



Dear Parents and Carers

We are aware that some questions have been asked with regards to why we are not using the 'Zoom' video conferencing platform with children, staff and parents. As a Trust we have made the informed decision to use just one platform Microsoft Teams. The advantages of using this system are:

- Microsoft Teams is a collaboration platform which means teachers and children can video conference and share work with each other. It also allows real time marking and feedback of children's work as teachers and children collaborate on the same documents.
- Teachers have been trained in using Microsoft Teams safely and effectively.
- Only Discovery Schools can access our platform space making this a safer environment for children to be online.
- Educationally the system allows assignments to be set, home learning uploaded and ongoing conversations with your child's class teacher to take place regularly.
- Microsoft Teams allows us to monitor the online behaviours of children and staff keeping the platform a safer place.

In contrast, it has been reported that Zoom has been criticised for a range of privacy issues, including sending user data to Facebook, wrongly claiming the app had end-to-end encryption, and allowing meeting hosts to track attendees. The huge uptake of Zoom has created the new phenomenon of 'zoombombing' which sees uninvited guests join video conferences, usually to shout abuse, share pornography or make racist remarks.

We do recognise that you may be using Zoom for personal or family purposes and so have included an information leaflet from the National Online Safety Website which includes key safety messages you need to know in order to keep you and your family safe.

The Trust has aspirations of delivering live lessons and face to face communications with children and parents so we are taking a measured approach to ensure the sustainability of an online learning strategy. This aims to provide a safe and engaging online learning platform which we are currently developing. Over the next few weeks and months the projects being undertaken will be rolled out to all schools and we look forward to your engagement and feedback.

We hope this clarifies our thinking and answers your questions.

Yours sincerely

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