parents - but we feel it is important to keep you informed and as up to date as we are regarding these issues.

If you are concerned about any issues regarding your son or daughter, please feel free to contact your Key Stage office.

The Safeguarding Team at Silverdale is;

- Claire Bailey - Assistant Headteacher
- Katie Anderson - Safeguarding and Inclusion Manager (Mon -Wed)
- Marcia Henry Safeguarding and Inclusion Manager (Thurs - Fri)
- Jane Last - Integrated Resource Manager
- Natalie Young - SEN Manager
- Sarah Vickers - Student Engagement Coordinator
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Any member of the team can be reached via the school number 2369991.

Yours sincerely



Mrs C Bailey
Assistant Headteacher



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