

Tune in on Tuesday

Wheelwright Lane Primary School Newsletter

Issue 36: 28.06.22

www.wheelwrightlane.warwickshire.sch.uk

Diary Dates

Diary dates for the Summer Term are shown below and will be included and updated on every newsletter.

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| 06.07.2022 | Induction Day |
| 06.07.2022 | Nursery Stay and Play session (pm) |
| 07.07.2022 | Year 2 to Warwick Castle |
| 11.07.2022 | New Reception children - Home visits. |
| 12.07.2022 | p.m. Sports Day (if raining then Wednesday 13 th July) Parents welcome |
| 14.07.2022 | Year 1 to visit The Mosque a.m. |
| 15.07.2022 | School reports out today |
| 18.07.2022 | 3.15 - 5.00 Meet your child's new class teacher |
| 19.07.2022 | 6.00 Year 6 Play for parents/carers (tea/coffee/cakes for afterwards) |
| 21.07.2022 | School finishes for Summer 2.15 |
| Wednesday 7 th September | Children return to school |

2021/22-Extra Bank Holiday Friday 22nd July - School finishes Thursday 21st July at 2.15.

2022/23 INSET days: Monday 5th September
Tuesday 6th September
Friday 7th October
Tuesday 3rd January 2023
(1 more day to be set)

Extra-curricular activities

New groups will be allocated from 25th April

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| Monday | | | |
| Tuesday | Tag Rugby | Y5 & Y6 | 12.30 - 1.00 |
| | Multiskills | Y4 & Y5 & Y6 | 3.15 - 4.15 |
| Wednesday | Football | Y3 & Y4 | 12.30 - 1.00 |
| | Multi-skills | Y1 & Y2 & Y3 | 3.15 - 4.15 |
| Friday | Dance | Y1 and Y2 | 3.15-4.15 |

Parents' Association

Our P.A. met and have arranged the following events for the children.

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| 30.06.2022 | School Disco £2.00 (you can pay on the night) R/1/2: 5.00-6.00 3/4/5/6: 6.15 -7.15 Drinks included in the fee |
| 30.06.2022 | Uniform sale - quality items available for a donation (5.00-7.15) |

We had another member join our very small team - thank you. We could do with a few more - if you have the time please speak to Katie, Sam or Leanne.

The PA are making arrangements for the Christmas Fair - please come along to the next meeting if you can support.

Payment for trips

We are mindful that funds may be a little tight in some households. If you are not able to pay for your child's trip in one go then please contact the office and we can make further arrangements for you - all confidential.

Year 2 trip to the Gurdwara

Year 2 had a wonderful morning at the Gurdwara! Everyone there was amazed at the children's knowledge, behaviour and respect for different faiths.

Our topic was covered before Easter so I am particularly pleased with the knowledge that the children have retained! Great retrieval!

A special thank you to Harleen and Yuvraj's parents for their wonderful hospitality. They read stories to the children and supplemented their knowledge. Well done Year 2



Health and Safety Governor

Our Governing Body is in need of a Health and Safety Governor. You do not need to be a H&S representative in your own job - training will be given. If you would like to join the Governors in the school and can offer your services then please contact myself or Mrs Turner in the office. I am happy to answer any questions you may have about the role of a Wheelwright Lane Governor.

Medical Appointments

Please telephone the office with details of your child's medical appointment in advance of the day, if possible. We are having phone calls just minutes before the children have their appointments. Please also let Mrs Turner have a copy of the appointment letter for her records.

Social Media

Again we are having issues around social media and children's online behaviour. I am attaching a poster for TikTok for parents - please keep an eye on your child's online behaviour and discuss any issues with them directly.

Lateness

The main door will close at 8.55. It is expected that children will be in school and in class by this time.

Lessons start at 8.55 prompt.

Summer Play scheme

The NB Leisure Trust will be running a playscheme during the Summer holidays. Please see the attached information for more details.

Correspondence

Please direct all correspondence to the office at admin2021@welearn365.com.

Mrs Turner will ensure that your correspondence goes to the correct adult in school.

Please do not email teachers directly.

Cleaner Vacancy

We currently have a vacancy at Wheelwright Lane for a cleaner from September 2022. All the details are on our school website if you or anyone you know is interested.

Sunscreen

As we are moving into the warmer months, please ensure your child comes into school wearing sunscreen, with a water bottle and with a sun hat when necessary. Please be aware the Nivea sun protect and care products for children now contain refined oil of sweet almonds. As we have children in school with severe nut allergies, we would prefer if these products were not sent into school.

Jigsaw PSHE

The Changing Me topic on our Jigsaw PSHE programme is being taught this year in the Summer term. Please see the school website for further details of the programmes we cover.

Parents do have a right to withdraw their children from certain lessons within this topic -see the extract from the school's Relationship Policy below. (I am attaching the full policy for further guidance)

1 Explanation of the right to withdraw

1.1 Primary

Relationships and Health Education form statutory parts of the RSHE curriculum for primary aged pupils. To that end, parents are not able to withdraw their children from these aspects of teaching and learning. Sex education is non-statutory for primary schools, although elements of sex education

do form part of the statutory science curriculum eg. puberty.

Parents are able to withdraw their children from sex education lessons that go beyond the science curriculum for their year group. We conclude that sex education refers to Human Reproduction, and therefore inform parents of their right to request their child be withdrawn from the PSHE lessons that explicitly teach this i.e. the Jigsaw Changing Me Puzzle (Summer unit) e.g.

Year 4, Lesson 2 (Having a baby)

Year 5, Lesson 4 (Conception)

Year 6, Lesson 3 (Conception, birth)

We highly recommend that your child stay in for all of the lessons as the children will talk about their learning during the school day. The lessons are sensitive and are relevant for your child's stage of development.

Relationships Education,
Relationships and
Sex Education (RSHE) and Health
Education Policy

Wheelwright Lane Primary School



Learning For Life

Dates: June 2021

Review: Annually

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1 Intent and Aims

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Appendix 1 Primary Appendix

This policy should be read in conjunction with the individual RSHE curriculum maps, which contain more detailed information on the localised content and sequencing of content of the RSHE curriculum. This can be found in the appendix of this policy.

1 Intent and Aims

1.1 The intent of RHSE is to encourage the emotional and social development of our pupils and involves learning about sexual health, sexuality, healthy lifestyles diversity and personal identity. This policy aims to ensure that the school complies with and implements effectively the requirements of the DFE Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education statutory guidance, the Education Act 1996 and any other statutory guidance.

1.2 The aims of RHSE are:

- To foster a safe school community where pupils can learn, grow and develop positive, healthy behaviour for life.
- To nurture secure learning environments where children can be inquisitive and curious, develop tolerance, empathy and self-esteem, and show respect and consideration for others.

- To meet our safeguarding obligations by providing a preventative programme that enables children to learn about the safety and risks in relationships.
- To ensure that all pupils are prepared for the physical and emotional changes they go through during puberty.
- To provide age-appropriate knowledge about sexual health and human development, together with an opportunity to consider the values and attitudes around sexual health issues.
- To help pupils to keep themselves safe, both on and offline, to develop positive relationships with others, and to understand the difference between consenting and exploitative relationships.
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2 Individual Responsibilities

Different aspects of RHSE provision are supported by The Governing Body, HT and DHT, Subject Leads, teachers, support staff, specialist services and health professionals.

Governance of policy

2.1 The Governors are responsible for:

- approval of this policy
- monitoring the work of the school RHSE Leads and support and challenge on matters relating to RHSE provision in accordance with the policy;
- have regard to the guidance issued by the secretary of state as outlined in section 403 of the Education Act 1996 and do its best to ensure that RHSE provision is in place in accordance with this act.

Governance of pupil/parental views

2.2 The Local Governing Body is responsible for:

- gathering pupil voice to contribute to the monitoring of priorities for RHSE provision.
- tracking themes in parental complaints in relation to RHSE;

- handling any serious or persistent concerns

Governance of curriculum content, delivery, impact and subsequent staff training.

2.3 The Headteacher of the school is responsible for: ensuring RSHE is taught consistently across the school, and for managing requests to withdraw students from non-science components of RSHE. This includes making sure that:

- RSHE is resourced, staffed and timetabled in a way that ensures the school can fulfil its legal obligations
- RSHE is effectively led and well planned and the quality of provision is subject to regular and effective self-evaluation
- Clear information is provided for parents on the subject content and the right to request their child is withdrawn.
- Staff wellbeing is considered. It is recognised that there are topics which are sensitive in RSHE and may be difficult to teach depending on the life experiences of the teacher delivering the curriculum. Therefore, the HT should be sensitive to staff wellbeing and needs by offering relevant support.

2.4 The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher are responsible for:

- supporting with the development of the curriculum design where appropriate
- providing support and guidance for RSHE teachers in implementing the agreed curriculum and measuring the impact
- ensuring their school is curriculum compliant by following the statutory guidance. This includes: ensuring the curriculum is shared on the school website; monitoring that lessons are age appropriate and accessible to all; auditing each of the RSHE strands to assess the impact of provision on pupils and make relevant changes to ensure the content delivered is relevant and timely.
- supporting staff with teacher training activities. This could include support with: ensuring the pupils can make progress in achieving the expected educational outcomes; teaching is

delivered in ways accessible to all pupils including those with SEND

2.5 Teachers are responsible for:

- delivering the agreed RHSE curriculum in a professional, sensitive and positive manner, remaining balanced and not dependent on any personal views. This includes ensuring that all pupils feel comfortable in a 'safe' learning environment. The teacher is expected to consider their own needs by forward planning and identifying topics which may be sensitive to teach due to personal life experiences and ask to be supported effectively
- delivering the agreed RHSE curriculum so that it is accessible for all and there is progress and development of all the pupils in their class. Quality First Teaching (QFT) is the first step in responding to pupils with SEND. Staff are required to consult the SEND register to support their teaching of RHSE.
- Modelling the positive attributes drawn on in RHSE
- Responding appropriately to students whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from the non-science component of RHSE
- raise any subsequent safeguarding concerns according to the school policy.

2.6 Pupils are expected to:

- - fully engage in RHSE and when discussing lesson content display the British Values of mutual respect and tolerance

2.7 Parents/Carers are the primary responsibility for providing children with relationships, sex and health education. They have a right to withdraw their children from the non-science component of sex education within RHSE

3 Explanation of the right to withdraw

3.1 Primary

Relationships and Health Education form statutory parts of the RSHE curriculum for primary aged pupils. To that end, parents are not able to withdraw their children from these aspects teaching and learning. Sex

education is non-statutory for primary schools, although elements of sex education do form part of the statutory science curriculum eg. puberty.

Parents are able to withdraw their children from sex education lessons that go beyond the science curriculum for their year group. We conclude that sex education refers to Human Reproduction, and therefore inform parents of their right to request their child be withdrawn from the PSHE lessons that explicitly teach this i.e. the Jigsaw Changing Me Puzzle (Summer unit) e.g.

Year 4, Lesson 2 (Having a baby)

Year 5, Lesson 4 (Conception)

Year 6, Lesson 3 (Conception, birth)

The school will inform parents of this right by newsletter, Spring Term before the Changing Me Puzzle is taught.

3.1.1 Requests for withdrawal should be made in writing and addressed to the Headteacher and upon receipt. The Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher will invite the parent to a discussion about their concerns. Permission will be granted in line with the statutory guidance.

4 Structure of school level content

4.1 For more information about our RHSE curriculum, see the RHSE curriculum map on the school's website. These documents include centrally agreed topics (compliant with the DFE statutory guidance.) We also recognise the need for our schools to approach RHSE in a progressive and inclusive way and therefore value the importance of contextual flexibility. It is essential that we have the opportunity to respond to local public health and community issues. For example, in teaching about county lines, gangs, etc.

4.2 Teaching in schools with a religious character

Wheelwright Lane Primary and Nursery School takes into account the religious backgrounds of the pupils they are teaching. The school is not a faith school. However, all relevant lessons will draw upon the law

including the Equality Act 2010 so that pupils understand what legally they can or can't do.

4.3 Use of Materials

Resources sourced will be thoroughly checked by the RSHE lead and will fall in line with this policy. Where available, resources used will have been recommended by the Local Authority, or accredited by the PSHE Association or Sex Education Forum. This includes Rise Above resources for lessons linked from the PSHE Association website. The school will follow the Jigsaw PSHE programme in all year groups from ages 3 to 11 (further details are available on the website). Resources used will be up to date and non-discriminatory. The school will continue to deliver Protective Behaviours through the Taking Care project in the Autumn Term.

4.4 Working with external agencies

It is the responsibility of all teaching staff to deliver the programme of study for RSHE.

However, there may be times where the RSHE curriculum is supported by external agencies. The intention of drawing upon this support will be to ensure that their input enhances the RSHE provision of our pupils. Prior to delivering the session all necessary safeguarding checks in line with Wheelwright Lane Primary and Nursery policy will need to be carried out and resources checked by teachers in advance to make sure that the content is age appropriate, addresses the needs of pupils and that the resources and delivery do not undermine the fundamental British Values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

4.5 Assessment/monitoring of progression.

Assessment in RSHE will not be measured in the same way as other subjects. The impact of RSHE will be measured according to the British Values our pupils' display, and therefore the values RSHE is trying to instil in its pupils at Wheelwright Lane Primary and Nursery School.

4.6 Integrating teaching

RSHE will sit alongside several national curriculum subjects. These being: Science, Computing and PE. Links will be made to draw links between these subjects and the subject leader will audit this content to ensure information is built upon and duplication prevented. Enrichment Fridays will also focus on Social Emotional Learning Skills (SEL) and be linked with the RSHE content.

5 Primary

5.1 Relationships Education

In primary schools, the focus of relationships teaching will be on the fundamental building blocks and characteristics of positive relationships within family relationships, friendships and relationships with other children and adults, both in person and online. We want all children to develop ideas of respect and boundaries that can built on during their primary years and on into the secondary curriculum. (See Primary Appendix)

5.2 Sex Education

Sex education is not compulsory in primary schools, although the Department for Education recommends that all primary schools have a sex education programme tailored to the age and the physical and emotional maturity of the pupils. Meeting this objective will require a graduated, age appropriate programme of sex education. Many elements of this programme will be statutory as part of the Science curriculum. Wheelwright Lane is committed to working with parents to provide a holistic approach to sex education and make teaching materials readily available for parents to view and discuss with senior leaders. (See Primary Appendix)

5.3 Difficult questions

Children may ask questions which go beyond the Sex and Relationships curriculum being delivered. We respect the courage and confidence it may take pupils to ask these questions and will respond in a thoughtful and appropriate way, being mindful that where a question is not

answered an answer may be sought elsewhere and children may receive inappropriate information. Questions of this nature will be handled sensitively. Staff will not answer 'in the moment' instead taking time to ensure that they are clear about the information that they are able to give and parents will be informed where necessary. Such questions may need to be handled alongside the safeguarding policy.

5.4 Physical health and mental wellbeing

Teaching children about physical health and mental wellbeing is an important part of supporting children to make good decisions about their own health and wellbeing. We know that mental and physical health are interlinked and it is important that children understand the impact that one can have upon the other. Through this subject area, children will learn about self-care techniques, personal health, basic first aid and the prevention of health and wellbeing problems. (See Primary Appendix)

5.5 Menstruation

It is important that girls are prepared for the onset of menstruation, and for many girls this is happening during their years at primary school. Menstruation is included in the Health element of RSHE and will be taught alongside the requirements outlined in the Science Curriculum. Sanitary products are available in school should they be required and sensitive arrangements are in place to help girls to prepare for and manage menstruation. Parents should contact their child's class teacher in the first instance if they wish to discuss this further.

6 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

We promote the needs and interests of all pupils, irrespective of gender, culture, ability or aptitude by ensuring that all resources are representative of the various cultures, religions and backgrounds of the children we teach. Teaching will take into account the ability, age, readiness, special educational needs and cultural backgrounds of our young people and those with English as a second language to ensure that all can fully access RSHE education provision. We promote social learning and expect our pupils to show a high regard for the needs of

others by listening to others, respecting the opinions of those around them, and being fair and unbiased in their responses. We will use RSHE education as a vehicle to address diversity issues and to ensure equality for all by supporting children to develop positive attitudes to all types of family relationships, including same sex relationships, and by preparing all pupils for the future irrespective of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

All pupils receive teaching on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) relationships during their school years. Sometimes this may not be explicit. For example, a lesson on relationships may contain gender neutral names to sensitively show the healthy/non-healthy characteristics of a relationship regardless of their sexuality.

References;

SEND Code of Practice 2015

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

SEN and Disability Regulations 2014

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2014/1530/pdfs/ukxi_20141530_en.pdf

Children and Families Act 2014

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/enacted>

Equality Act 2010

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/content>

Appendix 1 Primary Appendix

Relationships Education

By the end of primary school, pupils should know:

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| <p>Families and people who care for me</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ that families are important for children growing up because they can give love, security and stability. □ the characteristics of healthy family life, commitment to each other, including in times of difficulty, protection and care for children and other family members, the importance of spending time together and sharing each other's lives. □ that others' families, either in school or in the wider world, sometimes look different from their family, but that they should respect those differences and know that other children's families are also characterised by love and care. □ that stable, caring relationships, which may be of different types, are at the heart of happy families, and are important for children's security as they grow up. □ that marriage¹ represents a formal and legally recognised commitment of two people to each other which is intended to be lifelong. □ how to recognise if family relationships are making them feel unhappy or unsafe, and how to seek help or advice from others if needed. |
| <p>Caring friendships</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ how important friendships are in making us feel happy and secure, and how people choose and make friends. □ the characteristics of friendships, including mutual respect, truthfulness, trustworthiness, loyalty, kindness, generosity, trust, sharing interests and experiences and support with problems and difficulties. □ that healthy friendships are positive and welcoming towards others, and do not make others feel lonely or excluded. □ that most friendships have ups and downs, and that these can often be worked through so that the friendship is repaired or even strengthened, and that resorting to violence is never right. □ how to recognise who to trust and who not to trust, how to judge when a friendship is making them feel unhappy or uncomfortable, managing conflict, how to manage these |

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| | situations and how to seek help or advice from others, if needed. |
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^{1 13} Marriage in England and Wales is available to both opposite sex and same sex couples. The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 extended marriage to same sex couples in England and Wales. The ceremony through which a couple get married may be civil or religious.

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| Respectful relationships | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ the importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs. □ practical steps they can take in a range of different contexts to improve or support respectful relationships. □ the conventions of courtesy and manners. □ the importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness. □ that in school and in wider society they can expect to be treated with respect by others, and that in turn they should show due respect to others, including those in positions of authority. □ about different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), the impact of bullying, responsibilities of bystanders (primarily reporting bullying to an adult) and how to get help. □ what a stereotype is, and how stereotypes can be unfair, negative or destructive. □ the importance of permission-seeking and giving in relationships with friends, peers and adults. |
| Online relationships | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ that people sometimes behave differently online, including by pretending to be someone they are not. □ that the same principles apply to online relationships as to face-to-face relationships, including the importance of |

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| | <p>respect for others online including when we are anonymous.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ the rules and principles for keeping safe online, how to recognise risks, harmful content and contact, and how to report them. □ how to critically consider their online friendships and sources of information including awareness of the risks associated with people they have never met. □ how information and data is shared and used online. |
| Being safe | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ what sorts of boundaries are appropriate in friendships with peers and others (including in a digital context). □ about the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe. □ that each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact. □ how to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts, including online) whom they do not know. □ how to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult. □ how to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard. □ how to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so. □ where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources. |

Health Education

By the end of primary school, pupils should know:

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| Mental wellbeing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ that mental wellbeing is a normal part of daily life, in the same way as physical health. □ that there is a normal range of emotions (e.g. happiness, sadness, anger, fear, surprise, nervousness) and scale of |
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| | <p>emotions that all humans experience in relation to different experiences and situations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ how to recognise and talk about their emotions, including having a varied vocabulary of words to use when talking about their own and others' feelings. □ how to judge whether what they are feeling and how they are behaving is appropriate and proportionate. □ the benefits of physical exercise, time outdoors, community participation, voluntary and service-based activity on mental wellbeing and happiness. □ simple self-care techniques, including the importance of rest, time spent with friends and family and the benefits of hobbies and interests. □ isolation and loneliness can affect children and that it is very important for children to discuss their feelings with an adult and seek support. □ that bullying (including cyberbullying) has a negative and often lasting impact on mental wellbeing. □ where and how to seek support (including recognising the triggers for seeking support), including whom in school they should speak to if they are worried about their own or someone else's mental wellbeing or ability to control their emotions (including issues arising online). □ it is common for people to experience mental ill health. For many people who do, the problems can be resolved if the right support is made available, especially if accessed early enough. |
| Internet safety and harms | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ that for most people the internet is an integral part of life and has many benefits. □ about the benefits of rationing time spent online, the risks of excessive time spent on electronic devices and the impact of positive and negative content online on their own and others' mental and physical wellbeing. □ how to consider the effect of their online actions on others and know how to recognise and display respectful behaviour online and the importance of keeping personal information private. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ why social media, some computer games and online gaming, for example, are age restricted. □ that the internet can also be a negative place where online abuse, trolling, bullying and harassment can take place, which can have a negative impact on mental health. □ how to be a discerning consumer of information online including understanding that information, including that from search engines, is ranked, selected and targeted. □ where and how to report concerns and get support with issues online. |
| Physical health and fitness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ the characteristics and mental and physical benefits of an active lifestyle. the importance of building regular exercise into daily and weekly routines and how to achieve this; for example, walking or cycling to school, a daily active mile or other forms of regular, vigorous exercise. □ the risks associated with an inactive lifestyle (including obesity). □ how and when to seek support including which adults to speak to in school if they are worried about their health. |
| Healthy eating | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ what constitutes a healthy diet (including understanding calories and other nutritional content). □ the principles of planning and preparing a range of healthy meals. □ the characteristics of a poor diet and risks associated with unhealthy eating (including, for example, obesity and tooth decay) and other behaviours (e.g. the impact of alcohol on diet or health). |
| Drugs, alcohol and tobacco | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ the facts about legal and illegal harmful substances and associated risks, including smoking, alcohol use and drug-taking. |
| Health and prevention | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ how to recognise early signs of physical illness, such as weight loss, or unexplained changes to the body. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ about safe and unsafe exposure to the sun, and how to reduce the risk of sun damage, including skin cancer. □ the importance of sufficient good quality sleep for good health and that a lack of sleep can affect weight, mood and ability to learn. □ about dental health and the benefits of good oral hygiene and dental flossing, including regular check-ups at the dentist. □ about personal hygiene and germs including bacteria, viruses, how they are spread and treated, and the importance of handwashing. □ the facts and science relating to allergies, immunisation and vaccination. |
| Basic first aid | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ how to make a clear and efficient call to emergency services if necessary. □ concepts of basic first-aid, for example dealing with common injuries, including head injuries. |
| Changing adolescent body | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ key facts about puberty and the changing adolescent body, particularly from age 9 through to age 11, including □ physical and emotional changes. □ about menstrual wellbeing including the key facts about the menstrual cycle. |

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

SNAPCHAT

AGE RESTRICTION
13+

Snapchat is a photo- and video-sharing app which also allows users to chat with friends via text or audio. Users can share images and videos with specific friends, or through a 'story' (documenting the previous 24 hours) visible to their entire friend list. Snapchat usage rose during the pandemic, with many young people utilising it to connect with their peers. The app continues to develop features to engage an even larger audience and emulate current trends, rivalling platforms such as TikTok and Instagram.

CONNECTING WITH STRANGERS

Even if your child only connects on the app with people they know, they may still receive friend requests from strangers. Snapchat's links with apps such as Wink and Hoop have increased this possibility. Accepting a request means that children are then disclosing personal information through the Story, SnapMap and Spotlight features. This could allow predators to gain their trust for sinister purposes.

EXCESSIVE USE

There are many features that are attractive to users and keep them excited about the app. Snap streaks encourage users to send snaps daily, Spotlight Challenges give users to the chance to obtain money and online fame, and the Spotlight feature's scroll of videos makes it easy for children to spend hours watching content.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Some videos and posts on Snapchat are not suitable for children. The hashtags used to group content are determined by the poster, so an innocent search term could still yield age-inappropriate results. The app's Discover function lets users swipe through snippets of news stories and trending articles that often include adult content. There is currently no way to turn off this feature.

SEXTING

Sexting continues to be a risk associated with Snapchat. The app's 'disappearing messages' feature makes it easy for young people (teens in particular) to share explicit images on impulse. While these pictures do disappear – and the sender is notified if it has been screenshotted first – users have found alternative methods to save images, such as taking pictures with a separate device.

DAMAGE TO CONFIDENCE

Snapchat's filters and lenses are a popular way for users to enhance their 'selfie game'. Although many are designed to entertain or amuse, the 'beautify' filters on photos can set unrealistic body image expectations and create feelings of inadequacy. Comparing themselves unfavourably against other Snapchat users could threaten a child's confidence or sense of self-worth.

VISIBLE LOCATION

My Places lets users check in and search for popular spots nearby – such as restaurants, parks or shopping centres – and recommend them to their friends. The potential issue with a young person consistently checking into locations on Snapchat is that it allows other users in their friends list (even people they have only ever met online) to see where they currently are and where they regularly go.

Advice for Parents & Carers

TURN OFF QUICK ADD

The Quick Add function helps people find each other on the app. This function works based on mutual friends or whether someone's number is in your child's contacts list. Explain to your child that this feature could potentially make their profile visible to strangers. We recommend that your child turns off Quick Add, which can be done in the settings (accessed via the cog icon).

CHOOSE GOOD CONNECTIONS

Snapchat has recently announced that it is rolling out a new safety feature: users will receive notifications reminding them of the importance of maintaining connections with people they actually know well, as opposed to strangers. This 'Friend Check Up' encourages users to delete connections with users they rarely communicate with, to maintain their online safety and privacy.

TALK ABOUT SEXTING

It may feel like an awkward conversation (and one that young people can be reluctant to have) but it is important to talk openly and non-judgementally about sexting. Discuss the legal implications of sending, receiving or sharing explicit images, as well as the possible emotional impact. Emphasise that your child should never feel pressured into sexting – and that if they receive unwanted explicit images, they should tell a trusted adult straight away.

CHAT ABOUT CONTENT

Talk to your child about what is and isn't wise to share on Snapchat (e.g. don't post explicit images or videos, or display identifiable details like their school uniform). Remind them that once something is online, the creator loses control over where it might end up – and who with. Additionally, Snapchat's 'Spotlight' feature has a #challenge like TikTok's: it's vital that your child understands the potentially harmful consequences of taking part in these challenges.

KEEP ACCOUNTS PRIVATE

Profiles are private by default, but children may make them public to gain more followers. Your child can send Snaps directly to friends, but Stories are visible to everyone they have added, unless they change the settings. If they use SnapMaps, their location is visible unless 'Ghost Mode' is enabled (again via settings). It's prudent to emphasise the importance of not adding people they don't know in real life. This is particularly important with the addition of My Places, which allows other Snapchatters to see the places your child regularly visits and checks in: strangers, bullies and groomers could use this information to engage in conversation and arrange to meet in person.

BE READY TO BLOCK AND REPORT

If a stranger does connect with your child on Snapchat and begins to make them feel uncomfortable through bullying, pressure to send explicit images or by sending explicit images to them, your child can select the three dots on that person's profile and choose report or block. There are options to state why they are reporting that user (annoying or malicious messages, spam, or masquerading as someone else, for example).

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



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Sources: Status of Mind: Social media and young people's mental health | Life in Likes – Children's Commissioners Report | <https://support.snapchat.com/en-US> | <https://natsanity.net/snapchat-parent-review/> | BT.com | Independent.co.uk, <https://mashable.com/article/snapchat-status-snap-maps/?europe=true>, eSafety Commissioner, (2017), Young People and Sexting – Attitudes and Behaviours: Research Findings from the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Australia.