



Safeguarding Newsletter – March 2021

What Parents and Carers Need to Know About Avakin Life

A 3D 'lifestyle simulator' for mobiles, Avakin Life has a notable percentage of young teens among its 1.4 million daily users. But is the content really suitable for such an impressionable audience? With revealing outfits, suggestive dance moves and private chats with older users, it's not difficult to see why at least one regional UK police force has already issued a safeguarding alert about the game.

It's a game which prioritises physical appearances and material possessions. But that may be the least of Avakin Life's issues.

With a lack of age verification, players can easily pretend to be someone they're not in this setting. Add in skimpy outfits, suggestive dancing and the facility to chat in private, and there's a clear risk to the game's younger teen users.

[Click here to view the free guide on Twitter](#)



What parents and carers need to know about WhatsApp

WhatsApp is the world's most popular messaging service with around two billion users exchanging texts, photos, videos, documents and making voice and video calls. The app offers end-to-end encryption, meaning messages can only be read by the sender and the recipient. Not even WhatsApp can read them. Updates to its privacy policy in 2021 reportedly caused millions of users to leave the app. But the new policy was widely misinterpreted: it only related to WhatsApp business features, not to personal messages.



Advice for parents and carers:

- **Report potential scams** – advise your child not to 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 will be given the option to report that number as spam.
- **Create a safe profile** – even though someone would need your child's phone number to add them as a contact, as an extra precaution it is worth altering your young one's profile settings to restrict who can see their photo and status, the options are 'everyone', 'my contacts' and 'nobody'.
- **Delete accidental messages** – if your child posted a message in the wrong chat or sent a message that they immediately regret, they can delete it. Tap and hold on the message, choose delete and then 'delete for everyone'. WhatsApp allows 7 minutes to delete a message after it is sent but it is important to remember that recipients may have seen (and screenshotted) the message before it was deleted.

Belfairs Designated Safeguarding Leads:



Mrs Foster
Asst. Principal

Mr Zweistra
Vice Principal

Mr Evans
Asst. Principal

Mrs Morenas
Asst. Principal

Covid-19 Information & Updates

We are regularly posting information and links on our dedicated page for Covid-19 [here](#).

For any queries please email us at:
enquiries@belfairs.southend.sch.uk

 Follow us @belfairsacademy



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Student Wellbeing Newsletter

Our student wellbeing newsletter has been shared with students today via SMHW.

Please encourage your child to read the newsletter as it contains numerous recommendations and ideas on how to keep positive and focused.

You may even enjoy reading it yourself!



Upcoming Virtual Parent Forum Events

Wednesday 21st April
Equality & Diversity

Wednesday 26th May
Exam Dispensation

Wednesday 30th June
Personal Development

All information regarding our parent forums and information on previous events can be found at:

<https://www.belfairsacademy.org.uk/parents/parents-forum>

National Online Safety Mobile App It's time to get #OnlineSafetySavvy

Children are spending more time than ever online. As adults, we need to do everything we can to keep them safe in the digital world. But with new apps, games and platforms emerging every day, how can you stay in the know?

Say hello to the new National Online Safety mobile application.

With all online safety knowledge available at your fingertips, the NOS app empowers parents and teachers to understand and address online safeguarding risks – anytime, anywhere.

The world's most comprehensive online safety app, it's packed with insightful courses, explainer videos, webinars and guides on topics that will help you protect the kids you care about when they're online.

[Download the app for free here](#)

Starting a conversation about online safety

It can be difficult to know how to start talking to your child about what they're doing online or who they might be speaking to. But talking regularly, like you would about their day at school, will help your child feel relaxed and mean that when they do have any worries, they're more likely to come and speak to you. It can help to:

- reassure them that you're interested in their life, offline and online. Recognise that they'll be using the internet to research homework as well [as](#) talking to their friends.
- ask your child to show you what they enjoy doing online or apps they're using so you can understand them.
- be positive but also open about anything you're worried about. You could say "I think this site's really good" or "I'm a little worried about things I've seen here."
- ask them if they're worried about anything, and let them know they can come to you.
- ask them about their friends online and how they know they are who they say they are.
- listen for the reasons why your child wants to use apps or site you don't think are suitable, so you can talk about these together.
- ask your child what they think's okay for children of different ages so they feel involved in the decision making.

Who to contact?

If you would like to contact outside agencies for advice, help or guidance, please contact one of the numbers below:

First Contact Team (Social Care): 01702 215007 (Mon-Fri)

Out of Hours Team (Social Care): 0845 6061212 (365 days)

NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000

Childline: 0800 1111

Police: 999 (Emergency) or 101 (Non-Emergency)