

Emerson Park Academy

A SPECIALIST SPORTS COLLEGE

Our ref: MH/js
Date: 22nd April 2016

Dear Parents / Carers,

Live Streaming Apps

We are sending this information to you as part of our safeguarding duties so that we can raise your awareness and share our concerns around several **'live streaming apps'** that your child may already be using or may become aware of in the future.

Many of you already use social media such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter; with lots of our students also using Snapchat.

Periscope, Meerkat and **Myeye** are popular 'live streaming apps' which professionals use around the world to live stream, share video content in real time and broadcast to viewers who are also using the app.

As a parent/carer of a student here at Emerson Park Academy we believe you should be aware of the potential dangers of these apps.

How Live Streaming Apps Work

Once you download the app, you are prompted to create an account. In just a few clicks you can choose people to follow and giving the app permissions to access your camera. You can pretty much broadcast whatever you want, wherever you want, to everyone.

At any given time, the user can watch available content from anywhere in the world through the app.

Viewers can interact by commenting and chatting while the live stream is happening, and for one particular app, you can also tap and double tap to send hearts which "likes" the video in real time without the need to comment.

Clearly the developers are trying to make live streaming appealing to a younger audience.

Our Concerns About Live Streaming Apps

You can probably understand the reasons these apps are so concerning to us and for you as the parent / carer, it is not just that they are going to eat up battery life and monthly data, this live streaming is potentially being broadcast from the safety of your own homes using your own Wi-Fi.

Of course we can see as an educational establishment how useful this technology can potentially be for a journalist who is on location and wants to share real time video to their followers for example. It could also be useful for brands promoting special events and exclusive content or for conference attendees who can broadcast content to colleagues who aren't there. There are actually some really amazing things that responsible people are doing with these apps.

However, as part of our safeguarding duties, **Periscope, Meerkat** and **Myeye** really trouble us. Why do our students, your children, need to be live broadcasting their business and sharing their locations with people who are unknown to them?

The fact that by using such apps can, in some cases, reveal the location of your child is in itself a major concern. If your child's name, along with images of themselves are in their profile or they appear in the video, they are putting themselves at risk. They are broadcasting a lot of information about themselves - often in real time.

After just a few hours of monitoring these apps it is clear to us that there are real dangers that we believe are worthy for your consideration.

Due to the live nature of broadcasts it can also be difficult to avoid some abusive or upsetting comments. Some of the notorious Twitter trolls seem to target certain live streams with provocative and harassing messages.

While the community guidelines forbid users from posting pornographic, overtly sexual or explicitly graphic content, this does not mean that this content does not exist. The fact that broadcasts are live makes it difficult to manage and prevent more adult content from being uploaded.

Your child might think that a video disappears once the stream is over but this isn't entirely true and could lead to a false sense of security. It is possible to download these live streams or for other people to make recordings of these streams. Once a digital copy is made, they lose control of who sees the video.

Already, there have been numerous incidents internationally where people have got into trouble for violating copyright laws, by live streaming concerts, sporting events and television broadcasts.

Considering that all our students are still developing their sense of judgment, live streaming eliminates that time they might otherwise have to step away from the video and realize that they do not need to share this content, because it might hurt someone else or have negative consequences for them.

The Bottom Line about Live Streaming Apps

I strongly suggest talking to your children about these 'live streaming apps' and help them decide whether they are something they really need.

It can potentially be a fantastic tool for them if used in a safe, smart way.

However, we are requesting that you talk to your children about the potential consequences of these '**live streaming apps**' as well; not just as the shooter behind the camera, but also as someone who could be an unknowing star of a live broadcast for which they did not give permission.

App developers are putting surveillance technology in the hands of children and as we all know, children do not always make the best decisions about what to share on social media. It is one thing to share photographs, even video instantly to social media followers. But the prospect of real time broadcasting makes it so easy for anyone that this is a whole new ball-game that we all need to take seriously.

If you would like any further information, we are holding a parent / carer's meeting on Thursday 12th May starting at 7pm. Please complete the reply slip below and return to our front office if you would like to reserve a place(s).

Yours faithfully



Mr M Hope
Inclusion Manager

To: **Mrs Surridge, Academy Office, Emerson Park Academy.**

Name of Student:

Form Group:

I would like to reserve.....seat(s) for the presentation on **Thursday 12th May at 7pm.**

Signed:

Date: