



Newsletter October 2024

# St. Michael's Middle School

"Each person, uniquely made in God's image, merits the best we can give"



Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome to our first newsletter of the term. Our newsletters are produced monthly to share key successes of the school and provide reminders of important information. This edition is packed with information and we will have much more news in the coming months as the sporting fixtures and other activities in school gather pace.

It has been wonderful to see our new Year 5 pupils settling into school. Their positive attitude in lessons and around the school has been impressive. I am enjoying getting to know their individual personalities and finding out their unique talents and interests. It is great to see some of our new pupils mentioned in the 'House Points' and 'Pupils for Praise' sections.

We are delighted with phase one of the building improvements completed over the summer. The old library is now a spacious classroom and the library has moved into what was previously the PAD. We were also able to renovate classroom 10 and refit the old ICT2 room to make a new classroom base and lunchtime support area. Phase two will be the full redevelopment of the new library space and the construction of two new classrooms at the back of school to replace the old mobile rooms.

Included with this edition are a few carefully chosen parent guides for Snapchat, WhatsApp and Group Chats. We urge all parents to be vigilant regarding their child's online behaviour, as it often affects school friendships. This is especially important if your child is new to having access through their phones or tablets. Establishing safe and good habits early will help them navigate the complex world of social media.

In a few weeks, you'll have the opportunity to meet with your child's tutor to discuss the beginning of the year. We look forward to seeing you all, either in person or online. You can find the dates for these meetings on the important dates page at the back of the newsletter.

We are looking forward to another fantastic year ahead.

Mr Ayling

St. Michael's Church of England Middle School

Colehill Lane, Wimborne, Dorset. BH21 7AB

Tel: 01202 883433

[office@stmichaelsmiddle.org](mailto:office@stmichaelsmiddle.org)

Headteacher: Mr D. Ayling BSc/Ed (Hons) NPQH

Deputy Headteacher: Mr P. Andrews BSc (Hons) PGCE

**In this issue:**

**Pupils for Praise**

**Traffic around school**

**World Record Poetry Event**

**Harvest Festival**

**House Point Totals**

**Upcoming Dates**

**Subject spotlight on Music**

The logo for initio Learning Trust features the word 'initio' in a dark blue, lowercase, sans-serif font. Above the letters 'i', 'i', and 'o' are small colored circles in teal, yellow, and red respectively. Below 'initio' is the words 'Learning Trust' in a smaller, light blue, sans-serif font.



**Subject  
spotlight  
on...**

# Music



St. Michael's has a vibrant music department under the expert leadership of Mr Johnston. There are many different musical activities that your child can be involved in, both in and out of lessons. This page will give you a flavour of what we do.



Year 6 pupils are busy learning a pop song on the Ukulele to perform to parents at a special concert on Thursday 24th October. Details for this event have been sent out by Parentmail.



Our Year 7 pupils are learning play the Caribbean steel drums in their music lessons this term. Each tutor group will learn a different song and perform it to parents in a special concert on the afternoon of Tuesday 17th December. More details will follow via Parentmail.

We have a superb school choir which is run by the fabulous Steph Martin-Papp. Following a series of wonderful performances last year, including at the Wimborne Folk Festival, our choir is in high demand. This term alone, they will be performing at the Wimborne Twinning Association concert on Thursday 24th; at the Allendale Centre; the Wimborne Mayor's Charity Brunch; The Wimborne Christmas Lights Switch On and at the St. Michael's Church Christmas Fair. The choir is open to any St. Michael's student and rehearsals are on a Tuesday night.



Year 5, along with our instrumentalists and orchestra, will take a starring role in the annual Christmas Service on Monday 2nd December at 7pm.



SMOJO is the St. Michael's Orchestra and Jazz Orchestra. They rehearse in school on a Wednesday evening.



## Would you like to learn the flute?

We are looking for more pupils to play the flute and enhance the woodwind part of the school orchestra. We are able to offer the loan of a flute and taster experiences for any interested pupils. Please contact Mr Johnston via the school office if you are interested.

# Pupils for Praise

Every Friday, two pupils from each year group are selected to go and see Mr Ayling to receive praise and a reward for their hard work. All the pupils below have been selected since the last newsletter.

Hugo R

Riley E

Oscar W

Leah J

Amy M

Annabelle B

River H

Poppy C

Hetty P

Poppy S

Samuel H

# Congratulations!



## St. Michael's is a Nut and Sesame Seed Free School



**THANK YOU**  
for keeping our school safe!

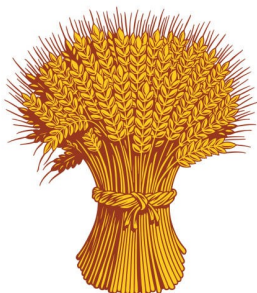


We have a number of pupils with severe allergies to foods containing nuts or sesame seeds. **Please do not allow anything containing these allergens to be brought into school.** Below are some popular products that you need to avoid:



We appreciate your cooperation.

# Harvest Festival Appeal



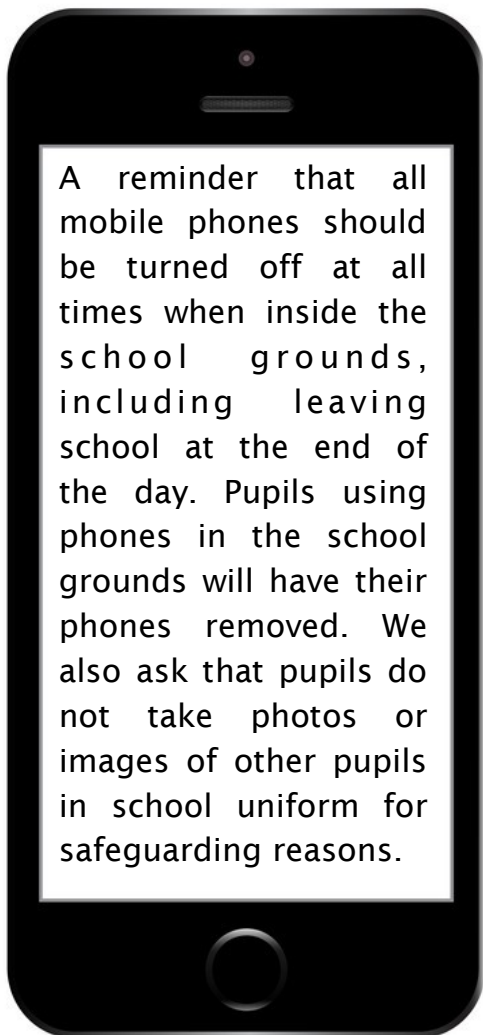
To celebrate Harvest, our Courageous Advocates are organising a collection for Wimborne Food Bank. If you feel able to donate items for this appeal, please send them into school with your child before Wednesday 9th October.

There are certain items that are in particular demand and these are shown in this list. We know how valuable the food bank is for many families and any contribution you are able to make will be very appreciated.

- ✓ Long Life Milk
- ✓ Tea Bags
- ✓ Tinned Pulses
- ✓ Tinned Potatoes
- ✓ Tinned Spaghetti
- ✓ Tinned Meatballs
- ✓ Biscuits
- ✓ Washing Up Liquid
- ✓ Chocolate Biscuits
- ✓ Tubes of Pringles

# Sports News

We will have more sporting news in the next newsletter as fixtures and tournaments get underway. A quick mention to the Year 5 football team who won against West Moors Middle in their first game in the St. Michael's shirt. Well done boys, a great start!



# Uniform Reminders

Thank you for all of your efforts in making sure that pupils have the correct uniform. This allows teachers to focus on positives and a warm greeting when pupils enter their rooms rather than immediately being challenged over their uniform. There are a few areas we can improve on further and your support will be much appreciated.



**School Shoes** We changed the school policy last year to allow pupils to wear black trainers in place of school shoes. Trainers need to be entirely black, including logos and soles. Boots and canvas shoes are not suitable for school activities.

**Socks** The uniform policy is clear that socks should be plain grey or black. White socks are not part of the uniform and no child should be wearing white branded sports socks.



**Earrings and Piercings** Pupils are allowed to wear one pair of stud earrings only. No other piercings are allowed to be worn, including blank retainers. There is no exception to this rule and they are expected to be removed even if this will affect the piercing healing up.

**Jewellery and Make-Up** Other than earrings, no other jewellery should be in school. Pupils should not wear bracelets or necklaces. Pupils should not wear make-up, false nails or false eyelashes. Spot concealer is permitted. Again, this applies to all pupils without exception.



OFFICIAL  
ATTEMPT

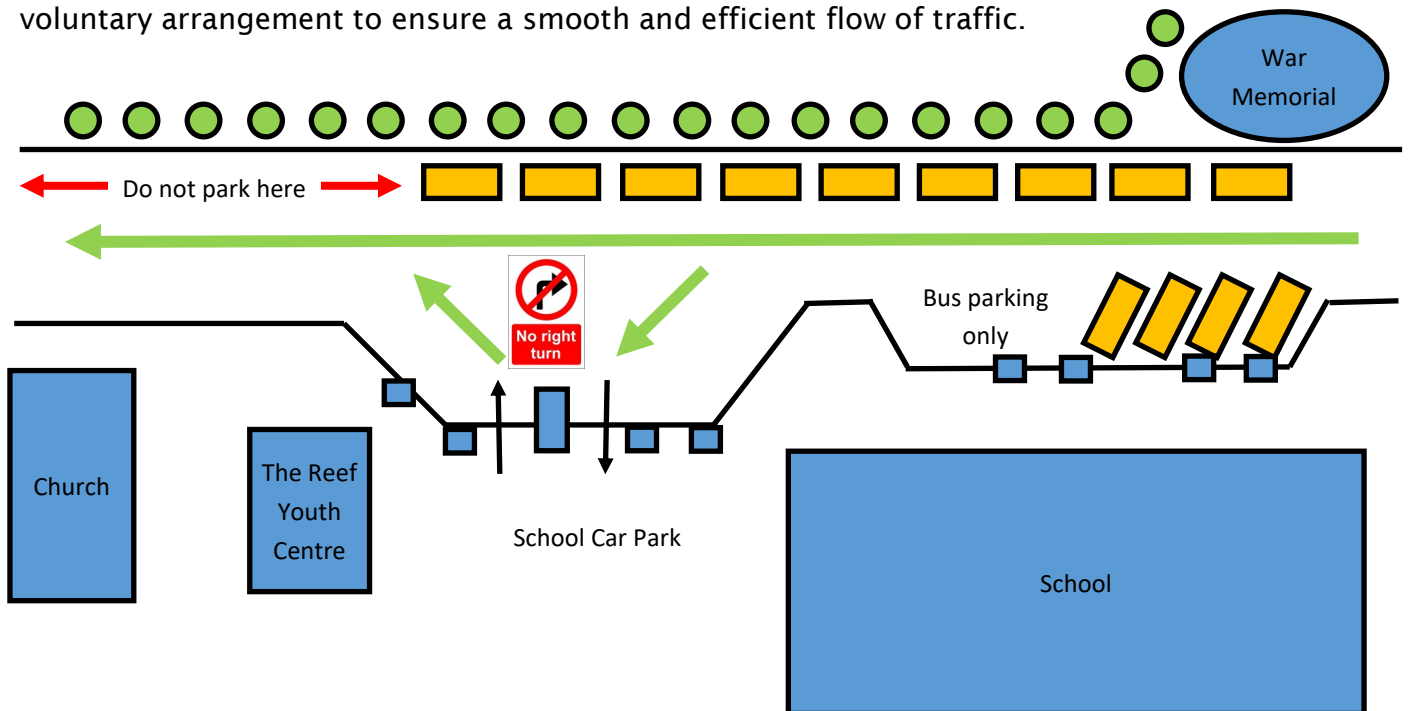


Pupils in Year 6 took part in the official world record attempt for the largest poetry lesson (multi-venue), hosted by poet Laura Mucha. During the event, pupils across the world helped her write a poem about 'what counts' as part of the celebration of World Poetry Day. We wait with anticipation to see if we helped set a new world record!

# Traffic around school

As most parents will be aware, the road system surrounding St. Michael's is not designed to cope with the number of vehicles that use it during dropping-off and picking-up times. We are concerned that some motorists are putting our pupils at risk by their actions, including mounting pavements to get past queues of traffic waiting at the junctions. The school does not have any control over these roads and any actions by drivers will be subject to examination by the police.

One of the main issues with the road system is that the design is such that a car parked in certain places will massively restrict the flow of traffic. We would ask all parents to adhere to a voluntary arrangement to ensure a smooth and efficient flow of traffic.



If all traffic uses the roads surrounding the school as a **one way system**, the flow of traffic will be more efficient. Please enter from the War Memorial end of Colehill Lane and exit by the church. Even one vehicle trying to come the opposite way will stop all of the traffic from flowing freely.

Please make sure that all pupils wait at the junctions either end of Colehill Lane until the school crossing patrol stops traffic before crossing.



Please can all parents be mindful of the access needs of local residents when parking near the school. Please make sure that you do not block access to their driveways, park on the corners at junctions or park on a pavement. Many of our local residents are elderly and require access to be available at all times of the day.

Please respect our  
Local Residents

Pupils who leave through the woods opposite the school need to take care near the Co-op as there is no crossing patrol there. It is much safer to walk to the ends of the road and use the crossing patrol.



We are delighted that attendance at school has made a very positive start; we are currently at 95.5%. We are aiming for 97% and so we have a little more work to do in this area. Thank you for making attendance a continuing priority.

We have a useful webpage that gives further information about school attendance including advice on what to do if your child is ill, has an ongoing health condition or is anxious about attending school. You can find the webpage by clicking [here](#) or going to the attendance section of the school website.

Here is the current attendance for each house.

Paget	Bankes	Gulliver	Hanham
95.5%	94.7%	95.5%	95.8%

The tutor group with the highest attendance in the school is 7R, closely followed by 5JS.

The highest year group in the school is year 5 with 97.6%.

## The Impact of Lateness

**If you are 5 minutes late every day that equates to:**

- 25 minutes per week (Half a lesson missed)
- 15.8 hours of missed school per year (over 17 lessons missed)
- 63 hours of missed school over the 4 years you are at St. Michaels (over 68 lessons missed)

**If you are 10 minutes late every day that equates to:**

- 50 minutes per week (1 lesson missed)
- 31.6 hours of missed school per year (over 34 lessons missed)
- 124 hours of missed school over the 4 years you are at St. Michaels (over 135 lessons missed)

**Every lesson counts!**

**Be on time!**

# House Point Totals

Here are the final house point totals for the year. Pupils earn 'EPraise' points and these are added together to make their house point totals. The stars under the house name shows how many times they have won the house trophy in the last two years.

**Hanham**

**6828**



**Bankes**

**6444**

**Gulliver**

**6627**

**Paget**

**6646**



You can check your child's EPraise points total by going to [www.epraise.co.uk](http://www.epraise.co.uk) and logging onto the parents page.

These are the 5 students with the most house points in each house. Well Done, a great effort!

Amy M (99)

Clemmie B (95)

Zachary N (85)

Lily W (98)

Arlo H (89)

Sean G (85)

Scarlett W (85)

Dexter M (89)

Amber B (82)

Wills B (84)

Ava H (83)

Poppy S (80)

Brooke A (80)

Grace D (83)

Teddy G (81)

Roman W (79)

Rowan S (80)

Chloe S (80)

Joseph V (81)

Mason L (78)

# UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES

Tuesday 8th October	Year 4 Open Evening (5pm)
Monday 14th—Friday 18th October	Year 5 Activities Week
Tuesday 15th October	Tutor Based Parents Evening
Wednesday 16th October	QE Careers Fair (suitable for Year 8)
Thursday 24th October	Year 6 Ukulele Concert (1.55pm)
Thursday 24th October	Year 3,4 and 5 Fun Run (3.45pm)
Thursday 24th October	Twinning Event at the Allendale Centre (Evening)
Thursday 24th October	Year 6 Ukulele Concert to Parents
Monday 28th October—Friday 1st November	Half Term Break
Monday 4th November	Staff Training Day (School Closed)
Tuesday 5th November	Year 7 AUB Arts Award (Visit 1)
Wednesday 6th November	Year 7 AUB Arts Award (Visit 2)
Sunday 10th November	Remembrance Service at St. Michael's Church
Tuesday 12th November	Year 5-8 Flu Vaccinations
Tuesday 19th November	Subject Based Parents' Evening for all Year Groups (in person)
Wednesday 27th November	Musicians Performing at Mayor's Brunch (10am)
Wednesday 27th November	Subject Based Parents' Evening for all Year Groups (online)
Friday 29th November	Year 6 Author Talk
Monday 2nd December	Christmas Service at Wimborne Minster (7pm)
Tuesday 17th December	Year 7 Steel Drumming Concert (pm)
Thursday 19th December	Last Day of Term
Friday 20th December	INSET Day (School Closed)
Monday 6th January	INSET Day (School Closed)
Tuesday 7th January	First Day of Spring Term for Pupils



# St. Michael's Middle School

## Term Dates 2024/2025



### **Autumn Term**

Tuesday 3rd September 2024	Staff Training Day (School Closed)
Wednesday 4th September 2024	Staff Training Day (School Closed)
Thursday 5th September 2024	First Day of Term
Monday 28th October 2024	Half Term Starts
Friday 1st November 2024	Half Term Ends
Monday 4th November 2024	Staff Training Day (School Closed)
Tuesday 5th November 2024	Pupils Return to School
Thursday 19th December 2024	Last Day of Term
Friday 20th December 2024	Staff Training Day (School Closed)



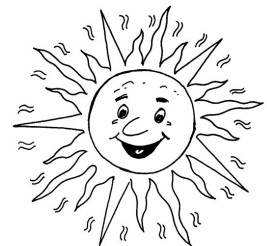
### **Spring Term**

Monday 6th January 2025	Staff Training Day (School Closed)
Tuesday 7th January 2025	First Day of Term
Monday 17th February 2025	Half Term Starts
Friday 21st February 2025	Half Term Ends
Monday 24th February 2025	Staff Training Day (School Closed)
Tuesday 25th February 2025	Pupils Return to School
Friday 4th April 2025	Last Day of Term



### **Summer Term**

Tuesday 22nd April 2025	Staff Training Day (School Closed)
Wednesday 23rd April 2025	First Day of Term
Monday 5th May 2025	Bank Holiday (School Closed)
Monday 26th May 2025	Half Term Starts
Friday 30th June 2025	Half Term Ends
Monday 3rd June 2025	Pupils Return to School
Friday 4th July 2025	Staff Training Day (School Closed)
Wednesday 23rd July 2025	Last Day of Term



In the unlikely event that the school is required to close at short notice, this will be communicated through three different channels. A pop-up alert will appear on the front page of the school website, parents will receive a Parentmail from the school office and the school status will be listed on the [Dorset Council Closed Schools](#) page. There is also usually an announcement made through local radio stations.



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56

# What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

# GROUP CHATS

64

On messaging apps, social media and online games, group chats are among the most popular ways that young people engage with their peers online. Involving three or more individuals, these groups allow users to send messages, images and videos to everyone in one place. While they can be great for connecting with others, there are several risks posed by these tools.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### BULLYING

Teens are often trying to find their place in their social group. Unfortunately, group chats can sometimes lend themselves to unkind comments being shared freely, putting people down to make their peers laugh – often creating a vicious circle that encourages others to join in. Being bullied so publicly – in front of friends and acquaintances – can also amplify the hurt, embarrassment and anxiety that the victim feels.

### EXCLUSION AND ISOLATION

This common issue with group chats can happen in several ways: for instance, starting a new group, but deliberately excluding a certain child. Likewise, the chat may take place on an app which one person 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 events that exclude them – for example, sharing photos from a day out that they didn't attend.

### INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Some discussions in group chats may include inappropriate words, swearing and unsuitable images or videos. These could be viewed by a child if they are part of that group, whether they actively engage in it or not. Some apps have features that cause messages to disappear after they're viewed, so children may be unable to report something they've seen, as it can only be viewed once or for a short time.

### SHARING GROUP CONTENT

Group chats can feel more private and protected, allowing children to share inside jokes and video calls with a smaller group of friends. It's important to remember that while the chat's content is private between those in the group, individual users can easily share material with others outside of the group, or screenshot what's been posted. The risk of something a child intended as private becoming public is higher if there are strangers in the chat.

### UNKNOWN MEMBERS

Within larger group chats, it's more likely for children to communicate with people they don't know. These strangers may be friends of the host, but not necessarily friendly towards everyone present. It's wise for young people to avoid sharing personal details and remember that they have no control over what others do with the material they send into the chat.

### NOTIFICATIONS AND FOMO

A drawback of large group chats is the sheer number of notifications they tend to generate. Every time someone sends a message, each member's device will be 'pinged' with an alert. This could result in hundreds of notifications a day. This is often highly distracting, and young people's fear of missing out (FOMO) can cause increased screen time as they try to keep up with the conversation.

74

## Advice for Parents & Carers

117

### CONSIDER OTHERS' FEELINGS

Group chats can become an arena for young people to compete for social status. This could cause them to do or say things on impulse which could upset others. Help children consider how people might feel if they behave in this way. If the child does upset someone, encourage them to reach out, show empathy and apologise for their mistake.

### 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. Ensure children understand 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 can't be certain where it might end up and how it might be used.

### GIVE SUPPORT, NOT JUDGEMENT

Group chats are an excellent way for children to connect and feel like they belong. However, remind them that they can confide in you if they feel bullied or excluded, instead of responding to the person who's upset them. Validate their feelings and empower them by discussing how they'd like to handle the situation. You can also encourage children to speak up if they witness others being picked on.

### AVOID INVITING STRANGERS

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

### BLOCK, REPORT AND LEAVE

If a child is in a chat where inappropriate content is being shared, advise them to block whoever sent the material, report that person to the host app or platform and exit the group. If any of this content could put a minor at risk, contact the police. Emphasise that it's OK for children to simply leave any group chat that makes them feel uncomfortable.

### SILENCE NOTIFICATIONS

Having a device bombarded with notifications from a group chat can be an irritating distraction – especially if it's happening late in the evening. Explain to children that they can still be part of the group chat while disabling notifications – and that it would be healthier for them to do so, avoiding a situation where they could feel pressured to respond.

## 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.



#WakeUpWednesday®

The National College®

Sources: <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/11-18/talk-talk-about/socialising-online/group-chats/> | <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/social-media/chat-apps/>

# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

# WHATSAPP

AGE RESTRICTION  
**16+**

in UK and Europe:  
rest of the world 13+

With more than two billion active users exchanging texts, photos, videos and documents, as well as making voice and video calls, WhatsApp is the world's most popular messaging service. Its end-to-end encryption only allows messages to be viewed by the sender and any recipients: not even WhatsApp itself can read them. This privacy issue has been in the spotlight recently, as the UK's Online Safety Bill proposes to end such encryption on private messaging; WhatsApp is unwilling to do so and has reportedly considered withdrawing its service in the UK should this legislation go ahead.

...MSG ME...

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### EVOLVING SCAMS

WhatsApp's popularity makes it a lucrative hunting ground for scammers. Recent examples include posing as the target's child, requesting a money transfer because of a spurious 'emergency'. Plus a scam where fraudsters trigger a verification message by attempting to log in to your account, then (posing as WhatsApp) call or text to ask you to repeat the code back to them, giving them access.

### CONTACT FROM STRANGERS

To start a chat, someone only needs the mobile number of the WhatsApp user that they want to message. If your child has ever given their number out to someone they don't know, that person could then contact them via WhatsApp. It's also possible that your child might be added to a group chat (by one of their friends, for example) containing other people that they don't know.

### FAKE NEWS

WhatsApp's connectivity and ease of use allows news to be shared rapidly – whether it's true or not. To combat the spread of misinformation, messages forwarded more than five times on the app now display a 'Forwarded many times' label and a double arrow icon. This makes users aware that the message they've just received is far from an original – and might not be entirely factual, either.

ONLINE

### 'VIEW ONCE' CONTENT

The facility to send images or messages that can only be viewed once has led to some WhatsApp users sharing inappropriate images or abusive texts, knowing that the recipient can't re-open them later to use as evidence of misconduct. People used to be able to screenshot this 'disappearing' content – but a recently added WhatsApp feature now blocks this, citing increased privacy.

### CHAT LOCK

Another new option allows users to store certain messages or chats in a separate 'locked chats' folder, saved behind a passcode, fingerprint or face ID authentication. The risk here is that this function creates the potential for young people to hide conversations and content that they suspect their parents wouldn't approve of (such as age-inappropriate material).

### VISIBLE LOCATION

WhatsApp's 'live location' feature lets users share their current whereabouts, which can be helpful for friends meeting up or parents checking that their child's safely on the way home, for example. However, anyone in your child's contacts list or in a mutual group chat can also track their location – potentially letting strangers identify a child's home address or journeys that they make regularly.

## Advice for Parents & Carers ...TYPING...

### EMPHASISE CAUTION

Encourage your child to treat unexpected messages with caution: get them to consider, for example, whether the message sounds like something a friend or relative would really send them. Make sure they know never to share personal details over WhatsApp, and to be wary of clicking on any links in messages. Setting up two-step verification adds a further layer of protection to their WhatsApp account.

### THINKING BEFORE SHARING

Help your child to understand why it's important to stop and think before posting or forwarding something on WhatsApp. It's easy – and all too common – for content to then be shared more widely (even publicly on social media). Encourage your child to consider how an ill-judged message might damage their reputation or upset a friend who sent something to them in confidence.

### ADJUST THE SETTINGS

It's wise to change your child's WhatsApp settings (go to 'Privacy', then 'Groups') to specify which of their contacts can add them to group chats without needing approval; you can give permission to 'My Contacts' or 'My Contacts Except ...'. Additionally, if your child needs to use 'live location', emphasise that they should enable this function for only as long as they need – and then turn it off.

### CHAT ABOUT PRIVACY

Some parents like to check in with their child about how they're using WhatsApp, explaining that it will help to keep them safe. If you spot a 'Locked Chats' folder, you might want to talk about the sort of chats that are in there, who they're with and why your child wants to keep them hidden. Also, if your child has sent any 'view once' content, you could discuss their reasons for using this feature.

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...HEY OSCAR...

NOS  
National Online Safety®  
#WakeUpWednesday

Source: <https://blog.whatsapp.com/an-open-letter> | <https://faq.whatsapp.com/10770/8839582332> | [https://faq.whatsapp.com/36/005896189245/7helpref-hc\\_fmav](https://faq.whatsapp.com/36/005896189245/7helpref-hc_fmav) | <https://www.whatsapp.com/security> | <https://blog.whatsapp.com/chat-lock-making-your-most-intimate-conversations-even-more-private> | <https://www.aura.com/learn/whatsapp-scams>

# What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

# SNAPCHAT

AGE RESTRICTION  
**13+**

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Snapchat is a messaging app which allows users to send images, videos and texts to others. Its best-known feature is that anything sent 'disappears' 24 hours after it's been viewed; however, users are known to take screenshots or use another device to obtain a photo of their screen. In 2023, Snapchat added a chatbot function called 'My AI'.

## SCAMS AND BLACKMAIL

Predators can exploit Snapchat's disappearing messages feature by, for example, telling a user they have naked photos of them (regardless of whether it is true or not) and will share them online unless they send them money. Teens then (understandably) panic and worry about the long-term consequences. Snapchat's own research found that 65% of teenagers had experienced this – either on this app or others.

## EXCESSIVE USE

Snapchat works hard on user engagement, with features like streaks (messaging the same person every day to build up a high score). The app also has sections called 'Discover' and 'Spotlight'. It claims the content shown here is relevant to each user, but it could also be seen as an easy way to hook users into watching videos endlessly. Furthermore,

## INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Some content on Snapchat simply isn't suitable for children. The hashtags used to group content are determined by the poster, so even an innocent search term could still yield age-inappropriate results. The app's 'disappearing messages' feature also makes it easy for young people to share explicit images on impulse – so sexting continues to be a risk associated with Snapchat.

## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

My AI is Snapchat's new chatbot, which replies to questions in a human-like manner. However, the software is still in its infancy and has significant drawbacks, such as biased, incorrect or misleading responses. There have already been numerous reports of young users turning to AI for medical help and diagnoses, which could be inaccurate and therefore potentially dangerous.

## ONLINE PRESSURES

Although many of Snapchat's filters are designed to entertain or amuse, the 'beauty' effects on photos can set unrealistic body image expectations – creating feelings of inadequacy if a young person compares themselves unfavourably with other users. Snapchat now also has 'priority' notifications (which still get displayed even if a device is in 'do not disturb' mode), increasing the pressure on users to log back in and interact.

## VISIBLE LOCATION

A feature called 'SnapMaps' highlights your device's exact position on a virtual map, which is visible to other users. There are options to restrict who can see this information: all friends, selected friends or just you. Snapchat also has real-time location sharing, which is intended as a buddy system to help friends keep track of each other – but it could also be used to track a young person for more sinister reasons.

## Advice for Parents & Educators

### SET CONTROLS VIA FAMILY CENTRE

Snapchat has parental controls called 'Family Centre'. You must invite a child to the Family Centre for them to join. This allows you to view their friends list, see who they have chatted with in the last 7 days (but not to view the specific messages) and report any concerns.



### TALK ABOUT REAL LIFE SCAMS

If a young person is mature enough to have Snapchat, then they are mature enough to have a conversation about scams, nudes and blackmail. Have this discussion before you let them join. Share some real-life examples. Discuss the importance of never adding strangers and discourage them from sharing nudes. If they are lured into a scam, encourage them to tell you immediately, then block and delete the predator and screenshot any evidence.

### DISCUSS AI

Although My AI's responses can often give the impression that it's a real person, it's essential that young people remember this certainly isn't the case. Encourage children to think critically about My AI's replies to their questions: are they accurate and reliable? Remind them that My AI shouldn't replace chatting with their real friends, and that it's always better to talk to an actual person in relation to medical matters.

### CHAT ABOUT CONTENT

It may feel like an awkward conversation (and one that young people can be reluctant to have) but it's important to talk openly and non-judgementally about sexting. Remind children that once something's online, the creator loses control over where it ends up – and who else sees it. Likewise, it's vital that children understand that some 'challenges' which become popular on the platform may have harmful consequences.



### KEEP ACCOUNTS PRIVATE

Profiles are private by default, but children may make them public to gain more followers. Snap Stories are visible to everyone a user adds unless they change their settings. On SnapMaps, their location is visible unless Ghost Mode is enabled. It's safest for a child to avoid adding people they don't know in real life – especially since the addition of My Places, which allows people to see where users regularly visit.



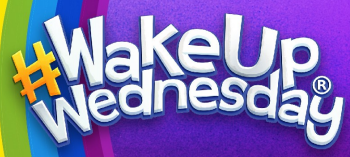
### BE READY TO BLOCK AND REPORT

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



### 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.



Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/snapchat-2021>