



SAFE AT Summerhill

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

This Safeguarding newsletter, aims to help staff, parents and students alike to be aware of the safeguarding and mental health issues, giving you useful links and resources to use if you have concerns. Please do not hesitate to contact us on the main school number 01384 816165 or via email on studentssupport@summerhill.dudley.sch.uk

SUMMERHILL SCHOOL recognised for its commitment to helping pupils stay safe online

SUMMERHILL SCHOOL has successfully completed a comprehensive online safety training programme demonstrating its commitment to keeping children and young people safe online.

The SUMMERHILL SCHOOL– has received a National Online Safety Certified School Accreditation for its whole school community approach to protecting children in the online world. National Online Safety is a multi-award winning digital training provider with extensive resources in online safety, developed in line with the Department of Education's statutory requirements. Its CPD accredited courses and educational resources support UK schools in educating the whole school community in online safety– including all senior leaders, teachers, all school staff and parents – on how to make the internet a safer place for children. James Southworth, co-founder of National Online Safety, said: "Congratulations to everyone at SUMMERHILL SCHOOL on becoming a National Online Safety Certified School. By completing our training programme, the school has shown its strong commitment to implementing an effective whole school approach to online safety."

"It can be increasingly difficult for schools and parents to stay ahead of online threats and ensure both children and staff are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. We arm schools with the knowledge they need to understand online dangers and react in the best way possible to any problems."

Youth Vaping

Vaping seems to be everywhere nowadays. It seems you can't go to a petrol station or walk through a shopping centre without seeing colourful advertising or catching a sickly-sweet scent lingering in the air. While vapes (also known as electronic cigarettes or 'e-cigarettes') are meant to be used as a 'quit tool' for smokers rather than a new method for non-smokers, one trend has been slowly on the rise in the last few years – youth vaping.

This may seem surprising, but we have received reports that children as young as 8 years old have been found vaping at schools across the UK. It also follows worries from healthcare officials that [youth vaping is gradually on the rise in the UK](#), despite the fact that selling vapes to under 18s is illegal. While there are many factors that play into this rise, healthcare officials have warned that [social media might be a big influence](#) in young people deciding to vape.

Mental Wellbeing for Young Persons in Dudley

Happier Minds can help you find the mental wellbeing information you need. It also provides information on how to get help urgently for people in crisis.

The website has three sections – for young people, parent carers and school-based professionals. All sections contain useful support and information.

The young people section for those aged 11yrs and over (secondary school and college), has video resources and useful contacts.

For parent/carers, there is information to help them to support their child and also resources to support their own mental wellbeing.

The professional section of the website has been designed for those working with young people in schools/colleges and provides useful information and resources. <https://happierminds.org.uk/>



What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

WIZZ

AGE RESTRICTION
12+

12+ App Store
Teen Google Playstore

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Wizz is a networking app which allows users to connect and chat with other people around the world. Its principle is similar to a dating platform: users have a profile with up to three photos, along with optional interests and hobbies tags. This allows other like-minded people to be recommended in searches. If a user likes what they see on someone's profile, they can initiate conversation through the instant message feature; otherwise they swipe on. The app does use age verification technology when an account is created and groups users by age.

OVER-SHARING

Immediately after setting up an account, users start receiving friend requests (mainly from the opposite gender). For many young people, this will be exciting and a boost to their confidence. As young people tend to be more trusting online and may believe what others tell them, however, this can lull them into dropping their guard and revealing personal information to strangers.

CATFISHING AND PREDATORS

Wizz uses Yoti, a digital ID system, to verify users' age. The AI only detects approximate age, though – so an older person who looks younger could be grouped with teens (or vice versa). Also, profile pics on Wizz don't have to match the face of the person who did the initial age verification: it would be fairly easy to create a fake account using another person's photos with a made-up name and age.

EXPLICIT CONTENT

During our research, conversations on Wizz very quickly turned sexual. Users frequently suggested 'taking it to Snap' (Snapchat's disappearing image feature can make it conducive to sharing explicit selfies), connecting on other social media, swapping nude or semi-nude pictures, or holding sexual chats. These users created an impression of the platform being sleazy and unsafe for young people.

INTIMATE IMAGES

It's not unheard of for young people to be coaxed into sending suggestive images of themselves over apps of this kind. Given that Wizz connects users with strangers who may not be honest about their real intentions, a teenager might conceivably be persuaded to share sexually suggestive selfies by someone who they believed they had a trusting relationship with.

NO PARENTAL CONTROLS

The app claims to provide a secure and inclusive environment, but our researcher couldn't find any parental controls or safety features in evidence. If you report another user for inappropriate behaviour, you are offered the option to block them – but there's no indication as to whether the block has actually been successful, and there was no follow-up contact from the developers.

SECRETS AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

Wizz sent our researcher occasional 'mystery' friend requests from a blurred-out profile. To discover the sender's identity, users can either watch a video (usually an ad for a game or app) or take out a monthly subscription. Cynics might suggest this could be a way to exploit young people's curiosity into making them pay for the app, and that the 'secret admirers' are bots rather than real people.

Advice for Parents & Carers

TALK IT OUT

If your child has downloaded Wizz, talk to them about why they like it and who've chatted with. Have they shared any personal details with this person or connected with them on other social media platforms? Refresh your child's memory of the various risks that can arise from engaging with strangers online and get them to consider using a similar app with more robust safety features.

BE SUPPORTIVE

When connecting with strangers on apps like Wizz, seemingly innocent chats can quickly progress to become sexually explicit and lead to nudes being sent. Make sure your child knows to come to you if they're uncomfortable about anything they've been sent or been asked to send. If they've already shared something that they now regret, reassure them that you'll support them no matter what.

EMPHASISE CAUTION

Young people are far more inclined to see the good in others; they often overlook the fact that scammers set up fake accounts on apps like this with the intention of getting money or personal data. Remind them that not everyone online is who they claim to be, how easy it is for someone to create a bogus profile, and why it's vital to think twice about sharing anything on networking apps.

KEEP THINGS TRANSPARENT

It might feel awkward, but regular chats about your child's online life can be beneficial. If they seem suddenly anxious or secretive around their phone or tablet, they may have something they need to get off their chest. You could also consider not allowing digital devices in their bedroom, especially overnight – that's when a lot of the riskier conversations on apps like Wizz tend to take place.

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.



NOS
National Online Safety
#WakeUpWednesday

Source: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=info.wizzapp&hl=en_GB&gl=US | <https://www.met.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/sexual-offences/sexting/>

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