

It has come to our attention that, in common with several other local schools, female Clyst Vale students who are users of Instagram and other popular social networks have recently been targeted.

The targeting starts by trying to persuade the student that that the person making contact is known to the student's friends and works for a modelling agency. Names of friends are sometimes used if privacy settings are not strong, and names can be harvested.

The attacker then goes on to attempt to coerce the girl into sending a series of increasingly revealing photographs as part of an 'audition'.

If a student sends photos, the attacker is likely to become increasingly aggressive by threatening to release the image(s). The attacker may also use the image(s) as proof of his/her status when targeting future victims. Therefore, it is really important that students are encouraged to report any such contact and made to feel safe in reporting any errors of judgement they themselves may have made by responding or sending images.

We take our students' safety extremely seriously, so this is to inform you of a possible threat rather than cause alarm. Despite all students receiving various E-Safety reminders each year, there are always new and ever more devious attempts to make them vulnerable online.

If you are concerned that your child may have been targeted or involved in this attack, please contact your child's Head of School.

The usual E-Safety rules continue to apply; education and awareness remain key. You should aim to maintain an awareness of the online life of your child(ren). What services do they access? Who are they communicating with? Have they recently become more secretive or shown suspicious behaviours? Maintaining a supportive, honest and open dialogue with your son or daughter is probably the single best protection a parent or carer can provide.

For your information, we have included below screenshots of actual Instagram exchanges associated with this attack:



Old logo



New logo

For any parent not aware, Instagram is a social network which is aimed at image sharing.

It is available on most mobile phones and tablet devices. Its old and new logos are shown above.

It describes itself thus:

***Instagram** is an online mobile photo-sharing, video-sharing, and social networking service that enables its users to take pictures and videos, and share them either publicly or privately on the app, as well as through a variety of other social networking platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, and Flickr.*

