



Safeguarding Newsletter—Summer 2 2025

Dear Parents and Carers

Welcome to the second half of the summer term.

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**

The hidden meaning behind emojis

Children are beginning to explore the digital world at a younger age, whether through games, messaging apps or learning platforms. Alongside this, they're also discovering emojis: colourful little symbols that help them express feelings, reactions and sometimes much more. With the release of Netflix's *Adolescence*, attention has been drawn to how emojis can carry hidden or inappropriate meanings, even among younger users.

While this series focuses on teenagers, it's a reminder that even younger children are seeing and copying what they encounter online. While most emojis are harmless and fun, a growing number of them are being used to communicate hidden messages— sometimes these are linked to bullying, inappropriate content or even illegal activity, such as drugs. That's why it's essential for parents to understand the double meanings behind some of these seemingly innocent icons.

How you can support your child

Talk early and often : ask your child what emojis they like and what they mean to them.

Set age-appropriate boundaries: keep communication apps limited to age-safe platforms.

Model good digital habits: let them see you using emojis kindly and appropriately.

Stay curious, not critical: if you spot something that concerns you, ask questions gently before jumping to conclusions.

<https://findmykids.org/blog/en/emoji-slang>

Keeping your child safe on Snapchat: A parent's guide

Many children become more engaged with social media at a young age and Snapchat is one of the most popular apps among them. It is important to note that the minimum age requirement for using Snapchat is 13 years old. While Snapchat can be a fun way for children to stay connected with friends, it also comes with risks.



What is Snapchat?

Snapchat is a social media app that allows users to send photos, videos and messages that disappear after being viewed. It also includes features like Stories, Snap Maps, and AI chatbots.

Risks of Snapchat

While Snapchat can be enjoyable, there are risks parents should be aware of:

Disappearing messages: disappearing Snaps encourage children to participate in more risky behaviour. They might send things that they wouldn't usually as they know it will disappear.

Stranger danger: strangers can contact your child if their privacy settings are not secure.

Snap Maps: this feature shows a user's location in real-time, which can put children at risk if not managed properly.

Inappropriate content: children may come across content that is not age appropriate. Pressure to maintain "Streaks": Streaks (sending Snaps daily) can create unnecessary pressure and anxiety for children.

Safety features parents should know

Snapchat has built-in safety features that can help protect your child. Here are some important ones:

Privacy settings: go to Settings > Privacy Controls to ensure only friends can contact your child and view their content.

Ghost Mode on Snap Maps: this hides your child's location from others. Enable this by going to Snap Maps and selecting 'Ghost Mode'.

Report and block: teach your child how to block or report inappropriate content or users.

Family Centre: Snapchat's parental control tool allows you to see who your child is communicating with while respecting their privacy.

Staying home alone

There is no legal age a child can be left at home alone, but it's against the law to leave a child alone if it puts them at risk. Every child matures differently, and because of this, it would be almost impossible to have a "one size fits all" law.

As your child gets older, talk to them about how they feel about being left home alone. If they're worried, work out what parts of being home alone worry them.

Do they feel safe in the neighbourhood?

Are they afraid of the dark?

Talk about anything that's bothering them and discuss a solution. Understanding why they don't feel comfortable will give you an idea of how to help – or why they might not be ready to be left alone. Don't do it if they are not comfortable.

For more information and advice, please click the image to the right and this will take you to the NSPCC website where you can find more information.

