



# St Ursula's Convent School

# The Weekly

Week Ending  
2<sup>nd</sup> October 2020  
Issue Number 005



Dear Parents / Carers

I have spent time this week interviewing prospective candidates for our Head Girl and Junior Leadership Team. It has been an absolute pleasure to be involved in this and my congratulations to all the girls who made it to the shortlist. Everyone of them spoke eloquently and with confidence. They all expressed a deep gratitude to the school and a strong desire to 'give back'. It was truly serviam in action. Mr Mandalos, the key stage 4 leader, will announce the names of the head girl and junior leadership team soon.



We held our second 'virtual' open event on Tuesday morning this week and had a large number of participants. It is not the same as having a live open morning but all departments produced short videos about their subjects. In addition Mr Collins, who as well as being one of our leaders in Science is our Digital Learning Co-ordinator, produced an amazing video of the school which can be viewed by following the link below.

<https://www.stursulas.com/news/virtual-open-event/>

Please do take a look – it is amazing.

We said goodbye to Mrs Durrant and Mrs Lanzon in July but today, Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> October, we were able to have a Mass

at which they were presented with a blessing from the Archbishop of Southwark, the most Reverend John Wilson. The blessing, in the form of a certificate, was presented by Sister Kathleen, our Provincial. I will post photographs in next weeks newsletter. Our best wishes to them both for a long and happy retirement and a huge thank you for everything they have done for St Ursula's.

As I mentioned last week the weather is changing. Outdoor coats must be navy or black with no logos or fashion symbols. Hats are not part of the uniform and therefore are not permitted, scarves must be plain navy or black.

Can I ask that you remind your daughters that they must wear masks on public transport. We have had a complaint from a medical professional who travelled on the bus with a large group of St Ursula's girls who removed their masks when they got on the bus. This is obviously disappointing and undermining of everything we are trying to do in school to keep our entire community safe.

My best wishes  
Mrs C Hamilton  
Headteacher



## Courageous and resilient



*"What matters is not great deeds, but great love. Holiness is an everyday thing."*

*"Let us not grow tired of prayer: confidence works miracles."*

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> October was the Feast Day of St. Thérèse of Lisieux. This much loved saint and Doctor of the Church gives us a wonderful example of how to live out our faith in a simple, unassuming and very practical way. She had absolute confidence in God which enabled her to be courageous and determined. This week, Little Way Week, we have been following her example by doing little things with love.



St. Thérèse of Lisieux – pray for us!

**CHAPLAINCY TEAM**

In these socially distanced times, there has never been a greater need for a prayerful and active Chaplaincy Team. As a result, this year there will be an increased student chaplaincy presence with more girls leading on faith initiatives in their form and year groups. The new Chaplaincy Teams will be announced in the coming days.



**"When I have a problem I ask the saint (Thérèse) not to solve it, but to take it in her hands and help me accept it." (Pope Francis)**



## GCSES 2021

We are aware that some pupils in Year 11 are anxious about their GCSE exams during this uncertain time.

The most up to date information from Ofqual, and the exam boards, can be found on the [exams section of the school website](#)

Year 11 pupils will receive their first report on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> October. More information about this report can be found in [Ms Johnson's letter to Year 11 parents](#)

## GCSE Examinations - Autumn Series 2020

**GCSE Examinations for a small number of our Year 11 pupils, who were due to take GCSEs in June 2020, will be held in school from 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020**

The [GCSE timetable](#) is available on the [Exams section of the school website](#). This timetable sets out the day and time of each exam.

Pupils will also be issued with the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) [Information for Candidates for Written Examinations](#) alongside a Candidate Handbook before October half term. This information should be studied carefully by all pupils, parents and carers to ensure that the rules and regulations of the GCSE examinations are fully understood.

Results from these November GCSEs will be released to pupils on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2021. We wish our Year 11s every success in these examinations.



### The JCQ rules include:

- Pupils must be on time for all exams
- Pupils must not take notes, mobile phones, iPods, MP3/4 players, smartwatches or wrist watches with a data storage device into the exam room
- Pupils must not talk, try to communicate with, or disturb other pupils in the exam room
- Any pencil cases must be completely clear and see through
- If pupils wear a wrist watch they must remove it and place it on their desk when they arrive in the exam room
- Small, plastic water bottles must be completely clear with any labels removed and contain water only



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Please ensure that your daughter comes to school with a face covering everyday. This is in line with Government and Local Authority guidance.

Your daughter **MUST** wear a face covering in all corridors and communal areas.

## Anne Frank Creative Writing Award

Congratulations to Jessica who received a certificate of participation for her entry in the Anne Frank creative writing award.

## Message from the Safeguarding Team



The past several months have certainly seen us face many new and unprecedented challenges, one of which being the increased use of many different social media platforms. It is with no doubt I'm sure you are all familiar with the problems such platforms can create and the need for close monitoring and parental restrictions / security settings.

Please see below a flyer highlighting the need for such security settings to be in place.

Wishing you all a good week

Mrs T Higgins  
Wellbeing & Safeguarding Officer





TikTok is a video-sharing social media app available on iOS and Android which lets users create, share, and view user created videos much in a similar manner to Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat. It's main draw, however, is that users can record and upload bite-sized looping videos of themselves lip-syncing and dancing to popular music or soundbites, often for comedic effect, which can then be further enhanced with filters, emojis and stickers. TikTok has been designed with the young user in mind and has a very addictive appeal. At the beginning of 2019 it skyrocketed in popularity to become the iOS store's most downloaded app with over 33 million downloads. Estimates suggest that it now has anything between 500 million and over 1 billion monthly active users worldwide.



## What parents need to know about

# TIKTOK



### MATURE CONTENT

On the iOS store, TikTok is listed as 12+. On the Google Play Store it is rated as 'Parental guidance recommended'. When signing up for the app, it's possible to lie about your age without any form of verification. As children scroll through their feed, most of the videos they're likely to come across are lighthearted or funny takes on dance routines which are designed to make people laugh. However there has been a slew of videos which have been reported for featuring drug and alcohol abuse, self-harm and sexual content, including young teens dressing overtly sexually and behaving suggestively. Given the deluge of material uploaded to TikTok every day, it's impossible to moderate everything and it can be quite common to come across explicit content on the 'for you' feed when logging into the platform.

### INAPPROPRIATE MUSIC

TikTok revolves around creating music videos through lip-syncing and dancing. Inevitably, some of the music featured by users will contain explicit or suggestive lyrics. Given the undeniably young user base, there is a risk that children may look to imitate the explicit language they hear or the suggestive actions they see when viewing others user's videos on the app.

### TIKTOK FAME

TikTok is very image focused and there is a notable preoccupation with appearing cool and attractive. Many teenagers now attempt to go viral and become what's known in-app as 'TikTok famous'. TikTok (and its predecessor musical.ly) has spawned its own celebrities – social media stars Loren Gray and Jacob Sartorius have been catapulted to fame through their initial exposure on the app. Obviously, most budding influencers looking to become the next big thing will be disappointed, but this may have the knock-on effect of making them go to more and more drastic lengths to get noticed.

### ONLINE PREDATORS

As a social network, TikTok makes it easy to connect with other users. This includes the ability to comment on and react to other user's videos, follow their profile and download their content. Be aware that by default, any user can comment on your child's video if their account is set to public. Most interactions are harmless enough but as an app, TikTok is prone to predators because of the abundance of younger users.

### ADDICTIVE NATURE

Social media is designed to be addictive and TikTok is no different. It can be fun and hugely entertaining. However, it is also because of this that it can be hard to put down. In addition to the short, punchy nature of the looping video format, the app's ability to keep you guessing what will come on screen next makes it easy to turn a five-minute visit into 45-minute visit.

### IN-APP PURCHASES

Aside from the content, there's also the option to purchase in-app extras called 'TikTok coins'. Prices range from £0.99 for 100 coins to an eye-watering £99.99 for 10,000 coins. TikTok coins are used to purchase different emojis to reward content creators that a user finds funny or entertaining. In the iOS version of the app you can disable the option to buy TikTok coins but this sadly doesn't seem to be a feature in the Android version.



## Safety Tips For Parents

### TALK ABOUT ONLINE DANGERS

Assuming your child is above the age limit to use the app, make sure you also take the time to talk to them about what they are seeing on the app. Have a dialogue, get them to give you their opinion on what is inappropriate and model the correct behaviour for them. Go over why they shouldn't give out private information or identifiable photos and be positive and understanding of them. In the long run, getting them to think critically about what they're seeing goes a long way to keeping them social media savvy.

### USE PRIVACY SETTINGS

Undoubtedly, the easiest way to safeguard your child on TikTok is to make sure their account is set to private. This means only those users your child approves can view, like, and follow their content. Setting the account to private may dash with your child's goal of social media stardom, but it will keep their account secure from strangers. This setting can be enabled under the privacy and safety menu by pressing the ellipsis in the 'me' tab of the app. To be extra safe, there are additional controls available to toggle such as who can send comments and messages, among other options.

### ENABLE RESTRICTED MODE

In the digital wellbeing section there's the ability to turn on restricted mode using a PIN. Restricted mode filters out content that is not age appropriate although it should be noted that this isn't always 100% fool proof. When enabling restricted mode, parents should still be vigilant to what their child is watching and take note that the algorithm moderating content is not infallible.

### EXPLORE AND LEARN YOURSELF

Understanding and learning the app yourself is a great way to get to grips with TikTok. You could then even use the app with your child and watch some videos with them. If you are the parent of a teen, even if it does not make you popular, keep a close eye on what they're viewing and sharing. That said, it's a brilliant chance to turn it into a bonding opportunity with your child also. You could even unleash your inner performer and make videos with them while (more importantly) keeping them safe online.

### LEARN HOW TO REPORT AND BLOCK INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

With the proper privacy settings in place, TikTok can be a safe space for your child to express themselves. However, just in case something does manage to slip through, make sure your child knows how to recognise and report content that isn't appropriate and get them to come to you about what they have seen. TikTok allows users to report offenders and comments within the app. You can also block individual users by going on their profile.

### MODERATE SCREEN TIME

As entertaining as TikTok is, you can help your child moderate their time on the app by making use of the digital wellbeing section. Under the screen time management option, you can limit the daily allotted time allowed on the app in increments ranging from 40 to 120 minutes. You can also lock this preference behind a PIN number which has to be inputted in order to then exceed the daily time limit. This way your child can get their daily dose of memes without wasting away the day.

## Meet our expert

Pete Badh is a writer with over 10+ years in research and analysis. Working within a specialist area for West Yorkshire Police, Pete has contributed work which has been pivotal in successfully winning high profile cases in court as well as writing as a subject matter expert for industry handbooks.



### \*NEW FOR 2020\* FAMILY SAFETY MODE

TikTok Family Safety Mode allows parents to link their own TikTok account to their child's. It's a great way to oversee your child's digital wellbeing by giving you direct control over their safety settings and being able to remotely turn features on and off. This includes managing screen time, the ability to send and receive direct messages (and with whom) and the ability to restrict the appearance of content that might not be age appropriate.

SOURCES: [www.tiktok.com](http://www.tiktok.com)



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## SOS - Do you have a unused laptop you could donate to the school?

With our current COVID-19 restrictions in place, the majority of our bookable computer rooms are now being used as Year 8 classrooms. This means that other year groups cannot use this space as bubbles are unable to mix.

In addition, we know that we have a number of students in our community who do not have access to computers at home. Should these students need to self-isolate, they would hugely benefit from access to a laptop to use at home.

If you (or your workplace) do have any laptops that you could donate to the school, we would be incredibly grateful. The laptop would need to have a charger and, ideally for you donate it.

If you do have a laptop you could donate, but do not know how to return it to factory settings, please don't let this be a barrier to donation. Please contact to the school and we will see if we can support.

If you think you or your workplace can help, please contact [admin@stursulas.com](mailto:admin@stursulas.com)

