



Safeguarding Newsletter—Summer Term 1 2026

Dear Parents and Carers

All staff at Belle Vue have a responsibility to safeguard children but just a reminder to you that we have the following designated staff in place with responsibility for safeguarding:

Mrs. C Davies—Designated Safeguarding lead
Mrs. S Richardson—Deputy Safeguarding lead
Mrs. A Perrett—Deputy Safeguarding Lead
Mrs. C Mulligan—Deputy Safeguarding lead

Governor responsible for safeguarding: Mrs. S Rose

If you have any concerns regarding the safeguarding of a child/children please contact the school immediately on 01384 389900 or email info@belle-vue.dudley.sch.uk. **If you suspect a child is in immediate danger please ring 999. If you have a concern during holiday time, please email safeguarding@belle-vue.dudley.sch.uk**

Responsible Communication—Your child and the use of mobile devices

It's not uncommon for children to have access to a mobile device at an early age. However, handing over a phone to a child without any prior training on texting etiquette can lead to unexpected consequences. From excessive use of emojis to spam-like messaging habits, it is essential to teach children responsible communication skills. Additionally, being vigilant about their interactions can help identify potential safeguarding risks.

This term's safeguarding newsletter aims to give parents an insight as to how to keep your child/children safe when using a mobile device.

When introducing a child to text messaging, it is crucial to lay a foundation of proper etiquette. Here are some key points to consider:

a) **Clear Communication:** Teach your child the importance of clear and concise messaging. Encourage them to express their thoughts in a way that is easily understood and avoids confusion.

b) **Respectful Language:** Emphasise the significance of respectful language and discourage the use of offensive or derogatory terms. Teach them to treat others over text messages with the same respect they would in face-to-face interactions.



Top 3 Tips for Child Safety on Mobile Phones

1. Set boundaries

It's important to set boundaries and limits with your children. Talk to them about the boundaries themselves, and your reasons for setting them.

These boundaries could include screen time limits, restrictions on what apps they can use or where they can use their phone.

By setting these limits, you can encourage children to still enjoy activities that stimulate their minds in other ways, such as sports, board games or reading. It also allows you to reclaim family time and ensure your child isn't using age-inappropriate apps.

2. Utilise parental controls & engage with your child's phone usage

Parental controls allow you to see exactly what sites and apps your child is accessing on their smartphone, tablet or computer. It also lets you see how long they are spending on these devices.

While there are many parental control apps to choose from, the standard choice is Google Family Link. Free to use, Google Family Link works with both Apple and Android devices.

While you still may want to use a parental control app to check what your child is doing online, it's always good to engage with them directly as well. By encouraging them to share what they are doing on their phone, you may get a better insight into risks such as cyberbullying or their social network use.

3. Teach your children phone security

By teaching your child a few security measures now, you will help them keep their devices secure in the long run. Examples include:

- ◆ **Don't connect to public wi-fi** as that may give hackers access to your child's phone and information.
- ◆ **Don't share passwords** with friends or strangers.
- ◆ **Don't overshare online** – once a photo or video is out there, it can't be taken back.
- ◆ **Keep your phone close** in your bag or on-hand rather than leaving it in public places where it can be stolen.
- ◆ **Password protect the phone** so that if it is stolen, personal photos or messages can't be easily accessed.

At what age should a child be given a mobile phone?

In our modern-day, [more than half of all 7-year-olds have their own mobile phone](#). However, every child is different and it will often depend on why you are considering giving them a phone.

If you're unsure whether your child is ready, here are some questions you may want to ask yourself:

- Does your child need a phone to stay in touch for safety reasons?
- Will your child understand the concept of limited minutes or in-app purchases? Will they understand the need to charge their cell phone and maintain battery life?
- Is your child mature enough to use their phone responsibly?



What Parents & Educators Need to Know about EMOJIS

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Emojis are more than playful expressions – they form a fast-evolving digital language that many adults struggle to decode. For young people, this 'secret code' is central to how they communicate identity, humour and emotions. With over 5 billion emojis sent daily on Facebook Messenger alone, understanding these symbols is key to engaging meaningfully with digital youth.

GENERATIONAL MISCOMMUNICATION

An emoji like 👍 (thumbs up emoji) might seem friendly to adults, but teens often interpret it as sarcastic or passive-aggressive. These differing interpretations can create confusion or unintended tension in cross-generational conversations.

SHIELDING BULLYING OR PEER PRESSURE

When embedded in emojis, mean-spirited jokes or exclusionary language can fly under the radar. Terms like 'mid' or 'delulu' may seem harmless, but they can be used to undermine peers in subtle ways.

RAPIDLY SHIFTING MEANINGS

Emoji meanings can change overnight. A person standing emoji (👤) once signified awkwardness but might now be repurposed for something entirely different. This ever-changing lexicon can leave adults in the dark and young people vulnerable to misunderstanding or misuse.

MASKING DISTRESS OR HARM

Some emojis are used to discreetly signal troubling behaviours. For instance, 🍂 (falling leaves emoji) or 💊 (pill emoji) might suggest drug use, while 🌵 (wilted flower emoji) could hint at emotional struggles. Such usage can obscure serious issues, making them harder for trusted adults to detect.

NORMALISING RISKY BEHAVIOURS

Emojis can make harmful actions seem light-hearted or fashionable. Strings like 🔥👤 (fire + 'woozy' face + pill emoji) may appear humorous but can reference partying, intoxication or dangerous challenges, which might otherwise raise red flags.

Advice for Parents & Educators

LEARN THE LINGO

Stay updated with emoji trends and definitions using resources like emojipedia.org or Urban Dictionary. Knowing current meanings builds confidence when engaging with young people and helps spot potential concerns early.



CREATE SAFE SPACES FOR DISCUSSION

Encourage casual chats about emojis, online slang, memes, or social media trends. Showing interest without judgement reassures young people that they can talk about their digital world openly and safely.



ASK, DON'T ASSUME

Approach unfamiliar emojis with curiosity rather than suspicion. A light-hearted "What does 🍷 (juice box emoji) mean these days?" can open conversation and show that you respect their knowledge.



PRIORITISE TRUST OVER SURVEILLANCE

While parental controls and monitoring tools can be useful, emotional safety matters most. Be someone children and young people feel they can come to – not just someone who's watching them.



EMOJI CHEAT SHEET – The following slang terms and emojis are some common examples – please be aware this isn't an exhaustive list.

COMMON EMOJIS:

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|---|--|
| 🤡 (Clown face) Foolishness or clowning around | 🙄 (Pleading face) Over-affectionate or 'simping' |
| 😎 (Cool face) Cool, stylish or ruthless | 👁️ (Eyes) Watching drama unfold |
| 🔥 (Hot face) Intense attraction or excitement | 🐐 (Goat) Greatest of all time (G.O.A.T.) |
| 😐 (Moai) Stone-faced, unbothered | 👉 (Nails) Confidence, sassiness, or indifference |
| 👑 (Crown) 'Slaying', as in doing great | 🚩 (Triangular flag) Red flag; a warning sign about someone's behaviour |

POTENTIALLY CONCERNING EMOJIS

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|--|---|
| 🍷 (Ear of corn) Slang for pornography (avoids censorship algorithms) | 🌵 (Wilted flower) Often used to convey emotional struggle or sadness |
| ❄️ (Snowflake, snowman, snow cloud) Can symbolise cocaine | 🐍 (Snake) Can represent betrayal or being 'two-faced' |
| 🔑 (Key, lying face) Related to cocaine use | 🔫 (Water pistol) Sometimes used to reference violence or self-harm |
| 🍃 (Falling leaves, herb, maple leaf) Can symbolise cannabis | ⚠️ (Warning) Used to emphasise drama, threats or emotional turmoil |
| 💊 (Pill) May reference drug use or prescription misuse | 🍜 (Steaming bowl) Refers to nudes ('noods' is an abbreviation of noodles) |

Meet Our Expert

Keith Broni is a globally renowned emoji expert and the Editor in Chief of emojipedia.org, the world's number one emoji resource. He has an MSc in Business Psychology from University College London and an MBA from Quantic School of Business and Technology.

