

Westminster Cathedral Roman Catholic Primary School

Founded By The Jesuit Fathers Circa 1849



Headteacher: Mrs A Stacey

Dear Years 5 and 6 Parents,

HIGH URGENCY

The school remains committed to working with parents to ensure children are safe on line. We have been prompted to contact you as the school is picking up that some children are using the app Tik Tok

Tik Tok is a social network app from the creators of Musical.ly . As Musical.ly officially went offline earlier this year, Tik Tok has taken its place offering the user the ability to watch musical clips, create short clips of up to 60 seconds and add special effects to them

All the content that was hosted on Musical.ly is now on Tik Tok. So if your child had a Musical.ly account they will now be able to access this content on Tik Tok.

In the UK, most social media websites and apps require your child to be 13 or over to sign up. However, there are apps where younger children can sign up without having to prove their age. There is no checking procedure in place.

Some concern has been expressed around the inappropriate language of some of the videos posted on Tik Tok which may make this less suitable for younger children. Another potential risk are predators seeking to connect with children.

When you download the app **users can see all the content without creating an account** although they are not able to post, like or share anything until they have set up an account on the app.

By default all accounts are public so anyone on the app can see what your child shares. However, only approved followers can send them messages. **It has come to my attention that inappropriate messages are being written and shared by pupils in the school.**

Users can like or react to a video, follow an account or send messages to each other. There is the risk that **strangers will be able to directly contact children** on the app. Tik Tok's messenger has 2 available privacy settings for the messenger: either OFF or FRIENDS which means a random person cannot start messaging a user unless they are mutually following each other on the platform.

Children may be **tempted to take risks to get more of a following** or likes on a video so it's important to talk about what they share and with whom. There are some **hashtags on the platform that may break community guidelines** by promoting inappropriate or self-harm behaviour. Although Tik Tok monitors these trending hashtags to take them down, they rely on their users to make a report to make sure these can be taken down.

Attached is a leaflet "Keeping Children Safer Online" with points of contact and resources.

I request you look to see if your child is accessing the Tik Tok app and to see which privacy setting is in place. I highly recommend you monitor the content of the app. Currently, there have been no incidents reported to school regarding the use of Tik Tok, however if any incidents are reported I will be taking it seriously and requesting evidence and will meet the parents.

Please use the time over the holidays to observe and monitor our child's online activity.

Yours, Mrs Stacey (Headteacher)

'Love One Another As I have Loved You' John 13:34

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