

1st July 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

The world of social media and online communication changes rapidly and it can be hard for adults and children to keep up with the rapidly evolving landscape of the internet. We therefore consider it important from time to time to share with you any concerns that we come across in school or from other local organisations.

## Yubo & Wink



**Yubo** (previously called Yellow) is a free social network that lets young people connect and chat with strangers. Users can swipe right on someone else's profile to "like" them, and swipe left to pass on to see other people's profiles. You can direct message, video chat and livestream on the app. You can also introduce your friends to people you have met on the app by using a profile share feature. **Wink** is also an app for making friends with strangers online. You can find, add and chat to people on the app, as well as sending requests to become Snapchat friends.

Net Aware (NSPCC Online Safety website) have rated both of these apps "Poor" for their overall safety rating. Pupils have reported that even in the section for under 18 year olds, they are often "liked" by adults and the descriptions can be inappropriate and the profile images can be explicit. The app will allow people of all ages to "like" and connect with one another within the age range too, resulting in 13 year olds being messaged by 17 year olds. We have had reports of pupils being asked for nude photos and sent explicit messages via the app.

## New tool for under-18s to report nude pictures of themselves online

Unfortunately, there are a number of young people who do send nude pictures of themselves via social media or online apps. This may be due to naivety, online grooming or coercion. In the first three months of this year, 38,000 self-generated images were reported to the IWF which is double the amount reported the previous year.

***"This is an OUTSTANDING school" - Ofsted 2016***

The Internet Watch Foundation and Childline have therefore created an online tool that allows under-18s who are concerned that a nude photo of them is online - or could potentially end up there - to flag up the content using the Report-Remove tool on the NSPCC's Childline service's website. If a picture or video has already appeared online, they can share the URL and the charity will examine the images. If the picture breaks the law, the IWF will work to have them removed. And if the content has not yet appeared online but a person is worried it might, the charity can create a digital fingerprint for the picture - known as a hash - which will be shared with tech companies and law enforcement around the world to help prevent it from being uploaded and shared.

Young people can report the images anonymously, as long as they verify their age, or they can leave their details and get support from Childline. Anyone who makes a report should expect to receive feedback on the outcome in one working day.

Next week in Form Time we will be teaching your child about this new online safety tool. We sincerely hope that they will never need to use it, but knowledge is power and they can perhaps pass the information on to a friend if needed.

The reporting tool can be found here: [Childline – Remove a nude image shared online](#)

We will in due course, be posting a link to this on the Safeguarding section of our website so that it can be easily accessed by our pupils if they ever need to use it.

### **Keeping your child safe online**

The most effective way to safeguard your child online is to regularly discuss social media with them, for example having a conversation about the social media platforms that they use, who they follow and who follows them.

We strongly advise you to monitor the history on your child's devices and talk to them about the dangers of open chat rooms and the possible potential risks of befriending an unknown person online.

For more information and tips for how to start a conversation about online safety with your child, please visit the NSPCC online resources here: [Talking to your child about online safety](#) .

Hertfordshire Police also offer advice here: [Staying safe online](#)

### **What to do if you have any concerns**

If you are concerned about possible illegal online activity, or any other activity that is worrying you, please report it directly to the police and notify us so that we are aware from a safeguarding perspective and can provide appropriate support as necessary. Any other concerns can be raised with your child's Form Tutor, Head of Year or a member of the safeguarding team:



Mr Dudley  
Deputy Headteacher  
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)



Mr Wood  
Headteacher  
DDSL



Mrs M Jackson  
Assistant Headteacher  
DDSL



Mrs Melissa Dayton  
Head of Year  
DDSL



Mrs Sarah Allott  
Head of Year  
DDSL



Mr Simon Lister  
Head of Learning Support  
DDSL

If you have something you do not feel comfortable about reporting to school, you can also report it using the NSPCC Helpline: Report Abuse in Education on 00800 136 663 or email [help@nspcc.otg.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.otg.uk).

Yours sincerely,

Mrs M Jackson  
Assistant Headteacher