



St. Mary's Catholic Primary School



St. Mary's Catholic Primary School, Rowden Hill, Chippengenham, Wiltshire. SN15 2PH

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Headteacher: Mrs Janz Howie-Lee

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Dear Parent/Guardian

There have been recent reports that some seemingly innocent videos on YouTube have been edited by unknown sources to include violence-provoking and/or other inappropriate content. As a parent, it's difficult to spot these videos as the harmful content doesn't appear until partway through the video.

Video apps such as YouTube include an 'up next' feature which automatically starts playing another video based on the video just watched. The thumbnails used on suggested videos are purposefully created in a way to encourage viewers to click them.

We urge all parents to monitor the apps that your children are using, as we have been made aware of a new frightening avatar that is being used to encourage children into playing games which include dares. These games can be accessed through Facebook, Whatsapp and some online games such as Minecraft. There are also countless videos available on YouTube.

If your child mentions that they are worried about anything they have seen online, please try these tips:

- **Tell them it's not real**
Whilst this may seem obvious, it's important for you to reiterate to your child that this cannot directly harm them.
- **Be Present**
It's important for you, as a parent or carer, to be present while your children are online.
- **Talk regularly with your child**
As well as monitoring your child's activity, it's important for you to discuss it with them too.
- **Device settings & Parental Control**
Ensure that you set up parental controls for your devices at home.
- **Peer pressure**
Make sure you talk to your child about how they shouldn't succumb to peer pressure and do anything that they are not comfortable with, online or offline.
- **Report & Block**
You can't always rely on parental controls to block distressing or harmful material. We advise that you flag and report any material you deem to be inappropriate or harmful as soon as you come across it.

Please telephone the school office if you experience any problems in relation to this letter.

Kind regards

Mrs Howie-Lee
Headteacher