



Welcome!

Welcome to Witham St Hughs Academy's Safeguarding Newsletter. Keeping children safe is of course, our key priority here at school. Safeguarding takes many forms including: Protecting children from harm; preventing impairment of children's health and development; enabling safe and effective parenting and giving children equal opportunities in life. We do many things every day in school to ensure pupils are safe including: ensuring all staff are trained in safeguarding; having clear policies and procedures in place to keep children safe; monitoring pupil attendance; ensuring a safe and healthy site; ensuring the behaviour of pupils is in line with the Academy behaviour policy and using our curriculum to teach children about risk taking, diversity, healthy lifestyles, managing relationships, online safety and much more. Our safeguarding policy is always available to view via our website.



Focus on: WhatsApp

WhatsApp has a minimum age restriction of 16. This means that the app developers, alongside online regulators, believe this is the youngest appropriate age to use this app. As an Academy, we of course agree with this judgement, and this is the messaging pupils receive from our teaching team.

We do however, understand that some of our older pupils do have access to this app and use it on a regular basis. Through this newsletter previously, we have shared a range of parental advice and controls concerning the use of WhatsApp. In this newsletter we would like to take the opportunity to remind parents and carers that any use of messaging apps should be closely monitored by adults to ensure children are behaving appropriately and safely online, in the same way we ensure this in school and at home offline.



Focus on: Walking alone

As we move towards the lighter evenings and the (hopefully!) warmer weather, more children may be walking to and from school alone. At Witham St Hughs Academy, this only happens with signed permission from a parent or guardian and only for pupils in Years 5 & 6. Some families do give these pupils permission to supervise younger siblings to and from school. If this is the case, parents/carers must be confident that the below apply:

- Older siblings are confident and competent to supervise younger siblings on the walk.
- All children walking alone are able to cross roads safely.
- Older and younger siblings stay walking together all the way home, and do not break off into groups.
- Children walking home alone are still representing our Academy, and will be respectful members of the community at these times.
- If older pupils have mobile phones, they are used responsibly and do not cause any distraction that could compromise their, or others' safety.



Who can help?

Every school has a 'Designated Safeguarding Lead'. At Witham St Hughs Academy, these are: Richard Stock, Emily Broadley, Hannah Younger and Michelle Dexter. Our safeguarding governor is Julie-Anne Leak. If you have any concerns in relation to a safeguarding, please feel free to speak to a safeguarding lead at any time.

Useful phone numbers

Social Services: 01522 782111
ChildLine: 0800 1111
Lincolnshire Prevent Team: 020 7340 7264
Young Carers Helpline: 01522 553275
NSPCC whistle blowing helpline: 08088 005000
FGM helpline: 08000 283550
Samaritans: 01522 528282
Family Services Directory: 0800 195 1635

Online Safety: Omegle



Safeguarding services in Lincolnshire have been having more concerns being raised again around the website 'Omegle'. Omegle offers a free video chat service which will connect you to a random stranger who can interact with you through text, chat and webcam. There is no safe way to use this website and it is highly likely that users will encounter adult content and risk encountering predatory behaviour.

Omegle is a website - no app is currently available. No account or username is required to use the service and users are anonymous unless they choose to tell other users about themselves. Users should be 18+ or over 13 years with parental permission. The main page of the site has a direct link to an adult site which streams adult content. There are no parental controls or privacy tools available at all through Omegle other than the ability to stop a chat and move to another user.

There are both moderated and un-moderated video chat features. The un-moderated chat carrying an 18+ age requirement and a warning that there is a high likelihood of viewing sexual content and coming into contact with potentially predatory individuals.

Many children and young people have used this site to seek new friendships given the isolation they may have experienced during the pandemic. While some individuals will use this site appropriately, there have been many reports of highly inappropriate behaviour by users towards under 18's and children in primary schools accessing this service. Omegle will connect children with strangers of any age, with no controls at all, putting them at risk of exploitation. We would highly recommend prohibiting access to the platform for all children under 18.

You can restrict access to this site by using parental controls on devices or home broadband. Visit Internet Matters to learn more.

**internet
matters.org**