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| *We honour God through our actions* | PRIORY CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL  St Catherine’s Road, St Marychurch,  Torquay, TQ1 4NZ  **Telephone: 01803 328480**  E-mail: [admin@priory-primary.torbay.sch.uk](mailto:admin@priory.torbay.sch.uk)  Website: www.priory-primary.torbay.sch.uk  Executive Head Teacher: Miss Cathy Lowry | A family of schools working together to serve the mission of our Catholic diocese. |

Tuesday 13th July 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

**Online safety, TikTok and screen time**

It has come to our attention that many of the pupils at Priory are accessing the social media platform TikTok, especially our older children. May we take this opportunity to remind parents/carers that TikTok has an age rating of 12+, and therefore should not be used by primary aged pupils. If you have older children in your family, there are some safety measures that you can implement to ensure your child is not exposed to any inappropriate content.

**- Use privacy settings**  
You can safeguard your account by making it private. Within the settings of the app, ensure this  
setting is ticked. This keeps the account secure from strangers.

**- Enable restrictions**  
In the digital wellbeing section there is a restricted mode that you can enable, using a PIN  
system. This filters out any age-appropriate content. This setting is not 100% fool proof, so care  
and vigilance is still needed in monitoring any usage of TikTok.

**- Reporting inappropriate content**  
If you do come across any inappropriate content, TikTok has a feature that allows you to flag  
and report it. You are also able to block any users you do not wish to see content from.

**- Moderate screen time**  
Under the screen time management option, you can limit the daily allotted time allowed on the  
app. This can be locked behind a PIN so when the time expires the app will no longer open.

TikTok can be used as an entertaining media outlet that children can become engrossed in; however, some of the content is highly unsuitable for children and I would plead that if children in your house are using this site you are extremely vigilant with regard to what they are watching.

We are aware that in today’s climate the number of devices and amount of screen time children are exposed to is continually increasing. There are of course many advantages to the advancements in technology that go alongside the exposure to screen time, such as broader opportunities for learning and communicating, and development in general. However, the worrying trend of increased screen time at the cost of essential behaviours should not be ignored and this has become very apparent in classrooms recently.

With a more balanced approach to screen time and the use of electronic devices, the clear benefits can be obtained while still maintaining and prioritising sleep, health and development and therefore impact on education.

* There is significant research into how the use of electronic equipment before sleeping stimulates the mind and interrupts sleep. This means your child will not sleep as deeply and therefore rest as much as they might. School age children between the ages of 6 and 13 should get about 9-11 hours’ sleep. Studies consistently show an association between bedtime media device use and shorter sleeps, poor sleep quality and excessive daytime sleepiness
* Lack of sleep has knock on effects on general health. The effects of poor sleep can lead to short and long-term health consequences including (but not exclusive to): obesity; reduced immunity; and poor mental health.

We would like to request that all our parents consider [limiting screen time](http://archpedi.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=1852609) and keep a close eye on children’s behavior and use of communication whilst playing. In relation to this, removing electronic devices from the bedroom reduces the risk of children having fallouts which you are unaware of and experiencing language and communication inappropriate for their age.

Kind regards

Cathy Lowry

Executive Head Teacher