

10.1.18

E-safety concerns - JG pupils using social media apps

Dear parents/carers,

I've become aware of children at Jesse Gray using the app Musical.ly, at home and that some are as young as 8 yrs. Some children are in school uniform. Several of them have no privacy settings at all, and are open to anyone contacting them through the app. I'm so concerned about what I've seen I want to flag this up to you.

And it's not just these two apps - there are so many free, live streaming, apps available, that we adults may not realise have the potential to open our children up to all sorts of external dangers & exploitation.

I have done some investigating this morning, and read a Channel 4 news article from June 17, which I think is worth all parents reading – it's shocking stuff.

Children bombarded with sexually explicit chat on Musical.ly and Live.ly by Channel 4 Reporter - Fatima Manji June 2017

During an eight-day investigation, Channel 4 News viewed 45 hours of live streams which revealed nearly half of the streams viewed contained inappropriate content, directed to girls as young as nine.

Children as young as nine are being groomed and bombarded with sexually explicit messages on popular social media app Musical.ly and streaming site Lively.

On 50 occasions, children were asked to show or remove their clothing, or change into sexy outfits. There were more than 25 sexual references to body parts and almost 30 occasions where children received sexual questions or requests, some of which were extremely explicit.

No live moderation took place and none of the explicit exchanges – some lasting over an hour – were closed down.

The free-to-purchase musical.ly app boasts more than 150 million global so-called “musers”, 2.5 million of them in the UK. In three years the company behind has gone from being a struggling start-up to now being worth more than \$500m.

Last year they launched a linked live streaming site – live.ly. The site is intended for over-13s, but younger children across the UK can be seen broadcasting live from their bedrooms.

Viewers post real-time comments, and can even be “gusted” in to live chats.

On one typical occasion the programme witnessed an 11-year-old girl in her bedroom on a Thursday morning, streaming on live.ly. She chats with viewers and asks them to “spam the hearts”.

But, at the same time she is also being bombarded with requests to remove her clothing.

Footage from another girl's bedroom show young teens are live streaming on a Sunday afternoon. It reveals a young girl belly dancing to a live audience.

Comments they received are extremely explicit – there are references to their pretty faces and what a viewer wishes to do on them. He also asks them to engage in a sexual act.

Headteacher Miss S. Law B.Ed (Hons) NPQH MBA(Hull)
Musters Road, West Bridgford
Nottingham. NG2 7DD
Tel: 0115 9748002 Fax: 0115 9232197
E-mail: office@jessegray.notts.sch.uk
Web Site: <http://www.jessegray.notts.sch.uk>

Our team also witnessed a viewer encouraging an 11-year old girl her to reveal her breasts and inappropriately touch herself. The man then asks to see her knickers.

John Carr, one of the UK's leading experts on child online safety who viewed the footage told Channel 4 News:

"There's no question an app like this is a magnet for paedophiles."

A musical.ly spokesperson told us the company "takes the safety of our users very seriously", adding: "We have implemented a number of measures to protect against misuse, and we are actively working to improve in this area.

"We have a moderation team as well as technology that work to block and remove inappropriate content. We have recently banned a number of emojis that may have a higher likelihood of being used inappropriately."

Please be vigilant and monitor what your children are using, and doing,online .
It is so easy for them to open themselves to serious potential threat.

Best wishes,



Sarah Law, Headteacher