THE WINSFORD ACADEMY

8th December 2024



Ms Emma McLaren
Principal

Message from the Principal

Dear Winsford Families,

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for your ongoing support with attending the various additional parent and carer events that we have calendared this year. Student preparation for assessment cycles has much improved this academic year, with Subject Leaders and teachers using assessment information to inform both curriculum and lesson planning.

For the next two weeks there will be a continued focus on improving attendance, both national research and academy data evidences, that students who have good attendance make better progress and achieve higher grades. To ensure students make strong progress through the curriculum, teachers will be teaching content right up until the end of term. To celebrate and reward good attendance, students that are in school will be entered into 'The Twelve Days of Christmas' draw. Each day students can win various prizes which include selection boxes, cinema gift cards, vouchers and Amazon Fire Tablets which is creating a real buzz in the academy!

To ensure the academy makes rapid progress towards set targets, we have successful appointed an Interim Executive Board which consists of five specialist leaders who have copious experience of supporting schools to achieve excellent outcomes. Board members will meet with myself and various senior leaders every four weeks to discuss progress, see the 'academy in action' and set targets for future improvement. The team of experts will act as the Governing Body and will take decisions in the best interests of the academy.

In preparation for January, we are also reviewing the timetable to ensure students receive expert teaching and reduce the number of split classes. We will also welcome another specialist teacher to join the academy team, Ms Edwards will teach Geography and will lead the Duke of Edinburgh Programme.

Thank you again for your support. I understand family life is busy, so within this letter have included scheduled academy events and assessment weeks up until March 25.

Dates for your Diary	
Monday 9th December	**Dance GCSE Exam**
Thursday 19th December	**WA Christmas Showcase – Starts at 6pm**
Friday 20th December	**Final Day of Autumn Term**
Term Break: Monday 23rd December – Friday 3rd January	
Monday 6th January	**INSET Day** Staff training will support progress towards **A**ttendance, **B**ehaviour and **C**urriculum Targets
Tuesday 7th January	All students return to school in full uniform, through the gates for 8:40am
WC 13th January	**Year 9 Assessment Week 1**
Thursday 16h January **4pm - 5:30pm**	**KS4 Careers Event** Representatives from Local Businesses and Colleges will have stalls, offering advice and guidance to families.
WC 20th January	**Year 9 Assessment Week 2**
Thursday 6th February	**Year 8 Parents' Evening 3:45pm – 6:45pm**
WC 10th February	**Year 11 Assessment Week 1**
Half Term Break: Monday 17th February – Friday 21st February	
WC 24th February	**Year 11 Assessment Week 2**
Thursday 27th February	**Year 9 Options & Parents' Evening 4pm – 7pm**
WC 3rd March	**Year 10 Assessment Week 1**



MOMENTS MATTER, ATTENDANCE COUNTS.

THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

DAY 12
32" TELEVISION

Day 1
1 x Amazon Alexa

Day 2
5 x Amazon vouchers

Day 3
10 x large selection boxes

Day 4
5 x Fast Food Vouchers

Day 5
5 x £10 Cinema Gift Cards

Day 6
30 x Large Chocolate Bars

Day 7
2 x £20 High Street voucher

Day 8
2 x Ear Buds

Day 9
2 x £25 Amazon voucher

Day 10
2 x Amazon Fire Stick

Day 11
2 x Amazon Fire 7 Tablet (latest model)

Prize draw
Automatic entry for all students who are in school during the last 12 days of term.

THE WINSFORD ACADEMY



5TH DECEMBER - 21ST DECEMBER

CHOCOLATE · GIFT CARDS · VOUCHERS · TECHNOLOGY

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about SNAPCHAT

SNAP STREAK 97 DAYS

AGE RESTRICTION 13+

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'.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

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.

PREDATORS AND SCAMS

Predators can exploit Snapchat's disappearing messages by, for example, telling a user they have naked photos of them and will post them unless they're paid. Snapchat's own research found that 65% of teenagers had experienced this – on this app or others. This likely isn't helped by 'SnapMaps' – a feature which highlights your exact position in real-time. This is meant to help friends keep track of each other, but could be used for more sinister reasons.

MY EYES ONLY

Snapchat has a hidden photo vault called 'My Eyes Only'. Teens can conceal sensitive photos and videos from parents and carers in this folder, which is protected by a PIN. You can check for this by clicking on the icon which looks like two playing cards. This takes you to the 'Memories' folder which stores photos, stories and the My Eyes Only folder.

SCREEN TIME ADDICTION

Snapchat prioritises 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', which show tailored content to each user. However, this could also be seen as an attempt to hook users into watching videos endlessly. Furthermore, constant notifications can lure people into using the app.

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.

ONLINE PRESSURES

Although many of Snapchat's filters are designed to entertain or amuse, the 'beautify' effects on photos can set unrealistic body image expectations – creating feelings of inadequacy in younger 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.

Advice for Parents & Educators

UTILISE PARENTAL CONTROLS

Snapchat's 'Family Centre' lets you view the details of the child's account – their friends list and who they've spoken to in the last week – and report any concerns. You must invite a child to the Family Centre for them to join. To keep the child's location hidden on the app, go into settings and turn on 'Ghost Mode' and 'Hide Live Location', and ensure they know not to share their location with anyone.

FAMILIARISE YOURSELF

Before you allow a child to download Snapchat, download it yourself and familiarise yourself with the app. Snapchat has produced a parents' guide to the app to help you understand how it works and any protections they have in place. A link for this can be found in the sources below.

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 tap 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.

ENCOURAGE OPEN DISCUSSIONS

Snapchat's risks can be easier to handle if you nurture an open dialogue. For example, discuss My AI's responses to questions and how reliable they are. Talk about scams and blackmail before letting children sign up. If they're lured into a scam, encourage them to tell you immediately. Talk openly and non-judgementally about sexting, emphasising its inherent risks. Furthermore, explain how popular 'challenges' on the platform can have harmful consequences.

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®

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