

HOUSEPARTY APP- Be aware-

Click [Safetycard2020-Houseparty](#) for further information

We continue to look after our students at this difficult time and have noticed that there has been an increase in socialising online using a variety of apps-Houseparty is one such app but it does carry with it some concerns that we want to warn parents and carers about. We have gathered some information for you here-

Safety Tips for students using Houseparty

What is it?

It allows users to live-chat with up to 8 people where they can play games and chat with friends and family in a 'room' (group video chat). It's currently available on Android and iOS phones, macOS and Chrome.

Apple rate Houseparty as **12+** and Google Play urge '**parental guidance**', but **Common Sense Media and others recommend users be at least 15 to use the platform**. Houseparty's privacy policy requires **users to be at least 13 years old**.

What are the core functions?

- Users can have group video calls with 2 to 8 people and play games together.
- Users can send group and private notes to friends or leave 'face-mail' (video-voicemail).
- Users receive a push notification when their friends have logged telling them they are "*in the house*".

What are the risks?

As with all live-streaming platforms, **screenshots, unsolicited messages and self-generated sexualised imagery can put young people at risk.**

- Links to 'rooms' can also be **shared publicly** – to other platforms which could see **uninvited users joining**.
- **'Rooms' should be locked to prevent uninvited guests from joining** – remember all rooms will lock by default if a user enables 'private mode'.
- If an **uninvited guest** joins a room they can easily **'friend'** others taking part in the live stream.
- It appears that when a friend is invited, **their friends can also join a 'room' without the invitation**.

Top Tips for Parents and Carers

1. Encourage young people to **only chat with people they know in real life and to use private mode (this locks all rooms they are in)**.
2. Make sure young people **'lock their room'** to **prevent uninvited guests** from joining.
3. **Try using Houseparty together** to get an idea of how it works – you might even enjoy it.
4. **Encourage kindness and respect online** – to help create a safer internet for everyone.
5. **Make sure young people understand the risks of image sharing and screenshots online.**