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Dear Parents/Carers

I would like to bring your attention to some concerning websites and hashtags that are appearing on major social media sites. There is considerable concern that what can be viewed very easily could cause significant harm to children. The risks are as follows:

- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Grooming
- Hate crime
- Viewing content not suitable for the age of the child such as pornography/ violence

The main platforms that pose a risk are **TikTok** and **Omegle**, however, others are emerging. The content that is being reported is grossly inappropriate for any child to view yet can be accessed with just a few clicks and swipes within the apps.

TikTok is a video based social media platform that uses hashtags to navigate different content. You do not need an account to use the app which therefore allows the user to search all content on the platform. TikTok has some really fun viral videos that have captured the nation, however for children under 13 this **must** be supervised by an adult. A few swipes from a perfectly acceptable video can lead to inappropriate content.

Omegle is a website that uses the slogan 'Talk to Strangers' as its purpose. The site does not require sign up to access and is being linked to via other social media platforms. Their consent statement merely states that if you use the website/ app you are consenting to being over 13 and that there may be explicit content. These 'random video chat' apps and websites are now flooding the app stores. Some clearly look like dating apps others look 'child-friendly' but the content is highly inappropriate.

Advice:

- Restrict app downloads on devices through passwords
- Monitor closely the use of digital technology – there can be an element of trust but check browser history, app downloads etc. regularly.
- Add filters to your WIFI – contact your Internet Service Provider for how to do this
- Use 'guided access' features – I will create a how to video on how to do this on iPhone/ iPad and source a good video for Android and Windows users. These features are amazing and allow you to control access very quickly.

If you want to discuss or ask for any support regarding these apps and websites, or what features are available to you based on your devices, then please get in touch with school and we will be more than happy to help. I cannot stress enough how disturbing and extreme the content is becoming on these websites.

As always, thank you for your continued support during this difficult time.

Yours sincerely

Mr J Lane
Principal