

30<sup>th</sup> March 2017

Dear Parents/Carers

The Ferns Primary Academy takes online safety extremely seriously. It has been brought to our attention that many of our pupils are using a free app called **musical.ly** which **contains adult material and could be used to groom children**. For this reason, we need to warn parents that what appears to be a harmless, fun application can pose a serious threat to the safety of your child.

We would always prefer to educate our pupils on how to use social media responsibly but on this occasion we must follow the advice provided by the Police and CEOP who recommend that this app is permanently deleted from all phones and tablets used by your children.

- Musical.ly is a social network for sharing user-generated music and videos. Many children enjoy the 'lip-sync' element of the app as well as browsing videos created by others. Videos are generally shared between groups of friends and can be saved as private, but the other **content is freely available and is not 'policed'**.
- The **app states that it is not to be used by children under the age of 13**. The terms and conditions say that it is **intended for users over the age of 18**.
- In addition, musical.ly links directly to another app entitled **live.ly which has no safety settings and permits anybody to enter into a conversation with your child**. Through this, your child is at serious **risk of being exposed to extremely inappropriate content and conversations**.
- There are **current ongoing investigations with the police and CEOP into claims of grooming via this app**. We consider this to be a valid threat to the young people using musical.ly and would **urge parents to remove the app from their devices**.

#### Other dangers to any child using this app:

- 18+ content in the song's lyrics. Swearing and adult concepts in the provided music.
- Pornography, graphic content, suicide notes.
- Musical.ly users can search for other users to view or follow near their own location/city
- User generated videos can be viewed and shared onto other social media and messaging apps increasing exposure.



- Bullying in comments.
- Users can publicise their messenger usernames or social media profiles on their Musical.ly profile.
- Live.ly live streaming is not private even if you have the privacy settings set up.
- Many fake user accounts, used to hijack views, groom or bully.
- Not easy to report accounts for being fakes or underage inside the app.
- Many underage accounts with large amounts of followers.
- Easy for users to create multiple accounts and hide them from their parents.
- Even with a 'private' profile, pupils can still find inappropriate material via the searches.

As there are current ongoing investigations with the police regarding this app, at some point this term, our local Community Police Support Officer will be in school to discuss this matter further with the pupils.

We post regular bulletins about Online Safety on our school website <http://www.thefernsacademy.org/our-academy/online-safety>. Information can also be found on our school blog <http://blog.thefernsacademy.org/> and clicking on the 'Online Safety' and 'computing@theferns' menus.

Please complete the slip below to confirm that you have read and understood this letter. The reply slip should be returned even if your child does not use this app.

Thank you for your support and vigilance.

Yours faithfully

*A Young*

Mrs A Young  
Head Of School

*J Broadbent*

Mr J Broadbent  
Technology Lead &  
Online Safety Safeguarding Officer

*S Dale*

Mr S Dale  
Chair of Governors

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**THE FERNS PRIMARY ACADEMY**  
**Internet Safety**

I acknowledge receipt of this letter regarding the dangers of children using musical.ly.

Child name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_