

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

Navigating the Risks of Saltburn

In response to concerns within our Safer Schools community, we're issuing this Safeguarding Update regarding the highly explicit nature of Saltburn. This is a trending movie on Amazon Prime Video with a 15+ rating which has garnered attention for its controversial content, spawning countless memes, challenges and reaction videos on social media. To proactively navigate the potential safeguarding risks associated with Saltburn, parents, carers and safeguarding professionals are encouraged to stay informed, initiate open conversations, and utilise the practical advice and resources outlined below.

The film itself combines elements of comedy, thriller, and drama with shockingly graphic and explicit scenes encompassing sexual and violent content. The storyline revolves around a university student who engages in inappropriate and manipulative sexual behaviour and orchestrates a series of murders. Two notably lurid scenes have dominated discussions and engagement on social media:

The Bath Scene: A character drinks bathwater in which another character has just committed a sexual act.

The Grave Scene: A character sexually engages with a grave.

What they have found Accessibility of these scenes on TikTok and YouTube even when logged into an account assigned to a 13-year-old, Engagement in viral challenges, such as dancing to 'Murder on the Dance Floor,' with some videos featuring children in school uniforms and Availability of gaming adaptations on platforms such as Roblox. If you would like to read more then please follow this link [All about Saltburn](#)

Rise in calls to Childline about in-patient mental health treatment

The number of young people contacting Childline about in-patient mental health concerns has jumped by almost a fifth in the last year.

NSPCC delivered 621 counselling sessions¹ in 2023 where being sectioned or hospitalised for mental health issues was discussed. This was up 18% on the previous year. The new [Helplines Insight Briefing](#) looks at young people's experiences of in-patient mental health care based on contacts to Childline and the NSPCC Helpline. It reveals that young people often feel they're not listened to during their admissions, treatment and discharge from hospital settings, including when important decisions are made about their care. If you would like to read more then please follow this link [NSPCC News](#)

Online Dating & Relationships

Online dating has seen a sharp rise in popularity over the last few years – especially in 2020, when the boat was well and truly rocked for all of us. Apps like MyLOL and Wink have drawn a huge userbase of young people – and it's not hard to see why. With their sleek design and ease of use, the promise of finding love with but a swipe of your finger is an appealing one indeed. It is not, however, all sunshine and rainbows. While these apps have helped bring together many couples who may never have met otherwise, lax security measures and bad actors can turn these apps into a hotbed of #OnlineSafety risks. Our guide investigates these risks and makes sure you're equipped to keep your child safe in the world of online dating.



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 ONLINE DATING & RELATIONSHIPS

Most online dating apps claim to be for over-18s only but, in some cases, relaxed age verification also allows children to access them. What's more, some popular social media platforms use similar design features to many dating sites – blurring the line between why a young person initially downloads an app and what they *actually* end up using it for.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

ONLINE GROOMING

Online grooming is when someone forms a connection with a child in the digital world and carefully cultivates this relationship with the intention of manipulating the child into doing something sexual or illegal. The process involves gaining the young person's confidence – which can make them far less likely to tell a trusted adult about their new online 'friend', or to recognise what is even happening.

WEBCAM BLACKMAIL

Some young people have been coaxed into getting nude or semi-nude on a video chat with someone they met on a dating platform. They're then told that, unless they hand over a certain amount of money, a recording of the video will be posted online (or possibly sent to their contacts). This can be hugely traumatic for a young person and, in extreme cases, has resulted in self-harm and even suicide.

DAMAGE TO SELF ESTEEM

Many dating platforms encourage users to rate the images that people upload; this has clear potential to negatively impact a young person's self esteem. On some apps, pictures of a user's face and body can be rated anonymously, with notifications informing them if someone has then declined to match with them. This form of rejection can feel extremely hurtful and degrading.

CATFISHING AND SCAMS

Creating a false identity to deliberately lure people into a relationship (whether romantic or platonic) online is known as catfishing. Commonly, someone pretends to share interests or beliefs with their victim and gradually gains their trust. A young person's feelings for this fake 'friend' may cloud their judgement and can lead to them surrendering money, personal images, passwords and so on.

STALKING AND HARASSMENT

Stalking is obsessive behaviour by a fixated individual which disrupts their victim's life; it can bring severe distress and even the fear of violence. There have been frequent reports of stalking cases that originated on dating apps, with perpetrators creating new accounts in response to being reported or blocked. It's a particular cause for concern if a young person has ever given out personal details (such as their street or school name) online.

Advice for Parents & Carers

KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING

Reassure your child that they can always talk to you about anything online that's worried them. Emphasise that if they're being sent unwanted images – or if they've shared images or video content themselves – they should tell you straight away. Discuss the potential risks of online dating and check in with them frequently to ensure that they're feeling comfortable about their online relationships.

TAKE A 'SAFETY FIRST' STANDPOINT

Encourage young people to be careful about who they send invitations to – and accept them from – on dating sites and apps. Familiarise yourself with how to adjust the privacy settings on your child's devices and apps to help them control who can access their profiles and information. Talk to your child about why it's unwise to share any sensitive, private or confidential information in their profile.

PROTECT CONTACT DETAILS

If a young person is interested in using online dating sites or apps, strongly encourage them to choose one that offers the facility to conceal both parties' email addresses when messaging prospective dates. If that's not possible, ensure that the young person sets up a separate email address which doesn't include their real name. This is easy to do via providers like Hotmail, Yahoo! Mail or gmail.

HIGHLIGHT COMMON DANGER SIGNS

Talk to your child about some of the obvious red flags in online dating: requests for money, for instance, should always ring alarm bells. Likewise, if a young person is in contact with someone who they feel is pressuring them into providing personal or financial information – or who they suspect is trying to trick them into it – they should end communication immediately and contact the dating service provider.

Meet Our Expert

Rebecca Jennings has more than 20 years' experience in the field of relationships, sex and health education (RSHE). As well as delivering workshops and training for young people, parents and schools, she is also a subject matter expert on RSHE for the Department of Education.



The National College

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