



## Safeguarding Newsletter—Spring Term 1 2023

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope you all had a good Christmas holiday

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. A Potter

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](mailto:info@belle-vue.dudley.sch.uk). **During holiday time, please email safeguarding concerns to: [safeguarding@belle-vue.dudley.sch.uk](mailto:safeguarding@belle-vue.dudley.sch.uk)**

**If you suspect a child is in immediate danger please ring 999.**

Operation Encompass is a police and education early information safeguarding partnership enabling schools to offer immediate support to children experiencing domestic abuse.

Operation Encompass ensures that there is a simple telephone call or notification to a school's trained Designated Safeguarding Lead /Officer (known as key Adult) prior to the start of the next school day after an incident of police attended domestic abuse where there are children related to either of the adult parties involved.

This sharing of information enables appropriate support to be given, dependent upon the needs and wishes of the child. Children are negatively impacted by experiencing domestic abuse and without early intervention and support this negative impact can last through a child's life course.

Domestic abuse can impact upon social, psychological, physical, emotional and behavioural outcomes with an often negative impact upon a child's academic success. Experiencing domestic abuse has been identified as an Adverse Childhood Experience.

Operation Encompass aims, by directly connecting police and schools, to secure better outcomes for children, to enable schools to better understand the impact living with domestic abuse has upon children, to help schools to better understand a child's lived experience and to therefore be able to support and nurture each child, making a child's day better and giving them a better tomorrow.





## Online Safety

Children regularly use different websites and apps from their parents, and it can be hard to keep up in this ever-changing digital world. But the things that help keep children safe online are often similar to the things that keep them safe offline.

Half of ten-year olds now own their own smartphone (Ofcom 2019)

70% of 12-15-year olds now have a social media profile, with Snapchat being the most prominent platform in this age group (Ofcom 2019)

Children aged 5-15 now spend over 14 hours a week online, just over two hours a day (Ofcom 2019)

## Internet Safety Advice: Top Tips for Parents

### 1. Discover the Internet together

Be the one to introduce your child to the internet. For both parent and child, it is an advantage to discover the internet together. Try to find websites that are exciting and fun so that together you achieve a positive attitude to internet exploration. This could make it easier to share both positive and negative experiences in the future.

### 2. Agree with your child rules for Internet use in your home

Try to reach an agreement with your child on the guidelines which apply to Internet use in your household. Here are some tips to get started:

- Discuss when and for how long it is acceptable for your child to use the Internet
- Agree how to treat personal information (name, address, telephone, e-mail)
- Discuss how to behave towards others when gaming, chatting, e-mailing or messaging
- Agree what type of sites and activities are OK or not OK in our family

Follow the rules yourself! Or at least explain why the rules are different for adults.

### 3. Encourage your child to be careful when disclosing personal information

A simple rule for younger children should be that the child should not give out their name, phone number or photo without your approval. Older children using social networking sites like Facebook should be encouraged to be selective about what personal information and photos they post to online spaces. Regardless of privacy settings, once material is online you can no longer control who sees it or how it is used.

### 4. Talk about the risks associated with meeting online "friends" in person

Adults should understand that the internet can be a positive meeting place for children, where they can get to know other young people and make new friends. However, for safety and to avoid unpleasant experiences, it is important that children do not meet strangers they have met online without being accompanied by an adult you trust. In any case, the child should always have their parents' approval first. In addition, it is also a good idea to have a fail-safe plan in place such as calling them shortly after the meeting begins so that they can bail out if they feel uncomfortable.

## Internet Safety Advice: Top Tips for Parents continued

### 5. Teach your child about evaluating information and being critically aware of information found online.

Most children use the internet to improve and develop their knowledge in relation to schoolwork and personal interests. Children should be aware that not all information found online is correct, accurate or relevant. Show your child how to check information they find by comparing it to alternative sources on the same topic. Show them trusted sites they can use to compare information.

### 6. Don't be too critical towards your child's exploration of the Internet

Children may come across adult material by accident on the web. Also, a child may intentionally search for such websites; remember that it is natural for children to be curious about off-limits material. Try to use this as an opening to discuss the content with them, and perhaps make rules for this kind of activity. Be realistic in your assessment of how your child uses the internet.



### 7. Let your children show you what they like to do online

To be able to guide your child with regard to Internet use, it is important to understand how children use the Internet and know what they like to do online. Let your child show you which websites they like visiting and what they do there.

### 8. Remember that the positive aspects of the Internet outweigh the negatives.



The Internet is an excellent educational and recreational resource for children. Encourage your child to make the most of it and explore the internet to its full potential.

# 10 Top Tips for Respect Online: INSPIRING CHILDREN TO BUILD A BETTER DIGITAL WORLD

Our ability to communicate with anyone in the world, at any time, via the internet has grown at breakneck speed. For teachers and parents, it can feel impossible to keep up. Worrying about our young people is understandable, and not unjustified: in 2020, for example, one in five 10- to 15-year-olds experienced bullying online. Our tips highlight ways that adults can support young people's positive online behaviours: by adopting and following 'netiquette', we can show them how to avoid getting into difficulty as they learn to negotiate the continually evolving digital landscape.

## WHAT IS NETIQUETTE?

Just like etiquette is a set of rules which guides and governs our interactions with others in everyday life, netiquette – etiquette on the net – is the framework which helps inform how we communicate with people online. The rules of engagement often aren't the same as a face-to-face meeting, so it's important that we can accurately 'read' situations in the digital world and know how to act appropriately.

### 1 ACCEPT DIFFERENT RULES

A lot of our interaction with others is helped by non-verbal signals like body language and facial expressions. Online, of course, many of these clues are missing. Talk to your child about why this makes misunderstandings more likely to occur in the digital world and why keeping in mind that online communication is a very different process can help to prevent difficulties from arising.

### 2 PRESS 'PAUSE'

It's so easy to do things quickly online that most people (adults included) habitually send or respond to messages without considering the consequences. Pushing 'the pause button' buys a young person some time while they ponder the golden rule: "Would I still say this if the other person was right front of me?" You could practise this with your child on some made-up tricky situations.

### 3 THE INTERNET IS ADDICTIVE

Apps and sites use sophisticated algorithms and clever marketing to keep us engaged, while notifications to our devices are designed to draw us back in. It's no wonder that people continually return to the digital world, sometimes spending long periods of time there. You and your child could trial turning off notifications on certain apps and instead agree a time to check for updates manually.

### 4 BEWARE THE DARK SIDE

Getting a hurtful or unhelpful comment on social media or in a group chat can make the recipient feel publicly shamed. That's painful for anyone – but especially for a young person whose status in a group is integral to their sense of identity. Encourage your child to think about the best and safest way to send a message: for example, doing it as a private message rather than a public post.

### 5 HARMFUL INTERACTIONS

Unfortunately, it's very easy to send a hurtful message or to spread gossip and rumours online. We all know this happens regularly. Not having to deal with actually seeing the other person's distress usually doesn't help people to make a positive decision in the moment. It's important that trusted adults help children to visualise the potential consequences and have empathy for others.

### 6 APPRECIATE DIFFERENCES

We're all built differently; some people are simply more emotionally sensitive than others. Young people can be particularly affected by negative online communication, such as group shaming. Even a single message (which might seem trivial at face value) can cause deep anguish. Trusted adults should be prepared to be patient and listen to any difficulties their child might have had online.

### 7 ACCENTUATED ANXIETY

Young people's online lives create a lot of anxiety. Messages go into a 'black hole' until someone responds, there are more reasons to compare ourselves negatively, and social media can make us feel like we're missing out. Encourage activities such as sports and hobbies to balance this out, and remember that merely blocking out thoughts (by gaming, for instance) isn't the same as relaxation.

### 8 PRO-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

A huge positive for the internet is how it helps people to feel connected and makes being kind and helpful easy to spread. When young people get involved in pro-social behaviours online, it creates a positive feedback loop which makes them feel good. Show your child examples of when you've done or said something positive online, and praise and encourage them when they do the same.

### 9 BE A GOOD ROLE MODEL

One of the best things we can do as trusted adults is to role model positive online behaviour. Just letting your child see that you know when it's time to put your phone away and do something more productive can set a strong example. Some families set aside particular times of the week (such as mealtimes or a family walk) where digital devices aren't allowed and conversation takes precedence.

### 10 SHOW COMPASSION

Mistakes can feel much bigger online, because they're so public. If a young person does or says something regrettable on the internet, it's important to support them to forgive themselves, learn any lessons and move forward positively. Even as adults, we can often stumble when learning how things work in the fast-moving digital world, so it's important to have compassion for ourselves, too.

## Meet Our Expert

Dr Carole Francis-Smith is an experienced counselling psychologist who, through her research, specialises in promoting safe and ethical online communications. She consults with businesses and organisations to support positive and effective communication online, often by considering some of the more hidden aspects of the mediums.



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#WakeUpWednesday



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