

To All Parents

Friday 15 May 2020

Dear Parents

Skype

I recently wrote to you with information about TikTok and Zoom age restrictions and advice on safer use of these platforms. We now understand that some children are using Skype independently to contact each other so I wanted to send out some information about this app to help support the safe use of Skype at home.

Skype is a platform and app that lets you make audio and video calls to other people around the world. You can also use it to send instant messages.

Skype has a minimum age requirement of 13+ and The Manor does not endorse use of the platform for children unless it is with adult supervision.

If you allow your child to continue using Skype, please be aware of the following information:

- Skype is an unmoderated service, which means no-one will be checking on who is talking to your child or what they are talking to them about when they are using the service.
- **As children should not have their own Skype accounts, if a child tries to call one of their friends, they may be calling an adult by mistake.**
- When you download the app, only people on your contact list will be able to see your picture, if you upload one, or share their screen or video with you. However, anyone who searches for you can call you or send you an instant message.
- While you can't save images or record video calls, people can take screen grabs or set up webcams to record whatever is on screen. Young users in particular need to keep this in mind and not say or do anything they wouldn't want their friends or parents to find out about.
- It is very easy to call someone by mistake if you are clicking on their Contact Information to remove or block them.
- **Calls should not be made during the school day unless pre-arranged by families as this may disrupt other children and adults from their remote learning or work.**

How to report a concern on Skype:

If someone you don't know or don't want to connect with contacts you, you have the option to ignore or report them. There is no report button to click on while making a call and no obvious link. The person being blocked will not be notified. You will just appear to be offline to them.

Desktop: Sign in and click on **Contacts** in the side menu and then, to the right, click **Skype**. Find the contact you want to block. **Right-click** the contact's name (on a Mac, **ctrl click**) and choose **Block...** You are also offered the option to **Report abuse from this person**. Click this if you wish to alert Skype to the user's actions.

Mobile (OS): Go to **Search** at the top of the screen and tap on the contact's name you'd like to block. In the drop-down menu, tap **View profile**. Select either **Block** or **Remove** contact. You may need to scroll down to see it.

Mobile (Android): To block a contact: Start Skype. Go to **People**, tap and hold the contact you'd like to block. Tap **Block contact**. Tap **OK**.

For more information about Skype, we recommend the following sites:

<https://parentzone.org.uk/article/skype>

<https://www.net-aware.org.uk/networks/skype/>

<https://www.commonssensemedia.org/website-reviews/skype>

As I wrote in my last letter, we continue to advise that you remind your child of our online safety advice that if they see or hear anything that makes them feel uncomfortable, they should tell a trusted adult immediately for help and support in talking about this and reporting the content. Please also continue to reinforce the message with your children that they should not share personal information like their name, phone number and address online.

If you ever have any concerns around your child's online safety, please do not hesitate to contact me on vfootring@manorprep.org or 01235 858480 (Deputy Head Office) / 07552 846591 (School mobile).

Best wishes

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Deputy Head Pastoral