



Friday 9th February 2024

Dear Parent/Carer,

Year 11 Mock Exams

A huge well done to our Year 11 students that have completed their first week of mock exams. They have done exceptionally well throughout the exams. Attendance to our revision breakfasts and online revision sessions has been great, as students have taken every opportunity to boost their grades. 1 week down, 1 to go- good luck Year 11!

Year 9 Progress Evening and Options Evening

A letter was sent out this week regarding our Year 9 Progress Evening and Options Evening. Please check Edulink for more information.

Year 11 Mock Interview Day

On Friday 16th February, we will be holding a Mock Interview Day for our Year 11 students. They will be given an opportunity to prepare and attend a mock interview for a fictional job. We are looking for some volunteers from different business backgrounds who have experience conducting interviews. Volunteers will conduct a number of 15/20 min interviews and then give the students some instant feedback. The response from previous students have been extremely positive but these days rely on the support of volunteers. If you/anyone you know might be able to assist us, please complete or share the below form.

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=9OLizVXRnUy--Aoo72F-pPreWkf99rJloQgOitCP0k1UQ0xERTNVVFY5MURtQkY2SzlyMVNIQ0VGTCQIQCNjPTEu>

Mind of the Student

This week, co-founders of Mind of the Student, Jaylan and Kieran, spoke to three of our students Maddie, Mollie and Matilda in a new podcast project as part of Children's Mental Health Week. The girls shared their tips to help with anxiety and exam stress. Full Podcast can be listened to here; [Mind Of The Student - Phoenix FM](#)



February Half-term

This is just a reminder that we have one more school week to go before February half-term. Half-term will take place from Monday 19th February 2024- Friday 23rd February 2024. Students will return to school on Monday 26th February.

Have a good weekend.

Yours faithfully,



Mr E Aylett
Principal



BOWER PARK
ACADEMY

Fabulous February!

Every Day Counts at Bower Park Academy

If your attendance is above 95% during the month of February, your name will be entered into a special raffle.

- Will you be a lucky winner?
- Will you make every day count?

Love2Shop Vouchers & Tablets as prizes!



What Parents & Carers Need to Know about MONKEY

Also known as Monkey Cool, this platform aims to fill the gap left by Omegle (which has now shut down) by placing users in random video chats with strangers. Participants use their mobile number and Snapchat username to connect to the service, where they can make matches, message other people and join group chats. The mobile version has been removed from the App Store due to safety concerns, but iPhone owners can still access the site via their web browser. The app remains available on Google Play, where its listing claims that Monkey has more than 30 million users worldwide.

AGE RESTRICTION
17+

(although the lack of age verification means that someone younger could easily log in with a fake date of birth)

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

The app claims to use AI to detect sexual content or activity that violates its policies, along with having a 24/7 moderation team. However, reports in the media continue to indicate that explicit content remains commonplace on Monkey (including sexually graphic or violent material) and is therefore accessible to anybody who uses the app – including those aged under 18.

UNDER 18

CONTACT WITH STRANGERS

The obvious risk in accepting random video chat partners is that users cannot know what or who they will see on their next connection. Talking to strangers is, of course, potentially dangerous – especially for children who might be persuaded to meet up with these people offline. The app lets users find each other by location, increasing the chances of a child being matched with a stranger from their local area.



IN-APP SPENDING

While Monkey is free to download, it nevertheless offers in-app purchases promising to unlock access to premium features. For example, users who wish to make use of 'Knock Knock chat' (Monkey's text-based messaging option), rather than the app's Chatroulette-style random video calling feature, will need to pay to be able to do so.



INTRUSIONS ON PRIVACY

According to Monkey's privacy policy, personal information (such as name, profile picture and date of birth), user-contributed content (any photos, texts, videos and screenshots shared) and each user's browser and IP address are collected. That is a considerable amount of data for Monkey to gather on its users – and all of this information is shared with third parties.



Advice for Parents & Carers

DISCUSS THE DANGERS

Even if you're comfortable with your child using Monkey, it's still important to talk about the potential dangers. It's crucial, for instance, that young people recognise the risks that stem from video chatting with strangers; that they understand not to share identifying information (like their street or school name); and that they know what to do if they are exposed to inappropriate content.



RESTRICT IN-APP PURCHASING

If your child is accessing Monkey via an Android device, you can prevent them from making in-app purchases through the device's settings. If you do allow your child to use the site, we'd recommend that you enable this feature: young people have been known to spend significant amounts of money in their desire to unlock more features in apps such as this.



REPORT INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Monkey states in the safety section of its site that "people are given the power" and that, to a large extent, Monkey is "self-governing." If a user is exposed to sexually explicit or inappropriate content on the platform, they can select the 'police' emoji in the top right corner of their screen to submit a report for Monkey's moderation team to review.



SPOT THE SIGNS

If you're concerned that your child is spending too much time on Monkey – or that they may have been exposed to inappropriate or distressing content – it's important to watch for potential indications that they've been affected emotionally. They could be unusually irritable or unable to concentrate, for example, or failing to complete their homework or even to eat regular meals.



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.



The National College



National Online Safety

#WakeUpWednesday



Drug alert: Vapes containing synthetic cannabinoids (SCRA- Spice)

Vape pens containing a synthetic cannabinoid often known as Spice have led to people being taken to hospital in London recently.

In one incident, five people became seriously ill after vaping from a “Vapresso” branded pen containing blue liquid in a silver and black cartridge. In a separate incident, people became ill after using a vape labelled “Lemonade Vape Cookies” (which may have been sold as THC).

Both vapes contained Spice, which can cause serious side effects like breathing problems, heart attacks and seizures. Other symptoms include feeling dizzy, vomiting, heart racing, sweating, anxiety and paranoid.

If you're buying either illegal vapes or ones you think have Cannabis/ THC in them, follow our steps below to stay safe.

Staying safe and helping others

If possible, avoid using the vapes we have identified above – the only way to avoid all the risks is to not take drugs which are not prescribed for you. However, if you do choose to take them, remember:

- **Go low and slow** - Be extra cautious about where you get your vapes from, and about the drugs you are taking. Start with a little bit, wait an hour and see how you feel.
- **Do not use alone**; make sure that someone you trust is with you and knows what you're doing in case you need help.
- **If doing it with others**, it's best if only one person vapes first instead of you all doing it at once.
- **Don't mix drugs**: Using more than one drug increases your risks of overdose, including mixing with alcohol.
- **Look after your friends**: look out for anyone who seems dizzy or confused, is sweating, trembling, vomiting or is very anxious, aggressive, or paranoid. If one of your mates is struggling to breathe or passes out, call 999.
- **Be prepared to call immediately for an ambulance** if someone overdoses or become ill.
- **Test your drugs using the testing service available** at www.wedinos.org

If you have any questions or are worried about anything, you can find your local service and their contact information on our website at www.changegrowlive.org

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Teaching

Every Lesson Shapes a Life.