

# Safe At Summerhill

**At Summerhill School we are committed to Safeguarding our children and young people as well as promoting positive well-being for all.**

This Safeguarding newsletter, aims to help staff, parents and students alike to be aware of the safeguarding and mental health issues, giving you useful links and resources to use if you have concerns. If you have concerns or ideas for future topics please do not hesitate to contact us on the main school number 01384 816165 or via email on [studentssupport@summerhill.dudley.sch.uk](mailto:studentssupport@summerhill.dudley.sch.uk)

## Exam Stress

It's normal to feel stressed and worried about exams. Stress is your body's natural response to pressure. While it can help you focus and feel motivated to get things done, sometimes it can feel hard to manage. Exam stress can affect anyone, and it can show up in different ways. For example, you might: feel anxious or depressed, feel irritable and angry, struggle to sleep and many more affects. Your child may experience symptoms of stress which aren't listed and that's okay. We are all different and cope with stress and pressure in different ways. If you notice any of these feelings or you're worried about your child and exam pressure is taking over their life, they are not alone. We have tips on this page that can help them. <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/coping-with-life/exam-stress/>

## World Kindness Day

World Kindness Day is celebrated on 13 November. How can we become happier by doing kind things for others? And how can we help the world by doing kind things for ourselves? This is an annual celebration which takes place on 13 November each year. The day is marked in many countries, drawing attention to the amazing work of organisations and individuals in local communities. How do people celebrate this day? Well, by being kind ... and having lots of fun. One typical event is to use 'kindness cards'. These are small cards which you hand to somebody when you do a kind act for them – with the message that now it is the other person's turn to 'pass on' the card by doing a kind act for another person. Most experts on kindness agree that it has a sort of ripple effect. This means that one kind action tends to lead to more and more. So don't wait for kindness to find you today, go and start a new ripple!



## What Parents and Carers Need to Know about X

The social media network formerly known as Twitter has undergone numerous alterations since its change of ownership and rebranding as X – and many of these recent developments have proved controversial. With any user now simply able to pay a fee for account verification, for example, the once-reliable 'blue tick' system has become largely meaningless.

It's just one of several changes that have set the social media giant on what many consider a concerning path in online safety terms. The guide below provides a run-down of the most significant tweaks made to X; their potential safeguarding implications; and how to help ensure young people minimise the risks while they continue to use the service.



Mrs Sprouting  
Designated  
Safeguarding  
Lead



Mr Randle  
Deputy  
Safeguarding  
Lead



Ms Gordon  
Deputy  
Safeguarding  
Lead



Mr Quirke  
Deputy  
Safeguarding  
Lead



Mr Cresswell  
Deputy  
Safeguarding  
Lead

# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

# X

AGE RESTRICTION

13+

In October 2022, the enormously popular social media network Twitter was purchased by tech tycoon Elon Musk. That sparked a host of changes to the platform – not all which have been received positively by its fans. The alterations have continued with each passing month, many of them raising online safety concerns among the 530 million users of Twitter (now rebranded as simply X). With further adjustments reportedly in the pipeline, X has attracted more than its usual share of controversy and caution in recent times.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### A BLOCK ON BLOCKING

X has announced plans to remove its blocking feature. Previously, this stopped other users from viewing your profile or sending you direct messages, while also hiding their posts from your feed. Only this latter function will now remain. The decision has been criticised by some members, who feel that blocking (in its current form) protects them from X users who 'promote denial and hatred'.

### LIMITED REPORTING FEATURES

X offers a premium membership, with some functionality (such as controlling who can view and reply to your posts) increasingly being made exclusive to those who pay the subscription fee. Several commentators have speculated that X could one day become an exclusively paid-for service, with access to accounts being revoked for anyone unwilling or unable to take out a subscription.

### AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Many of X's less age-appropriate posts can feature anything from extreme political views to pornography. While accounts marked as 18+ are restricted from non-members, it's still fairly easy to stumble across this material accidentally. X's new 'For You' page also shows content from accounts that a user *doesn't* already follow – meaning that almost anything could end up on a child's feed.

### VERIFICATION FOR SALE

Historically, Twitter's moderators granted account verification: certifying someone as authentic by placing a blue tick next to their username. One of X's earliest changes was to place verification behind a paywall; this caused the number of celebrity impersonators to rise and left no way to distinguish, say, a legitimate influencer from a copycat fake account seeking to exploit other users.

## BLUE TICK SALE

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### PROTECT PRIVACY

Unsavory characters may try to gain access to a young person's X account – either to view their posts and gather information on them, or to completely take control of it. To minimise risk, ensure the account has a strong password and enable the 'Protect Your Posts' feature (via the account settings), so that strangers can't view your child's posts without first being approved as a follower.

### DON'T RISE TO THE BAIT

To gain more views and followers, some X users post deliberately inflammatory comments on sensitive topics such as race, sexual orientation and gender issues. Many young people could find this upsetting. Emphasise that, if your child encounters someone spreading hate on X, it's best not to give that person what they want: an argument. Ignore them, mute their account and move on.

### STAY ALERT FOR IMPOSTERS

Make sure your child understands that X's blue ticks no longer guarantee the identity of anyone on the platform. While it might be exciting if a celebrity liked your child's post, it could just as easily be an imposter with malicious intentions. If your child's not 100% sure that an X user actually is who they claim to be, advise them to err on the side of caution and avoid interacting with that account.

### ONLY FOLLOW TRUSTED ACCOUNTS

Using the 'Following' tab on X helps to ensure that the only content your child sees has come from accounts they've chosen to follow: this should reduce the chance of them inadvertently being exposed to harmful, violent or explicit content. Show your child how to report another user's account if, say, they're behaving inappropriately by spreading misinformation or offensive opinions.

### BE READY TO TAKE ACTION

If your child suffers harassment on the platform or becomes the target of a hack, you could consider deactivating their account entirely. Recently, X's safety features have been criticised for allegedly failing to protect users' wellbeing – so if your child is being subjected to abusive messages or similar mistreatment on the platform, it might be prudent to remove them from X altogether.

## Meet Our Expert

Lloyd Coombes is Editor in Chief of gaming and esports site GGRecon and has worked in the gaming media for around four years. Always eager to test out the latest apps, games and online trends, he's also a parent who understands the importance of online safety. Writing mainly about tech and fitness, his articles have been published on influential sites including IGN and TechRadar.



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