

# St Mary's Lewisham CE Primary School

**Headteacher: Ms Christine Bernard**

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## "St Mary's is a good school" - Ofsted July 2016

### Our Vision

*To be a learning community that promotes the unique gifts, wellbeing and potential of every person. Our work is founded on the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, building on His message of equality, peace and justice, guided by His words 'As I have loved you, so you must love one another' (John 13:34).*

Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2020

Dear Parents / Carers

St Mary's pupils have supervised access to the Internet on a regular basis as part of their learning. In school, we have regular online safety lessons and worships to teach children how to keep themselves safe in the digital world.

We are aware that at home, many children have their own phones and devices and that some children may be given unsupervised access to the Internet. This, potentially, allows them to access a variety of dangerous websites and apps without the knowledge of their parents/carers.

**We are particularly concerned about our Year Five pupils, as we have been informed that some of them have been accessing a sexually explicit app for over 17s called 'IMVU'. This app is dangerous and can be used by predators** to try and get victims to share their phone number, send photos, and video chat. Content on the app is sexually explicit, chat rooms are unmoderated and users can buy inappropriate and suggestive clothes for their avatars. IMVU is an app that encourages users to chat with strangers and avatars can simulate sexual acts. Please ensure that your child does not have access to this app.

The children also have a number of WhatsApp groups. Whilst we are glad that the children enjoy speaking to each other outside of school, we would like to remind you that Whatsapp is officially recommended for ages 16+. Children are able to share any video, photo or screen shot and some may choose to share inappropriate material. They can add anyone at all to a chat, meaning that your child may end up in a chat with a stranger. We have also had complaints from children and parents that classmates are calling them on WhatsApp far too frequently and often at inappropriate times. If your child is using WhatsApp, and you choose to let them continue to do so, please look at their chats and calls regularly to ensure that they are not using it inappropriately.

If you are unsure whether an app or website is safe for your child to use, you can check it out on [www.net-aware.org.uk](http://www.net-aware.org.uk). Netaware is produced by O2 and NSPCC, and is a guide for parents to 39 of the most popular sites, apps and games that young people use. It's simple and easy to use, making it easier for parents to stay up to date with their child's online world.



You can visit this website at <https://support.apple.com/en-gb/HT201304> to find out how to set up parental controls on your child's iPhone, iPad and iPad touch.

You can visit this website <https://www.androidcentral.com/how-manage-parental-controls-and-use-kids-home-feature-your-samsung-galaxy-phone> for help setting up parental controls on a Samsung Galaxy.

Alternatively, you can contact your network provider and they will support you with this. There is also a free NSPCC/O2 advice line that you can call. It is manned by experts who will be able to advise you on how to tackle **any online safety concerns** that you have and can help you get on top of parental controls.

At St Mary's we are committed to keeping every child safe in both the real and online world. If you have any concerns or queries, please do not hesitate to contact us by phone or email.

Yours sincerely

Ms C Bernard  
Headteacher

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## NSPCC/O2 - FREE Advice Line



Need to talk to someone?

Sometimes it's easier to talk about a problem. That's why we've set up our advice line, to answer any questions you or your child might have about staying safe online.

Whether you're after techy advice on things like:

- information about an app or service in general
- privacy setting on apps
- parental controls on your wifi

Or want help with more personal matters such as:

- how to stop online bullying
- what to do about who your child's messaging
- how to talk about sexting.

We're here to help.

Whatever you're worried about, big or small, give us a call on **0808 800 5002** for free, Mon – Fri 9am – 6pm. If your child's worried about you talking to us, you can call us together, and we'll reassure you both.