



February 2019

Dear parents/carers,

We have shared an important message with all students today, following some concerns raised to us about the use of a particular teen dating app called 'Yubo' (previously 'Yellow'). There are other apps that have similar risks but we wanted to alert you to this, particularly with Safer Internet Day approaching on 5th February, due to the lack of regulation of the app (lack of age verification) and how it can identify the user's location.

We do not intend to demonise social media at all but do feel that, periodically, it is important to re-focus on some of the very real risks that it can pose and how difficult it is for young people to navigate given how 'normal' the use of social media is for them. We are encouraging open and honest conversations in school about this topic as this can sometimes be a very secretive and 'separate' part of their lives. Ultimately, our hope is that every young person has a trusted adult they can talk to about such matters, whatever their involvement with social media, and we are very happy to talk to students and parents/carers about any concerns.

This link takes you to a useful page with further information about Yubo, as well as some really useful advice about supporting young people in staying safe online: <https://www.net-aware.org.uk/networks/yubo/>

Please also review our 'online safety' information on the website, under the 'parent' tab. Below is a summary of what we have shared with students:

*Some significant concerns have been raised about the dating app 'YUBO' (previously known as 'yellow') - this is an app aimed at young people, which enables users to connect with each other and links in with Snapchat. Because there are no checks in place regarding users' ages, YUBO places users at potential risk as they can claim to be whatever age they choose, meaning that some older teens and adults are using it to groom younger children and teenagers. Another concern is how the app can allow your location to be discovered, placing users at further risk. There are other apps that are similar, and we want to remind you to make sure you keep yourselves safe by never giving out personal information to people you don't know (however well you think you have got to know them online, you really don't know their identity for sure), arrange to meet people you have met online, even if you are in groups - this can be very dangerous, share pictures of yourself that you wouldn't want out in public or share your location with people you don't know. Social media can be a brilliant way of communicating but there are real and significant dangers associated with it – please use it responsibly and do not put yourselves at risk.*

Kind regards,

Mrs C Knight, Assistant Principal, Student Welfare

