



EXCEL ACADEMY NEWS



www.excelacademy.info

Easter 2017



Well it is Easter 2017 already and hopefully the improvement in the weather will continue!

GCSE Exam season

We are fast approaching the Easter holiday and the countdown begins in earnest towards the Year 11 GCSE examinations. In fact, there have already been some GCSE exams taken, including Spanish speaking and listening, Art practical exams and some BTEC examinations but the majority of the exams begin after the Easter holiday. There are Easter holiday revision classes in most subjects and Year 11 have been invited to attend where appropriate.

Thanks to staff, students and parents for supporting this.

Year 11 will be receiving tailored timetables to include revision sessions during the exam period. 100% attendance is essential and expected to ensure the students are fully prepared for these important examinations. We wish all of our Year 11 students our best wishes at this important time.

Two members of staff will be leaving the Academy at Easter. History teacher Mr Hewson, who is one of our longest serving teachers, and Miss Davies who teaches Mathematics, will be moving on. Our best wishes go to both, especially Mr Hewson, who has contributed much over a number of years to the academic and pastoral development of a large number of our students at the Academy.

Mr D Bishop - Principal



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Mr Bishop - Principal



A ban on mobile phones...my thoughts...

We currently allow students to use their phones at break and lunchtime in the dining hall and the school yard but we are considering banning mobile phones completely at the Academy for a number of reasons;

- ◆ Lunchtime can become a stressful environment at times due to students messing around and arguing over photos taken or accidentally damaging phones.
- ◆ Mobile phones can be a mechanism for cyberbullying and the harassment of other students through the use of information and photographs. The number of issues arising from students using phones is rising significantly and includes comments made on social media. Students can often be abusive on phones which they would not do in person.
- ◆ Without the correct parental controls over internet usage, inappropriate images are freely available.
- ◆ A recent study found a ban on phones helps classroom performance. The research, published by the London School of Economics, found that after schools outlawed mobiles, test scores of students aged 16 improved by 6.4 per cent. They reckon that this is the "equivalent of adding five days to the school year".

Some parents feel that there are positive aspects to using mobile phones such as a means of keeping in touch with their children and to reach them in case of an emergency. If a child has a medical issue or there is a situation at school, mobile phones make it far easier to reach parents. However if a child needs to contact home urgently, or vice versa, we have phones in the office where students can be contacted.



Mobile phones can be a fantastic learning aid but inappropriate use of phones and the internet is an issue. We are not able to control it. We have conducted a straw poll with parents at parents' evenings about a ban. Almost 100% of the parents said if it keeps my child safe and happy then they agree with it. I hope you appreciate that any ban would be implemented to ensure that the children are safe which is our number one priority. Please email me with your thoughts if you are opposed to such a ban at principal@excelacademy.info

Best wishes to you all, have a restful Easter break!

GCSE Summer Exam Timetable

Please note that you can now find the Year 11 Summer Exam Timetable on our website:

<http://excelacademy.info/parents/examinations.html>

And then click on "GCSE Exam Timetable Summer 2017"

Students will need to bring their own black pen, pencil, ruler and calculator to their examinations.

Students should now have received their own examination timetable.

HOY Updates!



Year 7 have had a busy half term where we have been thinking about healthy eating and completing a year group circuit training outside. All students were involved and they all worked really hard. Year 7 have also been busy collecting cakes for a sale to raise money for Comic Relief. Each Form has a task and the Form who brought in the most cakes to sell won! 7LP was the winning form - well done! As a year group, we raised a whopping £178.65 for Comic Relief and we had enough cakes to sell over two days! A huge well done to Year 7 - I am very proud of you!



Year 8 have had another outstanding half term. They continue to excel across the board in uniform, attendance and academic success. The majority of students have now handed in their Options forms and have begun the first steps on their pathways to their GCSE's. It has been a great pleasure to see the amount of Year 8 students nominated by departments to receive a **Principal's Award** - it seems to me that we are the most successful year group! Finally, I am pleased to be able to end this term with a reward trip to 'Flip Out' trampoline park in Stone! I hope that the 50 students attending enjoy their time there - a reward for their hard work, good behaviour and good attendance!



Year 9's are now two thirds of their way through their first year of their GCSE courses. From speaking to the Student Executives, the students are very positive about the options they have chosen and are really enjoying these courses. The Student Executives were really positive about the behaviour during lessons and around the Academy, and the range of activities they were doing in lessons. We have had Ruby Girls UK in during PSHE lessons who have delivered lessons on self esteem. They worked on raising students' aspirations and belief in themselves and to focus on the positives about themselves, not the negatives. All in all, a fantastic half term!



The Year 10's have had an exciting term, with the Prefect selection process in full swing - see the article further on in the newsletter! Other activities have included Year 10 being heavily involved with our Duke of Edinburgh practice walks and preparation for their **Bronze expeditions**. We've had workshops from FRED, Kamal and My Yard, who were really impressed with the behaviour and engagement from our students! Check out some of the pictures in this newsletter! A quick reminder that WEX is 22 - 26 May. As ever, if you need any support with your child please don't hesitate to get in touch.



The Year 11s are moving into a crucial phase of their education. They have now sat their mock examinations and have completed most of their controlled assessments and are now shifting their attention to revision for the real things! To help with this there is still lots of support on offer for them:

- They should now have received their individual exam timetables so that they can start their personalised revision timetables.
- There are still ongoing P6 sessions between 3:00 and 4:00pm, allowing students time to revise and catch up on work with subject specialists.
- There is still **The Nightclub**, an area exclusive to Year 11's, where they can go to complete work or study until 5:00pm.
- We had an assembly about the build up to exams and how to combat stress.
- There are also sessions timetabled for the Easter Holiday where students are being invited in to complete work or revise certain topics.

After Easter it is only a matter of days until the GCSE exams start. We expect students to be in school until they have completed their exams and we expect the usual standards of behaviour including wearing correct uniform to be in play. I would also like to thank the current body of prefects, who will be handing over to the Year 10 group after Easter, for their continued effort and dedication to their roles.

Mr Kelsall - Vice Principal

Year 11 Revision Sessions



With Year 11 now in the final stages of their GCSE's, by Easter, the teaching of the GCSE course and the controlled assessment will also be virtually complete. The major focus is now on REVISION. For your child to achieve their maximum potential, effective revision should be underway at school and at home.

To support your child's revision over the Easter period, we are offering a programme of 'Easter Revision Sessions' from Monday 10 April to Wednesday 19 April. Subject teachers have been asked to prioritise the students they require to attend each session - your child should have now received their letter and revision timetable for Easter. Please discuss the Easter provision with your child and explain how valuable these sessions with a subject specialist are. I really do hope that you will encourage your child to attend these free sessions provided, which will help your child to achieve the results they deserve.

Please note that you can now find the Year 11 Summer Exam Timetable on our website:

<http://excelacademy.info/parents/examinations.html>

And then click on "GCSE Exam Timetable Summer 2017"

Students will need to bring their own black pen, pencil, ruler and calculator to their examinations.

Students should now have received their own examination timetable. A revision planner dated from the Easter break, right through to the end of the exams, will be handed out before the Easter break to help students plan in their revision. Students will also receive a weekly bespoke timetable, which includes revision slots, starting the first week of their exams.

'My Yard'



On Friday 31 March 2017, Gazebo Theatre (working with Garrick Theatre) came in to The Excel Academy to present a piece called "My Yard" to a group of Year 9 and 10 students. Year 10 student, Melanie Lucas, said *"This piece was about anti-social behaviour and it showed us the consequences of anti-social behaviour, including how it can impact young people and their lives."*



A full report of the morning will be on the website in due course - but we would like to take this opportunity to thank Gazebo Theatre and Garrick Theatre for a great morning!



No students were harmed in the making of these freeze-frames!



Maths Jam!

Mr Martin and Miss Willis accompanied three Year 9 students, Abbi, Jodie and Lauren, and three Year 10 students, Jared, Adam and Alfie, to the 2017 'Maths Jam' at Newcastle under Lyme College on Friday 24 March.

The event was organised in conjunction with Staffordshire University and saw the students face off against Year 9 and 10 students from ten other schools from the area in a series of challenging maths tasks.

All the students applied themselves very well to the tasks and the Excel Academy representatives did themselves and the Academy proud with their enthusiasm and skill, with both teams gaining plenty of first and second places within their small groups.

Out of the twenty or so different teams that competed, the Year 9 team finished in a tie for third place, and the Year 10 team finished in a tie for sixth place.

The afternoon was very enjoyable for all involved (especially for Miss Willis and Mr Martin laughing at the attempted bridge of the Year 10 team!) and showed that maths can be challenging and fun at the same time!



Snooker Success!



On Saturday 01 April, Year 11 Excel Academy student Jenson Kendrick (pictured left and bottom right with Former World Snooker Champion Stuart Bingham) took part in the EASB under 21's Midlands Regional Tour and came 1st! This means that Jenson, who is currently No 1 in the Midlands, has now been promoted to the Premier Tour - the top 40 in England! This is the next step to achieving Jenson's dream of becoming a Professional Snooker Player.

Jenson's recent achievements include taking part in the European Tournament in Gibraltar and achieving his first 147 break on 01 August 2016 making him the youngest player (15 years of age) to do this in many years!

Jenson's commitment to the sport is testament to his achievements. Jenson practices Snooker from 4pm - 9pm every weekday, and spends his weekends either practicing or playing in tournaments. This is alongside his ever increasing school and exam workload, including after school revision sessions!

This just goes to show that you can achieve anything, if you're willing to work hard enough and have a growth mindset!

Huge congratulations to Jenson, we're all so proud of you! Just remember where you came from when you're a star!



Macbeth!

On Monday 27 February, the Academy welcomed The Fred Theatre Company, who performed Macbeth for our Year 10 and 11 students. To tell you more about the day is Year 11 student, Bayleigh Luke:

"On Monday the Year 10 and 11 students had the fantastic opportunity to experience the interpretation of Macbeth performed by The Fred Theatre Company in our own Academy hall. The play lasted approximately 90 minutes and during this time, 'Macbeth' was brought to life. The 6-man show intrigued and engaged the students to understand the Shakespearean play in great depth and this also allowed them to recognise different interpretations of the characters themselves, which



will help us in our final GCSE English Literature exam. Once the play had finished, students had time to ask any questions to the Fred Theatre team which they answered in great detail developing our knowledge even further.

It's significant to have events like this so we are able to enjoy ourselves whilst learning and this is a prime example of that. In English Literature we are expected to be able to interpret any text we study in many different ways and seeing other people's interpretations first hand helps with this. Seeing a visual representation of the play rather than just reading it also helps us to really understand the play in ways we may not have before.

After the half term break, I think this play was a pleasant way to ease us back into Academy life and show that there are different ways of learning other than just reading and writing. Even without costumes, they brought to life the classic play of 'Macbeth' through their excellent acting and I know the students of Year 10 and 11 feel privileged to have been able to experience their fantastic performance and workshop.



The Fred Theatre Company came from Birmingham so I would like to thank them for coming to our Academy to perform for us. They also modernized the play so it was easier to relate to and understand. The effort and pride that went into the making of this play was incredible, it has been extremely well thought out. From the workshop, I could clearly see all the members of the theatre had great pride in what they had done. Everyone was equal in the group – from the director to the actors. Key quotes were obviously shown in the play which is a key part of revision as the Summer GCSE will be a closed book exam, so it's vital we are able to recall important quotes from the play and by hearing them in a theatre environment it helps to consolidate this knowledge. Not only was it a

fantastic way to revise, but also a reminder that school isn't strictly about exams and learning – but also about spending time with peers and enjoying yourself, whilst still making the most of your education."

A huge thank you to the English Department who arranged this incredible performance, The Fred Theatre Company and Bayleigh for her fantastic report on the day!



Goodbye from Mr Hewson

**GOOD
BYE &
GOOD
LUCK!**

I will be leaving the Academy on Friday 07 April 2017 after working here for more than 19 years. I started as a French teacher on a temporary contract in January 1998 and in the time since, I have taught Maths, Geography, Sociology, RE, Media Studies and English before finally ending up teaching History 15 years ago. In that time, I have seen a myriad of changes to the building, the uniform, the school day and have seen countless teachers come and go.

To say that I have enjoyed working here is something of an understatement. It has been an absolute privilege to have been part of what is, in my view, a great school. The students who I work with daily and have worked with in years past are some of the most amazing people - full of ideas, enthusiasm, humour and respect. To see former students who are now adults (some of whom with children I have taught as well) who talk so fondly of their time here speaks volumes for the work that we do as teachers and the strong bonds that we forge with them. As we get older, we don't always remember the content of the lessons that we learn in school, but we certainly remember the people. We recall the teachers who had an impact on our lives, both positively and negatively. We look back at the friendships that are formed, many of which will be lifelong and lasting, some of which will be fleeting and temporary.

Some of the lasting memories that I will take with me from my time here have been outside of the classroom. Football every Friday after school and reaching the semi-finals of the English Schools FA Cup; covered in glitter as Teen Angel in Grease or being compere in dance shows. One of the abiding memories is when we took a group of students to Auschwitz and they lit candles at the end of the railway line and paid their own silent tribute to that most terrible of historical events. The behaviour and conduct and respect shown by students cannot be measured by government targets and grades at the end of Year 11. They are life skills that exist both within school and beyond.

As a Head of Year I was always talking to the students in Year 11 about their legacy - what would they leave behind when they are gone? As I look back over my time here, I wonder what my legacy would be? I would like to think that it was as a person who listened, who cared, who encouraged, cajoled and motivated. Someone who worked with a smile on their face.

Education allows you to grow. It can change lives. I certainly changed because of education. I grew up locally, I went to school locally. I have done the job I love for almost two decades because I worked hard. I wanted to achieve and I had teachers who made me see that there was a bigger, wider world out there than I knew. One of the biggest barriers to success rests within. Tell yourself you can't do something and I can guarantee that you will be right. Tell yourself that you could do it and there's a chance that you will.

I am moving to a school to work with children who have complex needs and who sometimes find school to be a challenge. I am looking forward to starting my new job after the Easter holidays. I know that every day will be different and interesting. However, I will always look back on my time here fondly and with so many good memories.

To the students who attend The Excel Academy, I would leave you with one final wish. You were in the company of a very inspirational young man called Kamal earlier in the year and he told you to not follow your dream, but to build it. I echo his words - make something of your lives and do your best.

To colleagues and friends who I have worked with, it has been a pleasure. I wish you all the very best and look forward to seeing you at Parents' Evenings over the next few years. You are an amazing bunch of people and the hard work you put in should be recognised.

Ofsted said when they visited that The Excel Academy is a good school. I am not one to argue with them, but in this case, I am going to have to. It is not a good school. It is a great one.

Wishing you all the very best,
Mr Hewson

Prefect Interviews



The Prefect system has been in full swing with our students writing wonderful letters of applications. This has been reaching a crescendo with our business partner Lucideon, where applicants had a rigorous day of team building and interviews, along with personality tests. Maxwell Chimenes, one of the budding Prefects put through their paces, has written a report of the day:

"When we first arrived, we were told to sit down and prepare for our first activity. They called it an ice breaker activity which was fairly new to me. The activity was something that we had to start on the coach whilst we were getting there. It was to find out more or something new about the person you were sitting next to. Everyone was paired up and people went up one by one to talk about their chosen person.

I thought that this was a good activity from Lucideon because it let them get a feel for what type of people they were dealing with. As well as this, it enabled them to find out straight away who was confident and could speak loudly and to everyone. It was almost just for them to get a first impression on all the students there. However, if they were trying to pick out the people who may be seen as shy I think they would have a hard time. I think that everyone was confident and impressed straight away.



We went up for the ice breaker in any order but we then quickly moved on to the speech. So now the order was reversed, the person who was last was now required to go first. This again was a good method because they again find out if anyone was shy. Because the person that shied out of going up for the icebreaker now had to go up first for the actual speech. But obviously this might not have been the case.

So the speeches began and everyone listened. There were 6 - 8 Lucideon workers listening and taking notes.

They really were listening to every word of every speech, as you could see them constantly writing notes for everyone. I also noticed that there were certain triggers for them to write things down, for example, every time 'peer mentor' was mentioned they would all note it down.

After we had finished the speeches they put us in to three groups, to do the main activity, which was to make a brick balance on top of pieces of card,

however there was a budget. There were small cards and big cards, with the small costing £3000 and large costing £5000. You had to try and get the amount of cards right the first time, because if you didn't that price would then be doubled for every other piece of card you purchased.



They didn't give us any clues or tell us how much we were meant to take which is expected, why would they? And it turns out that none of the three groups accomplished the task. You needed three large cards and two small ones, totalling a cost of £21000. But unfortunately this was not the case for any of the groups. My group for example spent a total of £450,000 or more, which is quite astonishing really. But the idea of the task was correct as

they'd be able to see who took the lead and the people who worked well as a team.

After this we found out the results of our online personality tests. We went up in pairs and discussed with one of the workers the results. After this we did 1 to 1 mini interviews, I thought this was good experience and gave us a realistic picture of what going for an actual job was like.

To conclude, this Lucideon trip was very useful and was a great experience. I thought they did a great job and would definitely return there again if we had the chance."

Thank you to Maxwell and Lucideon!



Mr Harvey - Assistant Principal

Misuse of Technology and Social Media



Another request to parents to continue to be vigilant when it comes to checking the usage of your child's mobile phone or internet access. We continue to deal with a number of 'fall-outs' amongst friends which are caused, more often than not, by hurtful and insensitive posts on social media or via text messaging. As an Academy we continue to teach the students about the importance of Internet Safety, but the issues that these types of inappropriate posts cause, are unnecessary and upsetting for those affected.



Sanctions are imposed on any student who is caught deliberately misusing technology, so your support in monitoring this situation is most appreciated.

Uniform Standards and Expectations

Hopefully 2017 will be a nice summer weather wise. Our uniform expectations for the summer months are as follows:

- ◆ All students continue to attend the Academy in full uniform (including blazer and jumper).
- ◆ Mr Bishop decides on a daily basis whether the uniform can be modified during the day. Therefore it may be that the students are allowed to carry their blazer rather than wear it.
- ◆ Staff may allow students to remove jumpers during lessons, however when students are moving around the Academy the expectation is that jumpers and blazers are worn.
- ◆ When the temperature rises further, Mr Bishop may decide that students are allowed to take off their blazer and jumper at all times around the Academy.

The standard of uniform is something that we are proud of at The Excel Academy, and our expectations will not be compromised. I hope we can rely on your support in ensuring your child has their full uniform every day and is then respectful of the Principal's decision on a day by day basis. Please be aware that the building is temperature controlled and air conditioned so the comfort of staff and students remains a priority at all times.



Make Up and Skirt Length

Can I please remind parents to monitor the uniform and make up levels of their daughters. Excessive make up is not allowed at the Academy, we believe that a discreet level is appropriate and should be permitted. Many schools enforce a complete make up ban, however at The Excel Academy we respect that some students may want to wear some make up for personal reasons. Where girls are wearing too much this causes unnecessary conflict between themselves and staff who are simply enforcing the Academy expectations. It is at the staff's discretion as to whether the make up is too much and, should this be decided, then students will be made to remove it.



The rolling of skirts is an unnecessary uniform matter that staff deal with with a minority of students. This habit means that skirt lengths become inappropriately short. I hope I can rely on your support in reinforcing the Academy rule on skirts which is 'knee length or just above.' Almost all the students have a skirt of the correct length, however the trend of rolling them up at the waist means that they then become unacceptable.

Conflict Resolution

Where students have friendship issues, the Academy has a strong pastoral system to assist the students in overcoming problems. Every student has a Form Tutor, Head of Year and access to an extremely strong Student Welfare service. We continue to educate the students about conflict resolution and how best to deal with difficult situations with their peers. The principle message we share is that they must tell an adult within school if they are experiencing difficulties. Where students feel like they are able to sort out situations amongst themselves this usually doesn't succeed, and an adult's intervention is needed so that situations can remain calm and constructive.

The Academy has a zero tolerance policy towards students who escalate situations and become aggressive towards others, whether that be verbal or physical aggression. The Excel Academy is proud of its reputation as a safe and happy place for young people to learn, and we will continue to deal severely with any reports of bullying or inappropriate behaviour.



Home / Students / Safeguarding / Students

Safeguarding and Wellbeing Advice for Students



Report a Concern



On that note, please encourage your child to share any problems with a member of staff, or online through our safeguarding section on the Academy website. The support network we provide is most effective when we find out early that a student is experiencing difficulties, that way we can nip any issues in the bud and support your child through any difficulties. If you notice any changes in behaviour with your child please let us know so that we can help with any possible issues that may have developed with their peers.

Thank you.



Safeguarding

- ⇒ Our team
- ⇒ YouTube
- ⇒ SEN and being e-safe
- ⇒ Social Learning Theory
- ⇒ Apps
- ⇒ Consent Video
- ⇒ 360 Safe

Meet the Team!

In September 2016 a new safeguarding team was developed to include a range of staff who can support your child with welfare needs. Generally, this means that your child has somewhere to go if they feel upset, lonely, scared or worried about anything in or out of school.

This team consists of 5 members of staff.



Miss Smith works across the College Academies Trust (Excel Academy, The Discovery Academy, Maple Court, Studio College) in her role as safeguarding lead. She has been working within safeguarding for 9 years and teaching for 15 years, but now has the opportunity to do this work with even more students and staff!

Mrs Wainwright (right) has a wealth of experience in supporting young people and is on hand every day in the welfare office.



Mrs Sherratt (left) is usually everybody's first port of call! She is incredibly approachable and likes nothing more than seeing happy and safe students!

Mr Pickup (right) is a Maths teacher, and as you can see our only male member of the team! We are looking to expand this – so watch this space!



Mrs Malhi (left) is also the Academy's SENCO. She has lots of different roles to play in the Academy, but oversees all the Special Educational needs provision.

Information for Parents / Carers



Safeguarding Briefing 03/03/17



For parents of younger children, consider giving access to YouTube Kids, rather than the full YouTube service. It's free, no sign-up and it's multi platform.

RESTRICTED MODE within YouTube is a way of restricting objectionable content. It isn't perfect, but it can help to stop your children seeing inappropriate content on their computer or other device. Restricted Mode is available on web browsers, and on the apps on most devices and is really easy to set up.

Have that conversation with your child about what they are doing on YouTube; have they got their own YouTube channel, do they upload videos?

Talk to your children about the channels they watch and assure yourself that these are appropriate.

- Does your child have his/her own channel? Some children I speak to have their own, and also say their parents aren't aware. Check, and see what they're uploading.
- Apply the Restricted Mode settings. Do it with your child so that you can explain why you're doing it. Equally, let them know that if they see something concerning they can talk to you about it.
- For younger children, consider using the YouTube Kids app instead.
- Learn how to report (flag) inappropriate videos.



Special Educational Needs and Being e-safe

We know that for children and young people the internet can be a really empowering space. Students can disclose as much – or as little as they choose about themselves - although there is still the age old problem of over-sharing, but this can be a problem for young and old alike!

When a child or young person has additional needs they can reinvent themselves and be just about whoever they want, and part of that persona may not be someone who wishes to share any additional needs or vulnerabilities.

This can mean that children and young people become more vulnerable by virtue of the fact that allowances made for them in their offline world may not be made in the online world.

I would like to think that our world is changing and just because a child or young person has special educational needs or a disability this does not mean that opportunities to grow, develop and experience the same opportunities as a mainstream child are unavailable to them.

The internet is such an enabling space and allowing children and young people to make, share and comment on spaces such as YouTube can help students to grow in confidence and allow them to take control over their online presence as well as make connections with other like-minded people.

Of course we need to ensure we are educating students around the potential risk, on these sites so it is important to ensure that we revisit online safety messages regularly with all children and young people.



Social Learning Theory

There has been a substantial amount of re-search into children viewing violence and aggression on television and the relationship this has with the level of violence that children show. In the 1960's a Psychologist called Bandura showed some children a video of adults hitting and kicking a "Bobo Doll".

In this experiment the children who were about 5 years of age watched this video and copied the behaviour; some of them even copied the phrases used by the adults.

This is known as 'social learning theory' and can be seen in the behaviours of children in nursery/early years settings when they copy the adults in their lives.

Children under the age of 7 are very susceptible to behaviours they see modelled by people older than themselves. However as children mature they are able to assess other people's behaviour and using a 'moral' viewpoint they can work out if they wish/ want to copy that behaviour.

This occurs through a process called 'empathy', 'mentalising' or 'theory of mind' which means children can put themselves into the shoes of another person and using a process of if...then...they work out that if they carried out that behaviour what may happen.

When (children) are exposed to violent media on television there is an increased 'likelihood' that this will also increase the possibility of them (children) copying that behaviour. This may also lead them (children) to carry out this behaviour in the future.

Social learning theory can be applied to YouTube in the same way. Recent research by Childwise have found that YouTube has 'overtaken' watching television as a means of young children entertainment. In short this means that if children are viewing material on YouTube that is violent, aggressive, rude, racist, ageist, sexist, lacks empathy, uses humour around cyberbullying, is pornographic or highly sexual in nature then this behaviour may be copied.

But YouTube is not all bad; children can learn how to tie their laces, how a volcano works, share tips and tricks for homework through to gaming. They can consume information in a more visually stimulating way than can often be demonstrated in a classroom (e.g. volcanoes!) and this can only be a good thing.

APPS

Name: Monkey

Age: Rated 12+

Web: <http://monkey.cool>

New Smartphone App allows Facetime with random Stranger

Well it seems that it's now possible thanks to new App 'Monkey'. Its founders Ben Paster-nak (17) and Isaiah Turner (18) have described it as 'Snapchat's for your real-life friends. Monkey is for your internet friends.' Pasternak has claimed the app has made 215,000 users in 5 weeks.



So how's it work? Once you register for the Monkey App, you verify your phone number, age, Snapchat name and whether you are male or female – it then asks you to allow access to your contacts. Once this is done, 'Monkey' will try to connect you with people from across the world of a similar age.

Once connected both users have to 'add time' to continue with the FaceTime, otherwise the chat will disconnect. When FaceTime has been enabled there's an option onscreen to add the person as a friend on Snapchat.



According to a recent Interview in 'The New Yorker' Monkey's aim is to be 'Chat-roulette without the pervs.' Monkey App is currently rated as 12+ in the app store and is trending as of 25/1/2017. It's also up there in the Top 100 Chart of free apps.

The 'random nature' of FaceTime Chat requests - Yes - it's random. For example, when testing the App the user accepted a chat request from a guy sitting in a pub drink-ing beer. Once the chat was accepted it was difficult to end it. It appeared they could only do so by closing out of the app hitting the home button or letting the countdown timer end.

You don't actually need to connect your real Snapchat username to start finding people to chat with. They used the word 'test' and it allowed me to go right to the dis-cover screen to find people to FaceTime. Once you have Monkey set up, it's very easy to go back in and change your age profile to either younger or older.

In testing, the App appears to have no user reporting, privacy or safety tools in place where you can block or report anything inappropriate. There is no real verification in place. It seems to verify that the Snapchat user-name is actually that of the account owner on the Monkey App.

Consent Video

I think the topic of consent is really important.

A useful video about consent for older students is 'Consent as Tea' an animation from Thames Valley Police. You can watch it on YouTube here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZwvrxVavnQ> (Do beware that there are a number of spoofs of this video on YouTube so make sure you use the link above). You may want to show this to your Y11 child at home

Good news! Both The Excel Academy and Discovery Academy have applied for the e-safety kitemark! Hopefully we will get an assessment in June/July time, but until then we will be working really hard to make sure your children continue to be educated about e-safety and are educating others! I will be sending staff helpful tips each briefing on how they can support this process, but if you as parents and carers could support this process by reading these briefings and the newsletters and by keeping us informed about e-safe issues you discover, together we can make sure your children are safe and feel safe.

Resources: #DITTO: Andrew Hall Safeguarding Consultant: PSmith.

Regards, Paula

Paula Ripplingham-Smith (Assistant Principal, College Academies Trust)

Dates for your diary

Spring Term 2017	
Academy Closes	Friday 07 April
	N.B. Easter is 16 April
Summer Term 2017	
Academy Opens	Monday 24 April
May Day	Monday 01 May
Half Term	Monday 29 May to Friday 02 June
Academy Closes	Friday 21 July

Upcoming Events

Year 7 Parents Evening	Thursday 04 May 2017	All Year 7 Parents Welcome
Year 11 Exams start	Monday 15 May 2017	
Year 10 Work Experience	Monday 22 May - Friday 26 May 2017	