Colchester County High School for Girls
Parent Weekly Bulletin
3 March 2023

Term Dates 2022 – 2023

Spring Term
Thursday 5 January
Friday 31 March

Half Term
Monday 13 February
Friday 17 February

Summer Term
Monday 17 April
Friday 21 July

Bank Holiday
Monday 1 May
Monday 8 May

Half Term
Monday 29 May
Friday 2 June

Non-Pupil Days
Wednesday 19 July
Thursday 20 July
Friday 21 July

Term Dates 2023 – 2024

Autumn Term
Monday 4 September
Wednesday 20 December

Half Term
Monday 23 October
Friday 27 October

Spring Term
Thursday 4 January
Thursday 28 March

Bank Holiday
Friday 29 March

Half Term
Monday 19 February
Friday 23 February

Summer Term
Monday 15 April
Tuesday 23 July

Bank Holiday
Monday 6 May

Half Term
Monday 27 May
Friday 31 May

Non-Pupil Days
Monday 4 September
Monday 25 September
Tuesday 3 October
Friday 20 October
Wednesday 20 December
Thursday 4 January
Friday 5 January
Monday 22 July
Tuesday 23 July

Safeguarding: Never Acceptable
to report a concern:
Click Here to make an Anonymous Report
Link to Whisper an anonymous third-party service for CCHSG

Dates for Your Diary

Saturday	Mar	4	PTFA Nearly New Uniform and Book Sale 09.00 – 15.00
Monday **Week A**	Mar	6	Assembly: Yrs 12 & 13 via Teams Yr 8 Progress Check 2 to parents Yr 9 Psychology Visit to London
Tuesday	Mar	7	Assembly: Yrs 10 & 11 via Teams Yr 11 GCSE Drama Dress & Tech Rehearsal
Wednesday	Mar	8	Assembly: Yrs 8 & 9
Thursday	Mar	9	Assembly: Yr 7 via Teams Author Visit Yr 8 Period 3, Yr 7 Period 4
Friday	Mar	10	No Assembly PTFA Parent and Student Social Evening
Saturday	Mar	11	Yr 9 Magistrates Mock Trial Competition 09.00 – 13.00 DofE Silver Training Day 09.00 – 17.00

Nut Free School
We ask everyone to ensure no nuts or nut products are brought into school. This includes during travel to and from school via public or shared transport. Thank you.

Votes for Schools
This week's topic was: *'Are UK supermarkets doing enough to tackle food waste?'*

Glass Bottles
Please could we ask that glass drinks bottles are not brought into school as there have been incidents where they have been dropped and smashed. Thank you.

Yr 9 Diphtheria, Tetanus and Polio Booster and Meningitis Vaccination – Monday 13 March
The immunisation team will be in school to administer the vaccination, parents have been sent information and need to complete the consent form within the letter by Wednesday 8 March.
If you have any queries we ask that you do not contact the school, as we will be unable to help, but please contact the immunisation service via 0300 7900597 or 0300 7900594.

School Nurse
The School Nurse will be in school on Wednesday 8 March and Wednesday 22 March; students can contact Mrs Ward via jward@cchsg.com to make an appointment or let their Form Tutor know, who can contact Mrs Ward on their behalf.

Fundraising for European Youth Parliament
We are extremely happy to announce that our Yr 12 European Youth Parliament team passed the Regionals round on Thursday 23 February and are through to the Nationals at the start of July. The quality of the competition was incredibly high but the hard preparation and practice of our students paid off. Our EYP team are looking for potential sponsors to contribute to the expenses of travelling to the Nationals in Liverpool in July. If you are a businesses owner or the company you work for might be interested to sponsor please contact Mr Paz via ipaz@cchsg.com.
In addition, the team are holding raffle for a Hotel Chocolat Easter Egg, selling tickets via ParentPay. Please see the poster below, the deadline to buy tickets is Monday 27 March. Thank you for supporting them.

Healthy Living Sessions for w/c Monday 6 March
Yr 7: 7X Rotation 5 will have their first session on Monday 6 March during Periods 4 & 5
Yr 8: 8X Rotation 5 will have their first session on Tuesday 7 March during Period 1
The initial recipe with the ingredients has been sent to parents and students.

Lost Property
We urge all belongings to be clearly named. Any unnamed lost property that has been handed in can be collected from Reception and will be kept for two school weeks before being disposed of.

For regular updates on CCHSG activities you can follow us on Facebook @colchestergirls or Twitter @CCHSG_ For PE Department news see @CchsgD

Parent Weekly Bulletin – 3 March 2023

Extracurricular and Enrichment Activities

PE Fixtures

Date	Time	Event	Against	Location	Year(s)
08.03.2023	07.45 – 15.35	Essex & East Region Floor & Vault Gymnastics Championship	Various	Away	U14 & 16
09.03.2023	15.00	Football	Gt Baddow	Away	U16

Yr 11 GCSE Chemistry Revision – Wednesday Lunchtime in G17
On Wednesday 8 March will be covering the Rates topic.

Coast and Vale Youth Rangers
Mr King wishes to draw students' attention to the Youth Ranger Programme for 13 – 18 year olds run by The Coast and Heaths and Dedham Vale Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in Suffolk and Essex called the Coast and Vale Youth Rangers. The programme is run in partnership with the National Trust, RSPB, Flatford Mill Field Studies Council and the AONB team, so the site location for each session will vary. Sessions are on the first Sunday of the month and are for 2 ½ hours. Young people who attend will have the opportunity to do practical conservation work, wildlife surveys, bushcraft and outdoor recreation. Please see the poster below for more details.

As this is an even not run by the school parents should check the details themselves before deciding whether it is appropriate for their child to take part.

Mathematics Department Revision Sessions for Week A (Lunchtime)
Yr 13 Tuesday Integration with Mrs Roshen in M10
Yr 13 Wednesday, Statistics with Mrs Bradnum
Yr 12 Tuesday, Maths Intervention with Mr Williams
Yr 11 Thursday revision with Mr Glease (EGL and BRO groups) in M7
Yr 11 Friday, drop-in session with Mrs King
Yr 10 Additional Mathematics Wednesday with Mrs Roshen in M10
Add Maths drop-in session Friday in M10 run by Yr 12 FM students
Maths Surgery run by Yr 13 FM students Wednesday (open to All Years) in M10

PsychSoc – Tuesday 7 March at Lunchtime
Students can take part in 'I'm A Scientist Get Me Out Of Here' live chat with Psychologists about the subject, careers in Psychology and advice on how to revise. More information can be found on Psychology Zone – I'm a Scientist, Get me out of here (imascientist.org.uk) but to be able to log in students should see Mrs Phillips in H4 for an individual passcode. Students will need to have a log in ready for PsychSoc to participate. It is great fun and students can ask them anything about the world of Psychology, so should prepare some questions in advance.

Yrs 10 – 13 British Physics Olympiad
The Olympiad will be continuing on Monday Week A lunchtime, 12.45 in G1, with Mr Minton.
It is open to all students in Yrs 10-13, who would like to test their physics skills against other students in the UK and potentially the world!

All Yrs – Astronomy Club
For students who want to learn about the beautiful universe whilst having fun: Astronomy Club is the place to be! We do different topics each session, and there is always a fun Kahoot at the end to get competitive with (with prizes of course). Next session we will be exploring the ways our Earth/Universe will evolve and our place in Space. Students should come along and join the adventure, on every Thursday Week A, Lunchtime in G1. See you there Astronomers!

Wellbeing Information
Any student who feels they need wellbeing support, should contact any of the following:
EWMHS: 0800 953 0222
Young Minds: https://www.youngminds.org.uk/
Kooth: https://www.kooth.com/
Sexual abuse or harassment can also be reported to neveracceptable@cchsg.com or see the anonymous reporting link on the front of the Bulletin.
Childline: 0800 1111 NSPCC: 0808 800 5000
The School Nurse and School Counsellor are available for student appointments.

Parent Weekly Bulletin – 3 March 2023

From the Wellbeing Ambassadors – Simple Relaxation Techniques to Reduce Stress

1. **Breath Focus** – take long, slow, deep breaths to gently disengage your mind from distracting thoughts, especially helpful for people to enable them to focus on their bodies in a positive way
2. **Body Scan** – blends breath focus with progressive muscle relaxation to release any physical tension you feel there; helps boost your awareness of mind-body connection
3. **Guided imagery** – can find free apps and online recordings of calming scenes to sooth and help relax you, reinforcing a positive version of yourself especially for those who have intrusive thoughts
4. **Mindfulness meditation** – involves sitting comfortably and focusing on your breathing, enabling attention to be focused to the present, without worrying about the past or future – useful to help combat anxiety, depression and pain
5. **Repetitive prayer** – silently repeat short prayer or phrase from a prayer while practicing breath focus; especially if religion or spirituality is meaningful to you

Careers Information

Students can make appointments with our impartial careers adviser via the sign-up sheet outside of Mrs Tarrier's office.

Useful Careers Information

Is your child wondering what to do next? For options post GCSE, these links might be of use:
Get the Jump: explore your education and training choices | National Careers Service
Interested in a Career in Sport/Physical Wellbeing? Please see Careers Magazine - Active Essex
Careers Guidance for Essex career-hub-lmi-booklet-final.pdf (greateressexcareershub.co.uk)

e-Safety Information – Advice on Group Chats in Messaging Apps

It has come to our attention that most Form Groups, especially those in the lower school have group chats on messaging apps, such as WhatsApp. While there are many positive reasons for being in such group chats, we have encountered situations where there have been some negative behaviour and some student not always being kind to one another.

We would like to remind all parents and carers that if your child has a mobile phone then they are likely part of numerous group chats and social media platforms. To ensure your children are using these platforms safely and responsibly, the best policy is openness and transparency. Checking your child's phone and social media, and discussing what you find, whether positive or negative should be a regular occurrence, especially for those parents with younger children.

We have attached a few helpful guides that will provide information and help parents engage their children in discussion around their mobile phone use.

Dining Room Arrangements

Breakfast – served between 08.00 – 08.35, accessed via the Dining Hall Extension Doors outside the servery.
Breaktime – Yrs 7 – 11 need to go to the allocated outside area to eat. Break service in Dining Hall.
Lunchtime – hot food in Dining Hall at allocated time for each Year Group, cold food and pre-ordered panini/sandwiches available from the Snack Shack 12.35 – 13.00. Yrs 12 & 13 pre-ordered food in Sixth Form Refectory from 12.15.
The Hall is now back in use for students with packed lunches. Students should arrive promptly at 12.35 and be finished by 13.00. Salad Boxes should be eaten in the Dining Hall Extension and can now be pre-ordered.

Pre-orders must be made by 08.30 via the Civica Eats APP
Please ensure your child's ParentPay meal account is in credit.

Dining Arrangements students to Dining Hall for Lunch:

Week A		**Week B**	
12.35	Yr 13	**12.35**	Yr 13
12.45	Yr 11	**12.45**	Yr 11
12.50	Yr 8 & 7	**12.50**	Yr 9 & 10
13.00	Yr 9 & 10	**13.00**	Yr 7 & 8

Students should arrive promptly for their slot.

Parent Weekly Bulletin – 3 March 2023

Menu for w/c 6 March

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Chilli con Carne with Rice	Lasagne with Salad	Sausage, Chips & Beans	Sweet & Sour Chicken Noodles	Seafood Tagliatelle
Or				
Cheese & Tomato Pasta Salad	Stuffed Butternut Squash with Sweetcorn (Vegan)	Macaroni Cheese with Peas	Cheesy Stack Wrap with Salad	Quiche with Salad
Main Meal £3.30				
Chocolate Sponge with Chocolate Sauce	Blackberry & Apple Crumble with Custard	Profiteroles with Chocolate Sauce	Pancakes	White Chocolate Mousse
Pudding £1.30				
Panino £3.30				
Soup of the Day (changes daily) £0.60 with Homemade Bread £0.40				
Vegetable (Vegan)	Minestrone (Vegan)	Tomato & Lentil (Vegan)	Carrot & Coriander (Vegan)	Tomato & Basil

Correspondence Sent out this Week
8H: Research Project Consent
Yrs 8 – 10: Disneyland Netball Tour Information (participants only)
Yr 10: Research Project Consent (Group 10AA only)
Yr 10: History of Medicine Trip to London (History student only)
Yrs 10 & 11: DofE Bronze Presentation Evening (selected students)
Yr 12: Early Leave (selected students)
Yr 12: Consent for Extended Project Qualification Research
Yrs 12 & 13: STEM Physics Lecture at University of Cambridge (selected students)
Yrs 12 & 13: A Level Psychology Conference (Psychology students only)
Yrs 12 & 13: A Level Mathematics and Further Mathematics Revision Materials (Mathematics and Further Mathematics students only)

Deadline for Replies and Payments

Year Group	Trip or Event	Deadline for Response
All Yrs	PTFA Quiz and Curry Night	
All Yrs	EYP Chocolate Easter Egg Raffle	Monday 27 March
Yr 7	PTFA Social Event	Friday 3 March
8H	Research Project Consent	Monday 6 March
Yr 9	Yr 9: Diphtheria, Tetanus and Polio Booster and Meningitis Vaccination	Wednesday 8 March
Yr 9	DofE Bronze Training Day and Practice Expedition Group B	Friday 21 April
Yr 10	Research Project Consent	Monday 6 March
Yr 10	DofE Silver Training Day and Practice Expedition	Friday 24 March
Yr 10	History of Medicine Trip to London	Tuesday 7 March
Yrs 10 & 11	DofE Bronze Presentation Evening	Monday 6 March
Yr 12	UCAS Discovery Exhibition	Friday 3 March
Yrs 12 & 13	STEM Physics Lecture at University of Cambridge	Friday 17 March
Yrs 12 & 13	A Level Psychology Conference	Friday 10 March
Yrs 12 & 13	A Level Mathematics and Further Mathematics Revision Materials	Friday 17 March

MENSA Brainteasers
Add together three of the numbers below to score 30. Each number can be used as many times as you wish.
How many different combinations are there?
0 2 3 5 10 15 20 25

Answer from Friday 24 February: Renault and Neutral.

Word of the Week for w/c 6 March
Next week the word is: **QUINTESSENTIAL** – the purest or most perfect example of something.

Colchester County High School for Girls
3 March 2023

PTFA
Registered Charity No. 1110464

1. Spring and Summer Term Dates for Your Diary
- **Nearly New Uniform Sale:** Saturday 4 March, 10.00 – 12.30
- **Year 7 Parents & Students Social Evening:** Friday 10 March, 19.00 – 21.00
- **Quiz and Curry Night:** Friday 28 April, 19.00 - 22.00

2. Nearly New Uniform and Revision Books Sale: Saturday 4 March, 10.00 – 12.30
This term's Nearly New Uniform Sale, open to all Years, will be held in the Main Hall this Saturday. We do anticipate a large attendance, so we would appreciate your support and patience as we get you through the sale room. Please try to avoid bringing siblings, unless they are currently at the school and need to get uniform.

3. Year 7 Parents & Students Social Evening: Friday 10 March, 19.00 – 21.00
This a **final reminder** for all parents/carers wishing to attend the Year & Social Event on Friday 10 March. Tickets for this event must be purchased **by 23.55 on Friday 3 March via Classlist.** If you have not yet signed up to Classlist, please join this safe parent community through the following link www.classlist.com. Students will be entertained with a disco, and snacks and drinks will be provided. Please be advised, that students are not permitted to use mobile phones or recording equipment in the disco. Parents/carers are invited to attend a separate reception while the students are at their party. Complimentary canapes will be served – there will be a licensed bar and hot drinks available to purchase.
The PTFA are committed to reducing the use of single-use plastics at our events, so we would ask that **all students attending the disco bring a named re-usable water bottle with them.**

4. Quiz and Curry Night: Friday 28 April 19.00 - 22.00
The PTFA's annual Quiz and Curry Night will take place on Friday 28 April where you can enjoy a night of brainteasing questions, good food and fun and a chance to win the PTFA Quiz Night trophy. Please refer to the letter sent to parents on Wednesday 22 February to book your tickets via Classlist. If you would like to volunteer at the Quiz and Curry Night, please signup via the following link: volunteersignup.org/7BTCY

5. Amazon Smile
A reminder that the Amazon Smile donation programme permanently closed down on 20 February. Purchases made using Amazon Smile will no longer earn any donations for the PTFA. However, CCHSG PTFA is registered with Easyfundraising so you can still help us raise funds when shopping online. It's completely free to join. Please use this link www.easyfundraising.org.uk to get started!

6. Volunteer Sign-up links
None of our planned events can run without the kind support of volunteer staff/parents/carers. Could you help? To sign-up, please click on the link for the individual event to go to the sign-up sheet (or copy it into your web browser if clicking does not work). CCHSG PTFA thanks you in advance for your support.

EVENT	SIGN-UP LINK
Year 7 Students & Parents/Carers Social Evening: Friday 10 March	https://volunteersignup.org/JDWJW
Quiz and Curry Night: Friday 28 April	https://volunteersignup.org/7BTCY

PTFA CONTACTS:
For all enquires related to PTFA, email cchsgptfa@gmail.com

The European Youth Parliament Year 12 team has made it through to the nationals competition.

Can you help us get there?

We are selling raffle tickets for 50p or 5 for £2.

That's right – this delicious Hotel Chocolat Extra-Thick egg with a dozen melt-in-the-middle truffle and praline tiddly eggs that retails for **£30** could be yours for just **50p**!!



*Warning – contains nuts

Become a Coast & Vale Youth Ranger!

The Coast & Vale Youth Rangers is a free volunteer group for young people aged 13-18 in the Dedham Vale and Coast & Heaths Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Conservation and environmental work improves biodiversity and supports nature and wildlife.

Youth Rangers learn new skills, meet new friends, build confidence and help support the local environment.

Activities include practical conservation work, wildlife surveys and beach cleans

No experience is needed and all training and equipment provided.



Help support your local environment

Activities usually take place on the first Sunday each month

Own transport or lift in minibus from Soane Street, Ipswich

For more information please email Emma Black, Countryside Projects Officer at emma.black@suffolk.gov.uk

DEDHAM VALE
AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY
& STOUR VALLEY

Coast & Heaths
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Find out more at

www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org
www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org



PTFA

QUIZ & CURRY NIGHT



Tickets

ADULT £10.00
(Age 18 & over)

CHILD £5.00
(Age 17 & under)

Family £25.00
2 adults & 2 children

- Ticket includes a vegetarian meal.
- Non-vegetarian dishes, popcorn and cakes available to purchase.
- Licensed bar available.

FRIDAY 28TH APRIL 2023

Main Hall, CCHSG
19.00 - 21.30 (Doors open 18.30)

Quizmaster: JULIAN ROPER
Corporate Quiz Hire
www.corporatequizhire.co.uk

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

GROUP CHATS

Occurring through messaging apps, on social media and in online games, group chats are among the most popular ways that young people engage with their peers online. Involving, by definition, three or more individuals, these groups allow users to send messages, images and videos to everyone in one place. While they are useful for helping friends, people with shared interests or members of a club to communicate and coordinate activities, they can also leave young people feeling excluded and bullied – as well as providing opportunities for inappropriate content to be shared and viewed.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

BULLYING

Unkind comments or images which are purposely aimed at an individual can be shared freely in a group chat – allowing and often encouraging others to join in the bullying behaviour. If this content is shared in a group of their peers (especially a larger group), it serves to amplify the hurt, embarrassment, anxiety and isolation that the victim feels.

SHARING GROUP CONTENT

It's important to remember that – while the content of the chat is private between those in the group – individual users can easily share a message, photo or video with others outside of the group or screenshot what's been posted. The risk of something your child intended as private becoming public (and potentially going viral) is higher if there are people they don't know well in the group.

EXCLUSION AND ISOLATION

This common issue with group chats can happen in several ways: starting a new group, for instance, but deliberately excluding a certain child. Likewise, the chat may take place on an app which one child doesn't have access to, meaning they can't be involved. A child can also feel isolated when a group chat is used to discuss or share images from an event that everyone else but them attended.

UNKNOWN MEMBERS

Within larger group chats, it's more likely your child will be communicating with people they don't really know. These strangers may be friends of the host, but not necessarily friendly toward your child. It's wise for young people not to share personal details and stay aware that they have no control over the messages and images they share after they've put them online.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Some discussions in group chats may include inappropriate words, swearing and unsuitable images or videos. These could be viewed by your child if they are part of that group, whether they actively engage in it or not. Some chat apps have a disappearing message function, so your child may be unable to report something they've seen because it can only be viewed once or for a short time.

NOTIFICATIONS AND FOMO

A drawback of large group chats is the sheer number of notifications. Every time someone in the group messages, your child's device will be 'pinged' with an alert: potentially, this could mean hundreds of notifications a day. Not only is this highly distracting, but young people's fear of missing out on the latest conversation results in increased screen time as they try to keep up with the chat.

Advice for Parents & Carers

CONSIDER OTHERS' FEELINGS

Group chats are often an arena for young people to gain social status. This could cause them to do or say things on impulse, which could upset others in the group. Encourage your child to consider how other people might feel if they engaged in this behaviour. If your child does upset a member of their group chat, support them to reach out, show empathy and apologise for their mistake.

GIVE SUPPORT, NOT JUDGEMENT

Remind your child that they can confide in you if they feel bullied or excluded in a group chat, instead of responding to the person who's upset them. Validate their hurt feelings and help to put them back in control by discussing how they'd like to handle the situation. On a related note, you could also empower your child to speak up if they're in a chat where others are being picked on.

BLOCK, REPORT AND LEAVE

If your child is in a chat where inappropriate content is being shared, advise them to block the users sending the material, report them to the host app or platform and exit the group. If any of this content could be putting a minor at risk, contact the police. Emphasise to your child that it's OK for them to simply leave any group chat that they don't feel comfortable being a part of.

PRACTISE SAFE SHARING

In any online communication, it's vital for young people to be aware of what they're sharing and who might potentially see it. Discuss the importance of not revealing identifiable details like their address, their school or photos that they wouldn't like to be seen widely. Remind them that once something is shared in a group, they lose control of where it may end up and how it might be used.

AVOID INVITING STRANGERS

Sadly, many individuals online hide their true identity to gain a child's trust – for example, to gather information on them, to exchange inappropriate content or to coax them into doing things they aren't comfortable with. Ensure your child understands why they shouldn't add people they don't know to a group chat – and, especially, to never accept a group chat invitation from a stranger.

SILENCE NOTIFICATIONS

Having a phone or tablet bombarded with notifications from a group chat can be a massive irritation and distraction – especially if it's happening late in the evening. Explain to your child that they can still be part of the group chat, but that it would be healthier for them to turn off or mute the notifications and catch up with the conversation at a time which better suits them.

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.

National Online Safety®

#WakeUpWednesday

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about WHATSAPP

UK AND EUROPE 16+ REST OF THE WORLD 13+

WhatsApp is the world's most popular messaging service, with around two billion users exchanging texts, photos, videos and documents, as well as making voice and video calls. Its end-to-end encryption means messages can only be viewed by the sender and any recipients: not even WhatsApp can read them. Updates to its privacy policy in 2021 (involving sharing data with parent company Facebook) caused millions to leave the app, but the new policy was widely misinterpreted – it only related to WhatsApp's business features, not to personal messages.



SCAMS

Fraudsters occasionally send WhatsApp messages pretending to offer prizes – encouraging the user to click on a link to win. Other common scams involve warning someone that their WhatsApp subscription has run out (aiming to dupe them into disclosing payment details) or impersonating a friend or relative and asking for money to be transferred to help with an emergency.

DISAPPEARING MESSAGES

Users can set WhatsApp messages to disappear in 24 hours, 7 days or 90 days by default. Photos and videos can also be instructed to disappear after the recipient has viewed them. These files can't be saved or forwarded – so if your child was sent an inappropriate message, it would be difficult to prove any wrongdoing. However, the receiver can take a screenshot and save that as evidence.

ENABLING FAKE NEWS

WhatsApp has unfortunately been linked to accelerating the spread of dangerous rumours. In India in 2018, some outbreaks of mob violence appear to have been sparked by false allegations being shared on the app. WhatsApp itself took steps to prevent its users circulating hazardous theories and speculation in the early weeks of the Covid-19 pandemic.

POTENTIAL CYBERBULLYING

Group chat and video calls are great for connecting with multiple people in WhatsApp, but there is always the potential for someone's feelings to be hurt by an unkind comment or joke. The 'only admins' feature gives the admin(s) of a group control over who can send messages. They can, for example, block people from posting in a chat, which could make a child feel excluded and upset.

CONTACT FROM STRANGERS

To start a WhatsApp chat, you only need the mobile number of the person you want to message (the other person also needs to have the app). WhatsApp can access the address book on someone's device and recognise which of their contacts also use the app. So if your child has ever given their phone number to someone they don't know, that person could use it to contact them via WhatsApp.

LOCATION SHARING

The 'live location' feature lets users share their current whereabouts, allowing friends to see their movements. WhatsApp describes it as a "simple and secure way to let people know where you are." It is a useful method for a young person to let loved ones know they're safe – but if they used it in a chat with people they don't know, they would be exposing their location to them, too.

Advice for Parents & Carers

CREATE A SAFE PROFILE

Even though someone would need a child's phone number to add them as a contact, it's also worth altering a young person's profile settings to restrict who can see their photo and status. The options are 'everyone', 'my contacts' and 'nobody' – choosing one of the latter two ensures that your child's profile is better protected.

EXPLAIN ABOUT BLOCKING

If your child receives spam or offensive messages, calls or files from a contact, they should block them using 'settings' in the chat. Communication from a blocked contact won't show up on their device and stays undelivered. Blocking someone does not remove them from your child's contact list – so they also need to be deleted from the address book.

REPORT POTENTIAL SCAMS

Young people shouldn't engage with any message that looks suspicious or too good to be true. When your child receives a message from an unknown number for the first time, they'll be given the option to report it as spam. If the sender claims to be a friend or relative, call that person on their usual number to verify it really is them, or if it's someone trying to trick your child.

LEAVE A GROUP

If your child is in a group chat that is making them feel uncomfortable, or has been added to a group that they don't want to be part of, they can use WhatsApp's group settings to leave. If someone exits a group, the admin can add them back in once; if they leave a second time, it is permanent.

THINK ABOUT LOCATION

If your child needs to use the 'live location' function to show you or one of their friends where they are, advise them to share their location only for as long as they need to. WhatsApp gives a range of 'live location' options, and your child should manually stop sharing their position as soon as it is no longer needed.

DELETE ACCIDENTAL MESSAGES

If your child posts a message they want to delete, WhatsApp allows the user seven minutes to erase a message. Tap and hold on the message, choose 'delete' and then 'delete for everyone.' However, it's important to remember that recipients may have seen (and taken a screenshot of) a message before it was deleted.

CHECK THE FACTS

You can now fact-check WhatsApp messages that have been forwarded at least five times, by double-tapping the magnifying glass icon to the right of the message. From there, your child can launch a Google search and decide for themselves whether the message was true or not.

Meet Our Expert



Parven Kaur is a social media expert and digital media consultant who is passionate about improving digital literacy for parents and children. She has extensive experience in the social media arena and is the founder of Kids N Clicks: a web resource that helps parents and children thrive in a digital world.



National Online Safety®

#WakeUpWednesday

Tips for Encouraging Open Discussions about DIGITAL LIVES

The online world is an entirely familiar and commonplace part of life for today's children and young people, far more so than for previous generations. There are many positives to children being able to access online materials, so it's important not to demonise the internet, games and apps, and limit the benefit of their positive aspects. At the same time, we *do* have a responsibility to educate children about the hazards they may encounter online (just as we would about real-world dangers) so it's essential that we don't shy away from talking to them about the complex – and often sensitive – subject of what they do and what they see when they're online.

Here are some suggestions for kicking off conversations with your child about their digital life ...

MAKE YOUR INTEREST CLEAR

Showing enthusiasm when you broach the subject signals to your child that you're keen to learn about the positives of their online world. Most children enjoy educating adults and will happily chat about what they use the internet for, or what games and apps they're into and how these work. Asking to see their favourite games and apps in action could help you spot any aspects that may need your attention – such as chat functions which might require a settings adjustment to limit contact with strangers. Keep listening even if your child pauses for a long time: they could be considering how to phrase something specific, or they may be gauging your reaction.

BE OPEN AND HONEST, APPROPRIATE TO THEIR AGE

At various stages, children and young people become curious about puberty and how their body changes; about relationships; about how babies are made; and about sexual health. If your child knows that they can discuss these sensitive subjects with you, they tend to be less likely to go looking online for answers – which can often provide them with misleading information and, in some cases, lead to them consuming harmful content. Don't worry if you don't immediately know the answers to their questions – just find out for yourself and go back to them once you have the facts.

REMIND YOUR CHILD THEY CAN ALWAYS TALK TO YOU

In my role I work with many children and young people who admit being reluctant to tell a trusted adult about harmful content they've viewed online, in case it leads to having their devices confiscated. Emphasise to your child that you're always there to listen and help; reassure them that if they *do* view harmful content, then they are not to blame – but talking about it openly will help. Children shouldn't be expected to be resilient against abuse or feel that it's their job to prevent it.

KEEP TALKING!

The most valuable advice we can give is to keep talking with your child about their digital lives. You could try using everyday situations to ask questions about their online experiences.

DISCUSS THAT NOT EVERYTHING WE SEE ONLINE IS REAL

Here, you could give examples from your own digital life of the online world versus reality – for example, those Instagram posts which show the perfect house: spotlessly clean, never messy and immaculately decorated. Explain to your child that there are many other aspects of the online world which are also deliberately presented in an unrealistic way for effect – such as someone's relationship, their body, having perfect skin and so on.

TRY TO REMAIN CALM

As much as possible, try to stay calm even if your child tells you about an online experience that makes you feel angry or fearful. Our immediate emotions frequently influence the way we talk, so it's possible that your initial reaction as a parent or carer could deter a child from speaking openly about what they've seen. Give yourself time to consider the right approach, and perhaps speak with other family members or school staff while you are considering your next steps.

CREATE A 'FAMILY AGREEMENT'

Involving your whole household in coming up with a family agreement about device use can be immensely beneficial. You could discuss when (and for how long) it's OK to use phones, tablets, consoles and so on at home; what parental controls are for and why they're important; and why it's good to talk to each other about things we've seen or experienced online (both good and bad). Explaining your reasoning will help children to understand that, as trusted adults, we want to make sure they are well informed and kept safe. Allowing children to have their say when coming up with your family agreement also makes them far more likely to stick to it in the long term.

Meet Our Expert



Rebecca Jennings of KAPE (Raising Awareness in Sex Education) has almost 20 years' experience delivering relationships and sex education and training to schools, colleges and other education providers. A published author on the subject, she also advises the Department of Education on the staff-training element of the RSHE curriculum.

National Online Safety®

#WakeUpWednesday