



30 September 2022

Dear Parent/Carer

PD Day next Tuesday – 4 October, Use of Omegle, Awards evening, Year 8 construction trips, Tutor evenings – Years 7, 10 and 12, Year 12 trip next week, Formal opening of the RCC

Welcome to my end of week update letter. You will also find last week's letter and accompanying curriculum bulletin attached too now that IT services are back up and running properly. If I am being honest, it feels like we have crammed a lot into the first four weeks of term this September and, as we jump into October with enthusiasm and anticipation of the many activities due to be held before half term arrives, I know that the pace does not relent.

Below are the important headlines from this week and for next:

PD Day next Tuesday – 4 October

Next Tuesday is our first whole academy drop down day for Personal Development. For new parents to the Academy, we usually hold a drop down like this each half term with variable themes linked to our PD curriculum. We have an exciting day planned for students with a range of topics including SRPA Voices discussing hate crime, British Values exploring manifestos, voting and the freedom of democracy.

Our Year 7 students will be introduced to careers here at SRPA and, alongside Year 8, will take part in celebrations for European Day of Languages. Years 9, 10 and 11 have opted for a range of enrichment activities across Physical Education, Performing Arts, Art and Technology. Year 12 have a visiting speaker from the Resilient Me programme and the University of Lincoln will talk to Year 13 about university finance and accommodation. All years will spend some time in sessions focussing on our Learning 2 Learn programme (L2L) too which focuses on study skills and those areas necessary to be successful in studying.

A busy but exciting day is anticipated, follow the Academy Instagram page to see photographs of the day.

Use of Omegle

We have been made aware that several students have been using the website Omegle which is a website that allows the user to talk to strangers.

Therefore, there is no control for parents and carers over who your child is speaking to; it also allows people to upload videos with no monitoring of the content.

National Online Safety have created guidance about the website and recommendations for you as a parent on how to monitor your child's use.

Please see the attached flyer.

Awards evening

We held our Autumn awards evening last night for last year's Year 11 and 13 academic awards and also held a mop up from the summer of lower school awards. It was a wonderful event with a valuable keynote speech from Emma Jubbs, Assistant Director for Student Recruitment at the University of Lincoln. It is great to be back 'post-Covid' holding such events and seeing so many well-deserving and smiling faces!

Year 8 construction trips

On Wednesday and Thursday this week, our Year 8 students took part in a whole year construction careers trip as part of National Construction Week. I was very impressed by the behaviour of our groups, often in the presence of some who might do well to look at the example our youngsters set and learn from it.

We were awarded 'School of the Day' for the Wednesday visit, bringing home three individual awards and added another seven awards to that tally yesterday! Well done Year 8! You have made me proud and have surpassed yourselves.

Tutor evenings – Years 7, 10 and 12

During the final two weeks of this half term, we hold 'settling in' tutor evenings for any youngsters in Years 7, 10 and 12 as they begin secondary school or transition to a new key stage. On the same evenings, Mr Adlington and Mrs Hardy will be running SEND reviews for those year groups too.

Please look out for instructions for how to book your appointment very soon. These will be fully 'in person' events at the Academy.



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Year 12 trip next week

Year 12 are off to the King Power Stadium in Leicester next week for the UK University and Apprenticeships Fair. This is a valuable opportunity to consider next steps and explore what the path might look like for students on an individual basis.

The event is the perfect way for students to choose which university or apprenticeship is right for them. The fair is completely free for all students and this exciting and informative event will provide attendees with the opportunity to speak to a multitude of universities including; Russell Group, red brick, specialist and modern universities. Students will also be able to talk to a variety of the UK's best apprenticeship providers, HE colleges, specialist institutions, and student related organisations. This is a great opportunity to enable students to make clearer decisions about their future.

Formal opening of the RCC

Today I had the distinct pleasure of welcoming Nigel Christopher and his family to the Academy to formally open the Ros Christopher Centre. Ros was a popular member of our cleaning and catering team. A very private but dedicated lady, she would never leave anyone behind. That is the purpose of our RCC from September. Our former mental health hub will still offer all of the usual counselling services via our three dedicated on-site counsellors. However, we also offer so much more for our students, including art and lego therapy, attendance support workshops, resilience and mental health activities and much more.

This event was patronised by NHS leads in the sphere of mental health and wider services too and we hope to see that partnership strengthen over time. I am delighted that Ros' memory will live on daily in the valuable work we do to support our youngsters.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu once said "Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world."

The RCC and the wider Academy are forces for good. We strive to support all; to stretch, to protect, to enthuse, to amuse, to guide, to support and to defend right from wrong and we will not deviate from that path as agents of change until our job is done.

I hope you all find some time to do a little good over the weekend.



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I will write again soon.

Yours faithfully



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“This is a calm, happy and caring school.”



Omegle is a website that pairs random strangers for live text or video chats. It first launched in 2009 and its slogan is "Talk to strangers!" There is an option for adult (18+) content and a section for people aged 13+ with parental permission. Anyone can use the site. Users simply go to Omegle.com and then choose 'Text' or 'Video' chat and the page states how many users are currently online. Depending on the time of day this can be hundreds of thousands. Omegle markets itself as a great way to meet new friends however has been known to feature pornography and inappropriate content within chats, so it's important parents are aware of the risks associated with the site.



What parents need to know about

OMEGLE



NO AGE VERIFICATION MEASURES

Omegle is completely free to use and allows users to communicate with others without the need to register, supply an email address or create a profile. This means users can remain anonymous and it's hard to trust who your children are talking to. Furthermore, there are no age verification measures and other than agreeing to the terms and conditions, your child can easily start online engagement with strangers and potentially access more adult themed content.



RISK OF CYBERBULLYING

The anonymity of Omegle can increase the risk of cyberbullying on the site. Engaging in chat with strangers means that topics of conversation can lead almost anywhere including discussions about looks, body image or the sharing of other personal information. With the availability of video chat as well, this could lead to children being coerced or forced into carrying out activities online which could then be used against them.



UNMODERATED CHAT

Omegle encourages video chat as much as it can, prompting users during their text chat to activate their web cam. Whilst text chat has a degree of moderation, the content in Omegle's video chat rooms is not moderated by administrators and, at any time of the day, there can be thousands of users online. This means that your child could easily come across illegal, unacceptable or inappropriate images or media. Omegle currently offers no function for reporting online abuse or inappropriate behaviour on its site and instead only offers advice to 'please be careful'. It also advises to 'Use Omegle at your own peril. Disconnect if anyone makes you feel uncomfortable.'



PRIVACY RISK VIA FACEBOOK

Omegle can be linked to a user's Facebook account to match their interests and likes with other users. This means that Omegle can access your child's basic Facebook information, and Facebook friends may potentially view Omegle activity. In addition, users can save the chat log and share the link without the other user's knowledge. It is not uncommon then for users to request being added to Snapchat, Instagram or WhatsApp for further interaction, moving the conversation into a more personal setting.



RISK OF EXPLOITATION

Omegle chat picks another user at random and there is very little way of verifying who your child may be chatting to. This can lead to a number of risks including catfishing (users pretending to be of similar age), identity theft (users eliciting information to commit fraud) and sexual/psychological grooming (users coercing others to act in a way or do something they wouldn't normally do).



ADULT THEMED CONTENT

Unfortunately, Omegle is infamous for its pornographic content and it is not uncommon for users to expose themselves or engage in sexual acts. If a user selects video chat, then the other user's webcam will automatically be switched on before the action 'end chat' can be selected. There is also no 'preview' in smaller thumbnail windows. As video chat is so easy to access, it means that unintentionally viewing more mature, inappropriate or even illegal images can't always be avoided.



Safety Tips For Parents



DISCUSS RISKS WITH YOUR CHILD

It is important to speak to your child about the dangers of Omegle. Guiding and educating young children is far more useful than ignoring the possibility of Omegle being accessed. Explain to your child that Omegle is not completely anonymous and that other users will and do use Omegle to exploit others. Try to emphasise the risk of speaking to strangers and that engaging online is no different to engaging offline.



PROTECT PERSONAL INFORMATION

Omegle does not provide advice about how to protect your personal information so it's important that children are aware of what they should and shouldn't share online and with whom. If they use Omegle, always advise against sharing any personal information such as their real name, age, phone number, address or any other personal identifiable information. This also includes details of their social media accounts or gaming ID's. You should also adjust your child's Facebook settings to control what information is shared with Omegle.



REPORT CONCERNS

If your child comes across any inappropriate content or something which upsets them on Omegle, then it's important that they are able to discuss it with you and that you provide them with the support they need. If you think the content is illegal, then it must be reported to the police.



DISCOURAGE VIDEO CHAT

Try to discourage your child from using video chat on Omegle. Not only is there no filters or moderation in place, but children may be coerced into sharing intimate images or videos of themselves, which is illegal if they are under 18 and may be used against them. Omegle text chat has a degree of moderation controlled by Omegle through software and several actual moderators. The software moderates, identifies and prevents certain words and sequences of words to try and prevent bullying and grooming however is still not a 100% failsafe.



TRY OMEGLE YOURSELF

It's always an excellent idea to get a feel for the website or app your child is using so that you can see and understand the issues and risks for yourself. More importantly, it will also provide you with first-hand experience of the risks and dangers if/when you decide to speak to your child about Omegle and what they need to be aware of.



USE PARENTAL CONTROLS

Omegle is a website chat service. Children can only access the text chat on their phone and would need access to a PC or laptop to engage in video chat. If you have genuine concerns over Omegle and don't wish your child to access the site, you can add www.omegle.com to the list of banned websites and URLs. However, it's important to remember that Omegle can still be used via a web browser on an iPad, tablet, smart TV or gaming device and similar controls would need to be implemented on each of these devices separately.



Meet our expert

Jonathan Taylor is an online safety expert and former Covert Internet Investigator for the Metropolitan Police. He is a specialist in online grooming and exploitation and has worked extensively with both UK and international schools in delivering training and guidance around the latest online dangers, social media apps and platforms.



SOURCE: <http://www.omegle.com>