



## Information regarding current online Apps causing concern

As you will be aware, we continually seek opportunities to educate our students about how to stay safe online. Through assemblies, tutor time discussions and our CHARACTER programme we highlight how each of them can safeguard themselves from any potential harm.

We have no doubt that you share our concerns around some of the dangers of the online world. That is why, as part of our partnership working, I feel it is appropriate to share some information provided by West Berkshire, regarding various online apps which are accessible to and in use by many young people.

The apps are as follows:

### **Blue Whale**

This is a game played via many social media platforms. Players are given a master who controls them for 50 days. Each day they are given a task to complete and these tasks increase in intensity over the course of the 50 day period. One task, for example, might be to scratch a blue whale somewhere on their body. On the 50th day the masters behind the game instruct the young people to commit suicide. This game has already claimed several lives. Parents/carers should check devices to ensure that their children do not have this game.

### **SAYAT.ME**

This public website allows users and others to leave anonymous posts about other people. Parents/carers should monitor their children's use of social media and to ensure that they do not use this particular social media platform.

### **Pickle**

This app encourages users to participate in, and film, a dare for which they will receive payment. Dares are posted anonymously. It suggests that it is 'an easy way to make money'. There are many obvious safeguarding concerns with this app. Parents/carers should check devices to ensure that their children do not have this app.

### **Yellow**

An app where under-18s can post profile pictures to engage in liking and dating and other conversations of a sexual nature. The app can be linked to Snapchat accounts and there have been many concerns about requests from users of this app for inappropriate pictures. With many young people having Snapchat, and potential access to this app, parents/carers should talk to their children about the dangers of engaging with others via this app. Clear advice is that young people should not have or use this app.

### **Snapchat Streaks**

Young people are giving out their passwords to their accounts to friends in order that friends might continue their 'snapchat streaks' when they themselves cannot be on snapchat. No young person should give away their passwords to anyone other than their parents or carers. Passwords should not be given out to friends. Parents/carers should check their children's passwords for all their social media accounts and reinforce to them the importance of keeping these confidential.

### **Instagram**

There are some sites on Instagram with West Berkshire schools' taglines requesting that young people send in 'mugshots' of themselves. Instagram and Police Support Officers have been made aware of the existence of these sites. No young person should send or post a 'mugshot' of themselves (or of another young person) to these sites and no young person should make any comments on these sites. No young person should be attempting to create such sites on Instagram or any other social media platform. Parents/carers should check that



their children are not in any way linked to these sites and to use the reporting functions on Instagram as appropriate.

### **13 Reasons Why**

This is a Netflix programme adapted from the book that discusses many serious issues, including suicide, depression and self-harm. Many young people appear to be watching this programme and are openly discussing its contents with their friends. Several Mental Health charities have expressed their concerns over the programme – the content of which is, in places (including the suicide itself), quite graphic. There are concerns that this programme romanticises suicide. Following many public concerns Netflix have announced that they will add an on-screen warning to the programme.

I hope that you find this information as useful as staff have at Denefield. I am sure that you will take time to discuss the contents of this letter with your child/ren. You can find further information regarding keeping safe online on our website by clicking the 'Parents' tab and scrolling down to 'Keeping children safe online'.