



24 June 2022

Dear Parent/Carer

**Les Mis, WINK, School Food Champions, Request for uniform & PE kit donations, Canteen and proposed changes to the Academy day**

Welcome to my end of week update and letter and a very warm welcome to all Year 6 parents whose child will be joining us for the first time in September. We are now opening up my letters for you to receive in this important transition period prior to the summer holidays.

It has been a really busy and productive week at the Academy as we have finally concluded the summer examination series today, as well as being our annual show week and our assessment for CareerMark redesignation.

**Les Mis**

What an amazing week! Every single member of our cast from stage crew, sound and technical, staff and the whole cast have excelled beyond compare! It was a real privilege to attend the end of run show and present to our wonderful colleagues Mr Pepper and Mrs Lee who have pulled out all of the stops and then some. Les Mis is my favourite musical by some margin and our youngsters did it justice in every department. I have seen the trials, tribulations, struggles and doubts, the ups and downs and the uncertainties over these past few months, often from afar whilst sneaking around so as not to disturb proceedings. Each member of our cast have learnt something from this journey and have grown.

Last night, we had a professional agent (who represents some very famous people) in the audience who sent the following email to Mr Pepper: "Wow, wow, wow! I was blown away this evening. Amazing professional show full of a very talented enthusiastic cast and production. I have seen the stage show in London and I can say that your directorship of this clearly made it a masterpiece. Well done to everyone."

I am so incredibly proud of their efforts, so much so, each cast and crew member will receive a colours tie for services to academy drama in the Full School Assembly at the end of this term as I have commissioned a special design for this year.

## **WINK**

There is increasing press coverage of young people being groomed using WINK (parent guide attached) and this is happening locally. Please take a look at the guide so that we may work in partnership to keep your child safe.

## **School Food Champions**

Mrs Hodson deserves real praise for securing our access to a national programme to promote Food education in schools. She will lead this programme next year for youngsters to access across the Academy. More detail will be published later in the year but we have been selected from a number of schools nationally to take part and our students will undoubtedly benefit.

## **Request for uniform & PE kit donations**

Should any parents have any old uniform items or PE kit they are happy to donate to the Academy because their child is leaving us or has outgrown the garment, we would be most grateful. We are hoping to offer items as part of a second hand uniform shop given the current cost of living to help families in need of a bit of support. I will publish further details in due course.

## **Canteen and proposed changes to the academy day**

The MS Form closes today for students wishing to give their views regarding the proposed changes to the length of break and lunchtime.

Thank you to all parents and carers who have now responded to our request for feedback on our proposals too.

We will be making some changes to our food operation from September, including the introduction of catering pods outside in the zone areas where students eat and socialise. This will allow for grab and go food and drink to be served away from the canteen but still be linked to ParentPay. I will publish further information in due course but I am going to another school next week to see one in action.

I would ask that, once again, if parents have concerns over the canteen, please write to me or come and visit the Academy for me to show you the service in operation. Year 6 parents are now joining the parent Facebook and some are becoming concerned about issues that are not in existence. I took photos this week on one day in real time to show the queue (or lack of it)



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at 12.43pm and also shared pictures of the food available on the day which was not running out to allay fears. We are throwing away food every day despite healthy and nutritious food being available for youngsters to eat.

Finally, Lincolnshire is becoming an Education Investment Area as part of the government's Levelling Up White paper. As a result, all food hygiene inspections will have attached to them a compliance audit for the School Food Standards. I have been recently contacted by the County Council to act as a case study because we are the only compliant secondary school in the county at the moment as we move to the implementation of these new standards which are compulsory from September and are incredibly draconian as to what schools can and cannot offer and when. This may be why some youngsters have seen changes to menus over the past few weeks and months but this change is needed and is unavoidable. For more information about our dining offer, please see our website under the **Parent** tab, **Cashless Information & Dining**.

At the end of this week, I am reminded of the words of French author Dominique Champault, who said of performing that it was a great opportunity to "Give your soul to touch their hearts".

After such an amazing week that I will remember for some considerable time because of the show this seems a fitting way to describe the efforts, passion and considerable craft from our show cast and crew.

Have a lovely weekend when it comes.

I will write again soon.

Yours faithfully



**Mr D Hardy**  
**Head Teacher**



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# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

# WINK

AGE RATING

13+



Wink is a messaging app which allows children to connect and communicate with other users. In a similar style to Tinder, Wink uses the swipe method for browsing profiles and accepting or declining them. Once two users have accepted each other by swiping on one another's profile, they can then communicate and play games online together. The fact that Wink allows children to share photos, personal information and their location with other users has caused significant concern.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### POTENTIAL FOR GROOMING

Wink accounts can't be made private – so when a young person uploads images and shares their social media usernames, it's easier for potential groomers to stalk and locate them online. The fact that children prioritise having an abundance of friends is also a concern: they're more likely to accept someone just to build their friend count – possibly including users with sinister intentions.

### ACCIDENTAL OVER-SHARING

Many young people don't consider privacy when they choose to share their social media usernames on their Wink profile. This allows other people to connect with them on multiple platforms, strengthening their online presence and reputation. Some children post photos which reveal aspects of their personal life to other users – showing their house, school, friends and family, for instance.

### INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Many popular messaging apps contain profiles featuring profanity, nude or semi-nude photos and users openly looking for a "wifey" or "hook ups". Users can send messages anonymously, which engenders a sense of power and freedom. Children often engage in inappropriate behaviour more willingly when it's anonymous, even if it's not the sort of thing they would take part in normally.

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CENSORED

### CYBERBULLYING

Being anonymous online provides some users with an incentive to bully others through toxic private conversations. Anonymous bullies can send hurtful messages or pressure young people into sending inappropriate content. Being a victim of cyberbullying can result in children becoming depressed and showing low self-esteem. If your child is exhibiting these signs, it's time to step in.

### EXCESSIVE SCREEN TIME

Wink encourages repeated engagement through signing in daily, making connections, building up a message 'streak' and publicly sharing stories. The reward is 'gems', which allow users to connect with more people, play games and edit their profile background. This can lead to children spending an excessive amount of screen time on the app, which of course can be detrimental to their health.

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### DO YOUR RESEARCH

If you do decide to allow your child to have a Wink account – or you find that they already have one – it's vital to talk to them about how to use the app responsibly and keep themselves safe. You could also consider exploring Wink yourself and becoming familiar with the app before letting your child download it, as there are no security settings or parental controls that can be put into place.

### OFFER YOUR SUPPORT

While it's not always easy to talk about inappropriate content with your child, it's crucial that they understand the impact of sending or receiving it. They also need to feel that they can speak to you about it without worrying about consequences. Emphasise that, if your child receives any messages that make them feel uncomfortable, they can block the sender and report them to the app.

### BE WARY OF SHARING

It's important that your child stays aware of what they're sharing online. Remind them about the importance of not posting personal information like their full name or which school they go to. Many users share their other social media account details on Wink to build their friend count, but we would recommend advising your child not to give strangers multiple avenues to contact them.

### DISCUSS LOSS OF OWNERSHIP

It's essential that young people understand that once content goes online, the sender no longer has any control over where it will end up. While your child may feel like they can trust their online 'friend', that person is still a stranger. Even sharing one inappropriate image, for example, could then be used as leverage – as their 'friend' threatens to release it publicly unless the child sends more.

### BALANCE SCREEN TIME

Before having a chat with your child about screen time, ask yourself if you're being a positive role model. Get your child thinking about how much time they spend on the app: is it healthy? Is it affecting their offline relationships with people? Is it impacting their mood? If so, you could suggest some activities you can do together which aren't so reliant on digital technology.

### BE CAUTIOUS OF NEW CONTACTS

Remind your child that not everyone online is who they say they are, and some users have harmful intentions. If someone on Wink is asking them lots of personal questions or suggests meeting up in real life, these are definite red flags. Encourage your child to ask for help if they're unsure about a particular profile. Remember, the app has a block button: your child shouldn't be afraid to use it!

## Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



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Sources: <https://www.getwinkapp.com/fac/>