



31890/BF/JOH
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Headteacher:
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Dear Parents and Carers

Information for Parents on the “House Party” app

An app that appears to be becoming more popular amongst our students is “House Party”. This app was launched in 2016 and has grown in popularity ever since, with over 20 million active users. Similar to applications such as Skype and Facetime, House Party allows users to have live video chats, however a feature of House Party is the ability to have simultaneous video chats with up to 8 separate friends using a split screen function.

Whilst this has the ability to be a really useful feature, there is also the opportunity for young people to place themselves at risk. When you log onto this app you can signal that you are “available to chat” and start chatting simultaneously to other active users. You can also add your phone number to give the app access to your phone’s contact list in order to “invite” other people to join the app and join your “party” or group chat.

As with any social media platform/app it is imperative that security settings are locked and kept up-to-date. In House Party, if you do not “lock” your chat room and choose private settings, other people have the ability to enter into the video chat. Although a video chat may be with certain friends, any of their mutual friends can choose to enter the chat if the privacy settings are not set up correctly.

Another feature of House Party is the ability for users to send photos or send a “side text,” which is a private message with someone in the chat; these private messages will then disappear after 24 hours. This has the potential for this app to be used for the sending of inappropriate messages and photographs. Whilst these messages and photographs disappear after 24 hours, users can easily take a screenshot beforehand.

At present, there is also no official age restriction for this application, however the Apple App Store state you have to be 9 years old to download this app. We personally feel that this age restriction is too low and would advise that students under the age of 13 should not use the application. The age restriction of 13 is also in line with other popular social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat.

If you do have any questions or queries regarding the issues raised in this letter, please don’t hesitate to get in touch.

Yours faithfully

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