



St Michael's Catholic College

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Principal: Ms Felicity Corcoran

Vice Principal: Ms Charlotte Sayed

Vice Principal: Ms Kathleen Faherty

31st March 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Online Safety during COVID-19

During this time of isolation and school closure to the majority of students, we are aware that they are online more than ever. With this in mind, I wanted to remind you about keeping students safe whilst online and offer some support in this.

As explained in Ms Corcoran's letter on 20th March 2020, schoolwork is being set using the Google classroom facility, which all students are familiar with. All classes have a Google classroom set up for each of their subjects where students have access to the work set and are able to submit a response as instructed. In order to safeguard students and staff, there will continue to be no live video streaming between class or teacher, however students may submit a question in real time to their class teacher which staff will respond to as appropriate.

It is more important than ever that you are checking what your child/children are doing online, who they are communicating with and the materials that they are putting out for all to see.

A couple of Apps that I would like to draw your attention to are:



Houseparty has recently brought up several safeguarding and security concerns, particularly with adult strangers easily being able to join 'chats' with young people if they haven't 'locked' the chat and it is easy for all to see when you are online as soon as you open the app you are seen as being 'in the house'. There is even a facility for people to enter the chat in 'Sneak' mode so you wouldn't know they were there. Please be aware, in the last few days there has also been speculation that people have been using the Houseparty app to hack other accounts.

YOLO is an anonymous question and answer app that works in conjunction with Snapchat. We have found that more often than not it is being used as an opportunity to post negative comments about others, and can be a hub for cyberbullying.

I would strongly encourage you to think seriously about whether you allow your child/children to use the above apps. If you choose to allow them to have these apps, like with all apps I implore you to check how they are using them on a regular basis.



I would like to remind you that during this time, if you wish to contact the college you may do so using contact@stmichaelscollege.org.uk, if you have concerns regarding online safety please mark the email for my attention, e.g. For the attention of Ms Nottage.

If students have any concerns they should be encouraged to contact me, alternatively, they can access age appropriate practical support from the likes of:

- [Childline](#) - for support
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - to report and remove harmful online content
- [CEOP](#) - for advice on making a report about online abuse

The following links can be used to support you in keeping your children safe online:

- [Internet matters](#) - for support for parents/guardians to keep their children safe online
- [London Grid for Learning](#) - for support for parents/guardians to keep their children safe online
- [Net-aware](#) - for support for parents/guardians from the NSPCC
- [Parent info](#) - for support for parents/guardians to keep their children safe online
- [Thinkuknow](#) - for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - advice for parents/guardians

In this challenging time, I hope that you are all staying safe.

Yours faithfully,

Miss J. Nottage.
Assistant Principal, Behaviour, Inclusion & Safeguarding.

