# E-Safety Alert

**TWITCH and OMEGLE**

Twitch – is a live video streaming service for video gamers to stream live footage of themselves playing video games. Viewers watching your stream can type live comments about your stream as you play.

As of May 2018, it had 2.2 million broadcasters monthly and 15 million daily active users.

To sign up for Twitch you must be aged 13+ and Twitch states on its website that The Twitch Services are not available to persons **under the age of 13**. If you are between the ages of **13 and 18**, you may only use the Twitch Services under the supervision of a parent or legal guardian who agrees to be bound by these Terms of Service.
The typical Twitch user is male and aged between 18 and 34 years of age.

**Our Concerns** – While Twitch is a legitimate platform enjoyed by millions of users it doesn't come without issues particularly for younger users. Comments left on peoples live streams can be at times very abusive, negative and explicit. Female gamers who stream are often the target for abuse and receive offensive and explicit comments. Younger users are also known to be targeted for abuse by older users who see them as an easy target to wind up etc.

We are also aware of users becoming very upset and stressed when no one watches their streams or they receive negative comments. This is having a negative impact upon their self-esteem and confidence. Appropriate content is a major issue with regards to younger views as many of the games broadcast are not suitable with games such as GTA 5 and other 18 cert games broadcast. These broadcasts are often accompanied with a content warning on start-up but you don't have to verify your age.

The local authority have seen a rise in primary age children saying that they are using Twitch. It may not mean that they have an account as you can access Twitch streams without needing an account. You cannot leave comments on someone's stream however without an account.

https://www.net-aware.org.uk/networks/twitch/

**Omegle** - is a free online chat and video chat website that allows users to socialize with others without the need to register. The service randomly pairs users in one-on-one chat sessions where they chat anonymously. Users must be aged 13 years plus and any one aged between 13 and 18 are encouraged to gain parental consent.

**Our Concerns** - Omegle offers a monitored service and an unmonitored service. The monitored service is supposed to protect younger users from inappropriate content including nudity and sexualised behaviour, however it has a reputation of not being very effective. The unmonitored service is pretty much anything goes and has a reputation for a lot of sexualised content and nudity. The local authority e-safety

lead has talked to a number of young people who have used Omegle and all have reported to seeing adult males and in some cases females naked and more often than not engaging in inappropriate sexualised acts.

There is also a lot of reports of users dressing up as horror movie characters and trying to scare and intimidate others by making threats such as "I know where you live" and "I'm watching you".

In the opinion of the local authority experts, Omegle is not suitable for children under 13 years of age due to the risk of being exposed to inappropriate and explicit content. Alongside this is the fact the site encourages users to chat and interact with strangers. We also find it hard to recommend Omegle for users aged 13 and over due to the reasons already mentioned.

For more info - https://www.net-aware.org.uk/networks/omegle/

If you need support in putting in place controls and checks in place please contact us in school either by telephone or by email.

Our e-safety co-ordinator is Mr Algie. His email address is palgie@educationvillage.org.uk