



Safeguarding Newsletter

Issue 10 – 29.4.24

Nothing is more important to us than the safety and welfare of our pupils.

We are fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our children and young people within our school. We work closely with families and a range of professional external agencies to secure this and follow Dudley Safeguarding policies and procedures within our school.

We hope you find this Safeguarding Newsletter useful and aim to send at least one each half term.

NSPCC – Online Safety support for parents

NSPCC have produced some new free materials for parents. The Keeping Children Safe Online workshop provides parents and carers with information about how to support their child in their online world. The 40 minute pre-recorded presentation covers topics such as online bullying, mental health, and social media, as well as signposting to resources and organisations for help and support.

Find the resource on this link; <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/free-online-safety-group-workshops/>

Young Minds

If you're worried about your child or young person's mental health or wellbeing, you can speak to Young Minds over the phone or chat to them online.

The Helpline provides detailed information, advice and support to parents or main carers of children and young people aged 25 or under.

Remember, it's okay to reach out for help. We all need a little extra support sometimes, and Young Minds hear from parents and carers just like you all the time.

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-helpline/>

Sleep and Mental Health

Good sleep can help us to: manage feelings, emotions and behaviour, be alert and remember things properly, be attentive and learn effectively.

However, lack of sleep or poor-quality sleep can make us feel low, anxious, irritable or confused. It can also make it harder to manage our emotions and the challenges in life.

Sleep problems can be both a symptom of, and a contributor to, mental health problems. Experiencing a sleep problem is very common, with as many as 1 in 3 people having difficulties sleeping. Lack of sleep over a consistent period of time can also increase impulsive behaviour, negative thinking, feelings of anger, and is linked to increased risk of mental health problems such as depression and anxiety disorders.

The recommended sleep time for primary aged pupils is between 9-11 hours. Have a look at the top tips for parents at the end of this newsletter about developing healthy sleep routines for your children.



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Hate Crime:

1. What is Hate Crime?

A hate crime or hate incident is when somebody is targeted because of their:

- Disability
- Gender identity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation

2. What behaviors can hate crime include?

Hate crimes or incidents can take many forms including:

Verbal abuse or insults	Offensive graffiti
Threatening behaviour	Robbery
Bullying at school or at work	Harassment
Abuse via phones or the internet	Damage to property
Physical attacks and assaults	Neighbour disputes
Encouraging others to commit hate crimes	

This is not an endless list

3. What is the impact?

Research shows that hate crimes and incidents cause more emotional harm than similar crimes not motivated by prejudice.

They create fear in victims, groups and communities and can break down community cohesion.

National research shows incidents of hate crime are under-reported. Sometimes victims and witnesses are reluctant to report for a number of reasons, for example they may think it isn't serious enough, they won't be believed or nothing will be done about it.

4. Who can report a hate crime or incident?

In Dudley a variety of reporting mechanisms are available to ensure people are able to report in confidence where they feel most comfortable.

Anybody can report a hate crime or incident whether they are a victim, witness or a third party.

Partners in Dudley are committed to tackling this behaviour and encourage all hate crimes and incidents to be reported.

5. How can a hate crime/incident be reported?

In Dudley, the main reporting options are:

West Midlands Police: Call 999 in an emergency. For all other matters please visit WM Police [Online](#)

Dudley Council Plus 0300 555 2345

True Vision www.report-it.org.uk

Victim Support 01384 241511 www.victimsupport.org.uk

Or by contacting one of our **third party reporting centres**

6. What is a third party reporting centre?

Third party reporting centres are community locations where victims can report hate crimes or incidents without having to contact the police directly. Staff at the centres have been trained to help you report a hate crime through the True Vision website - this can be done anonymously if preferred. The information is then passed directly to your local police force.

For local third party reporting centres visit: www.dudleysafeandsound.org/hatecrime

7. What to do next

For more information on hate crime visit www.dudleysafeandsound.org/hatecrime

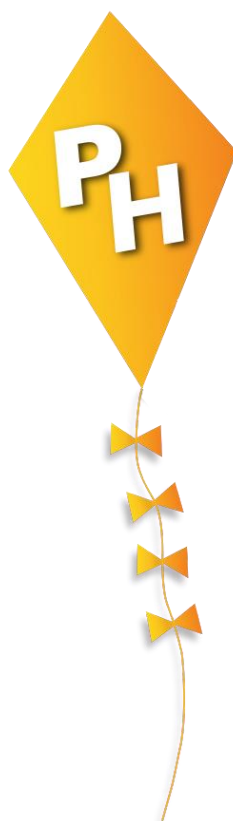
You can also download the West Midlands Police Hate Crime App by visiting the Apple APP store or Google Play

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Referrals

As a school there are a number of places we can refer to for support, from parenting advice to help with children's clothing. If there is something you feel would benefit you and your family, please make contact with a member of the Safeguarding Team who will deal with your request confidentially and without judgement... we may be able to help in ways you wouldn't realise.



Meet our Safeguarding Team

Tracy Curnin



DSL

Simon Duncan



Deputy DSL

Hayley Owen



Deputy DSL

Ellen Foxall



Deputy DSL

Karen Bridgwater



Safeguarding Officer

Peters Hill Primary School

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10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators DEVELOPING HEALTHY SLEEP PATTERNS

Quality sleep is paramount for wellbeing as it impacts our cognitive function, emotional balance and overall health. A World Health Organisation study highlighted that 44% of young people reported difficulty sleeping – potentially affecting their mood, concentration and immune system. Our guide offers expert tips for helping children to sleep more healthily.

1 MINDFUL TECH USE

Encourage a balanced approach to screen time. While phones, laptops, tablets and so on can serve as a helpful means of stress relief, it's advisable to minimise their use right before bed. These devices can keep the mind racing long after they're switched off, impacting how easily and how well a person can sleep.

2 EFFECTIVE SLEEP PRACTICES

Offer practical advice on reinforcing certain habits that have a positive influence on sleeping patterns. Children could start keeping a diary which they add to each evening, for example – or they could use up excess energy by exercising during the day.

3 HYDRATION HABITS

Underline the importance of drinking plenty of water throughout the day, while limiting drinks close to bedtime to prevent disruptions during the night: it's a lot harder to switch off if you keep needing to get out of bed for the toilet. Avoiding caffeinated drinks later in the day also allows the body and brain to slow down naturally, without any chemicals firing them back up.

4 CONSISTENT BEDTIME SCHEDULE

Assist children in developing consistent bedtime routines that tell the body it's time to wind down, promoting a more relaxed state. Establish specific activities for young ones right before going to bed – such as brushing their teeth – to set up an association between that action and falling asleep.

5 OPTIMAL SLEEP ENVIRONMENT

Ensure that the bedroom is comfortable, dark and free from distractions, fostering an ideal space for quality rest. The room's temperature should also be suitable for sleeping – that is, not too hot and not too cold – while rooms should be kept as tidy and free of clutter as possible.

6 RELAXING EVENING ACTIVITIES

Recommend activities that have a calming effect on the mind – such as reading or gentle stretching – in the lead up to bedtime, to prepare the mind for a peaceful night's sleep. Doing something quiet, relaxing and low intensity signals to the brain that it's time to rest and makes falling asleep much easier.

7 PRIORITISING ADEQUATE SLEEP

Emphasise the crucial role of sleep in maintaining physical and emotional wellbeing. It's especially important to sustain a healthy sleep pattern during challenging and intensive periods in our lives: during the exam season for children and young people, for instance.

8 NUTRITIONAL BALANCE

Highlight the significance of a healthy, balanced diet – and its role in establishing a more consistent sleep pattern. Try to lean towards preparing meals with plenty of fruit and vegetables, served in reasonable portion sizes: not only is this a lot healthier, but it also reduces the chances of feeling too full to be comfortable in bed.

9 PARENTAL SUPPORT

Parents and carers, of course, are uniquely situated to support their children in establishing and maintaining healthy sleeping habits. Parents can review their own sleep habits (incorporating anything from this list that they don't do already) to model a balanced bedtime routine and reinforce the importance of self-care.

10 MILITARY SLEEP METHOD

Look up 'the military sleep method': it's a technique for falling asleep quickly, which incorporates deep breathing exercises. You could encourage children to try it or even use it yourself. While it can take a good deal of practice to perfect, eventually it will start to feel natural – and the results are often extremely impressive!

Meet Our Expert

Minds Ahead design and deliver the UK's only specialist postgraduate mental health qualifications. Winner of the Social Enterprise UK 'One to Watch' award, the charity provides training and support to education organisations and local authorities. This guide has been written by Adam Gillett – a learning and development specialist who is also Associate Vice-Principal for Personal Development at a large secondary school.



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What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

SNAPCHAT

AGE RESTRICTION
13+

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

CONNECTING WITH STRANGERS

Even if your child only connects with people they know, they may still get friend requests from strangers. The Quick Add option lets users befriend people the app recommends – but these 'friends' are merely a username, which could have anyone behind it. Accepting such requests reveals children's personal information through the Story, SnapMap and Spotlight features, potentially putting them at risk from predators.

EXCESSIVE USE

Snapchat works hard on user engagement, with features like streaks (messaging the same person every day to build up a high score). Spotlight Challenges tempt users into spending time producing content in search of cash prizes and online fame, while it's easy for children to pass hours watching Spotlight's endless scroll of videos.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Some videos and posts on Snapchat aren't suitable for children. The hashtags used to group content are determined by the poster, so even an innocent search term could still yield age-inappropriate results. The app's 'disappearing messages' feature also makes it easy for young people (teens in particular) to share explicit images on impulse – so sexting continues to be a risk associated with Snapchat.

CAUTION

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

My AI is Snapchat's new chatbot, which replies to questions in a human-like manner. However, the software is still in its infancy and has significant drawbacks, such as biased, incorrect or misleading responses. There have already been numerous reports of young users turning to AI for medical help and diagnoses, which could be inaccurate and therefore potentially dangerous.

ONLINE PRESSURES

Although many of Snapchat's filters are designed to entertain or amuse, the 'beautify' effects on photos can set unrealistic body-image expectations – creating feelings of inadequacy if a young person compares themselves unfavourably with other users. Snapchat now also has 'priority' notifications (which still get displayed even if a device is in 'do not disturb' mode), increasing the pressure on users to log back in and interact.

VISIBLE LOCATION

Snap Map highlights a device's exact position on a virtual map which is visible to other users. There are options to restrict who can see this information: all friends, only you (Ghost Mode) or selected friends. Snapchat also has real-time location sharing, which is intended as a buddy system to ensure friends have reached home safely – but which could also be used to track a young person for more sinister reasons.

Advice for Parents & Carers

TURN OFF QUICK ADD

The Quick Add feature helps people find each other on the app. This function works based on mutual friends or whether someone's number is in your child's contacts list. Explain to your child that this could potentially make their profile visible to strangers. We recommend that your child turns off Quick Add, which can be done in the settings (accessed via the cog icon).



CHOOSE GOOD CONNECTIONS

In 2021, Snapchat rolled out a new safety feature: users can now receive notifications reminding them of the importance of maintaining connections with people they actually know well, as opposed to strangers. This 'Friend Check Up' encourages users to delete connections with users that they rarely communicate with, to maintain their online safety and privacy.



DISCUSS AI

Although My AI's responses can often give the impression that it's a real person, it's essential that young people remember this certainly isn't the case. Encourage your child to think critically about My AI's replies to their questions: are they accurate and reliable? Remind them that My AI shouldn't replace chatting with their real friends, and that it's always better to talk to an actual person in relation to medical matters.



CHAT ABOUT CONTENT

It may feel like an awkward conversation (and one that young people can be reluctant to have) but it's important to talk openly and non-judgementally about sexting. Remind your child that once something's online, the creator loses control over where it ends up – and who else sees it. Likewise, it's vital that children understand that some challenges which become popular on the platform may have potentially harmful consequences.



KEEP ACCOUNTS PRIVATE

Profiles are private by default, but children may make them public to gain more followers. Snap Stories are visible to everyone your child adds, unless they change the settings. On SnapMaps, their location is visible unless Ghost Mode is enabled (again via settings). It's safest not to add people your child doesn't know in real life – especially since the addition of My Places, which allows other Snapchat users to see where your child regularly visits and checks in.



BE READY TO BLOCK AND REPORT

If a stranger does connect with your child on Snapchat and begins to make them feel uncomfortable through bullying, pressure to send explicit images or by sending sexual images to them, your child can select the three dots on that person's profile and report or block them. There are options to state why they're reporting that user (annoying or malicious messages, spam, or masquerading as someone else, for example).



Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



Source: <https://help.snapchat.com/hc/en-gb/articles/320599359022-What-is-My-AI-on-Snapchat-and-how-does-it-work> | <https://www.snap.com/en-gb/health/safety-learnings-from-misconduct-and-new-safety-enhancements> | <https://help.snapchat.com/hc/en-gb/articles/320599359022-What-is-My-AI-on-Snapchat-and-how-does-it-work> | <https://help.snapchat.com/hc/en-gb/articles/320599359022-What-is-My-AI-on-Snapchat-and-how-does-it-work>

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