FRIDAY 9TH OCTOBER 2026
ISSUE 5

THE BLUE COAT SCHOOL WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

SEND COFFEE AFTERNOON STRENGTHENS HOME-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

It was a pleasure to welcome parents and carers to our recent SEND Coffee Afternoon, led by Mrs Jones, Head of SEND, and Tara McKibben, School Improvement Support. The event provided an invaluable opportunity for families to come together, share experiences, ask questions and learn more about the support available for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

During the afternoon, Mrs Jones and Tara shared information about the school's SEND offer and explained the graduated approach that underpins our provision. Families were given an overview of how needs are identified, assessed and supported, ensuring that every student receives the right help at the right time. Discussions also highlighted the Liverpool SEND Local Offer and the wide range of services and support available to children, young people and their families across the city.
A particular highlight of the event was the launch of the School's SEND Information Hub. This new resource has been designed to provide parents and carers with easy access to information, guidance, signposting and practical support. The hub will continue to develop as a central source of information, helping families to navigate SEND provision both within school and beyond.

The session also showcased the significant work taking place across the school to further strengthen inclusive classrooms. Staff have worked extremely hard to develop and implement adaptive teaching strategies that enable all students to access learning successfully. Families heard about the positive impact of this work and how teachers are continually refining their practice to ensure lessons meet the needs of every learner while maintaining high expectations for all.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to all the parents, carers and families who attended and contributed so positively to the afternoon. Your support, feedback and partnership are invaluable as we continue to develop an inclusive school community where every young person can thrive. We look forward to welcoming you to future SEND events and continuing to work together to achieve the very best outcomes for all our students.





WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY: WHY MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

World Mental Health Day takes place every year on 10 October. It is an opportunity to raise awareness, challenge stigma and remind us that looking after our mental health is just as important as looking after our physical health.

The theme for 2026 is "**Lived experiences heard: real voices, real change**", highlighting the importance of listening to people who have experienced mental health difficulties and ensuring their experiences help shape the support available to others.



Why Does Mental Health Matter?

Mental health affects everyone. At times, we may experience stress, anxiety, loneliness, sadness or worry. While these feelings can be temporary, they can sometimes become overwhelming and affect our schoolwork, friendships, sleep and everyday life.
At The Blue Coat School, students can speak to their Form Tutor, Key Stage Leader or Student Support Team if they are worried about their wellbeing. Support is available in school, with links to specialist services where needed.

Looking After Our Wellbeing

Small everyday habits can make a real difference. Getting enough sleep, staying active, spending time with friends and family, enjoying hobbies, taking breaks from screens and social media, and spending time outdoors can all support positive mental health.

Most importantly, asking for help is a strength, not a weakness. Talking to a trusted friend, parent, teacher or another adult can be the first step towards feeling better. If someone you know is struggling, listening without judgement and helping them find support can make a real difference.





CELEBRATING ENRICHMENT THROUGH DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY

At The Blue Coat School, we are incredibly fortunate to offer a wide range of enrichment opportunities that help develop students' creativity, confidence and practical skills beyond the classroom. We would like to thank our dedicated Design and Technology staff for the fantastic experiences they continue to provide, enabling students to apply their learning in meaningful and engaging ways.



This term, our Year 8 students have embarked on an exciting Embroidery Project, learning a range of hand-stitch embroidery techniques and developing their understanding of textile design. The project encourages patience, precision and creativity while giving students the opportunity to produce their own unique pieces of work.

To inspire our Year 8 students and support them with their practical making tasks, Kavie in Year 10 GCSE Design & Technology has created an outstanding embroidery sample. Her work showcases the high-quality skills that can be developed through the Design & Technology curriculum and has provided younger students with a fantastic example to aspire to.

It is wonderful to see students across different year groups supporting one another, sharing their expertise and acting as role models within the department. Opportunities like these help to strengthen our school community while fostering a love of creativity and practical learning.

A huge thank you to our Design & Technology team for continuing to provide such enriching experiences and to Kavie for inspiring the next generation of designers and makers. We look forward to seeing the wonderful embroidery projects our Year 8 students create over the coming weeks. ✨🧵👏

EXPLORING THE BENEFITS OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN EDUCATION

As a school, we continually explored innovative ways to enhance teaching and learning, ensuring that our students received the very best educational experience. One area that was developing rapidly across education was the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to support learning, assessment and feedback.

While AI had the potential to reduce workload and provide valuable insights into student progress, it was important that any technology was used thoughtfully and responsibly. At The Blue Coat School, our priority remained ensuring that assessment was accurate, meaningful and personalised. Technology was intended to enhance professional judgement, not replace it. The expertise of teachers in understanding individual students, identifying misconceptions and providing targeted support remained central to effective learning.

As part of this work, we welcomed Dr Hamza Mughal to school on Thursday to introduce Running Paper, an innovative educational technology company that had developed an AI-powered marking and assessment platform specifically for schools. Running Paper aimed to support teachers by analysing students' written work and providing detailed insights to help identify strengths, misconceptions and next steps in learning. The platform was designed to complement teacher expertise by making assessment more efficient while ensuring that feedback remained targeted, meaningful and impactful.

These sessions provided an opportunity for staff to learn more about the platform, ask questions and consider how AI tools could be used effectively to support teaching and learning, while maintaining the high standards of feedback and assessment that our students deserved. As educational technology continued to evolve, we remained committed to evaluating new approaches carefully, ensuring that any developments aligned with our values of academic excellence, inclusion and high-quality teaching. The sessions provided an opportunity to explore how emerging technologies could help us further enhance learning opportunities for all students.

TRUSTEES SUPPORTING SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT

We are delighted to welcome trustees into school throughout the year as part of their important role in supporting, challenging and evaluating the school's ongoing development. Trustee visits provide valuable opportunities to see the school's work first hand, speak with staff and students, and gain a deeper understanding of the experiences and outcomes of our school community. These visits help trustees to strategically plan, monitor priorities and evaluate the impact of school improvement initiatives.

Recently, Jane Holmes, our Safeguarding Trustee, completed two visits to school focused on safeguarding processes and the support provided to safeguarding staff. During her visits, Jane reviewed key safeguarding procedures, including aspects of IT filtering and monitoring, ensuring that robust systems remain in place to keep our students safe. These visits provide important assurance that safeguarding continues to be a central priority across all aspects of school life.

Trustees also spend time meeting with pupils and staff from a range of year groups and departments to gain a broad perspective on school improvement. By listening directly to stakeholders and observing daily practice, trustees develop a rich understanding of the school's strengths and areas for future development. This enables them to effectively support senior leaders and ensure that strategic decisions are informed by the experiences of our wider school community.

We have also recently welcomed Ben Giles and Patrick Adamson (Vice-Chair) into school for Trustee Staff Wellbeing and Curriculum visits. Both trustees commented positively on the commitment and professionalism of our staff and were pleased to see the effective use of teaching strategies across classrooms. They highlighted the use of visualisers to support learning and noted how Assessment for Learning approaches, including opinion lines, were being used successfully to engage students and deepen understanding.

Thank you to all staff and students who have engaged so positively with our trustees during these visits. Their willingness to share experiences and showcase the excellent work taking place across the school helps trustees gain a clear picture of the school's continued development.

We look forward to welcoming Rebecca James (Chair of Finance & Risk)for her forthcoming visit and to continuing our strong partnership with trustees in driving the school forward.

KS3 DANCE CLUB OFF TO A FANTASTIC START!

Our KS3 Dance Club got off to a flying start this week, with more than 35 students attending the first Monday lunchtime session. Pupils threw themselves into the energetic and exciting Musical Theatre Jazz workshop, demonstrating enthusiasm, creativity and a willingness to step outside their comfort zones.



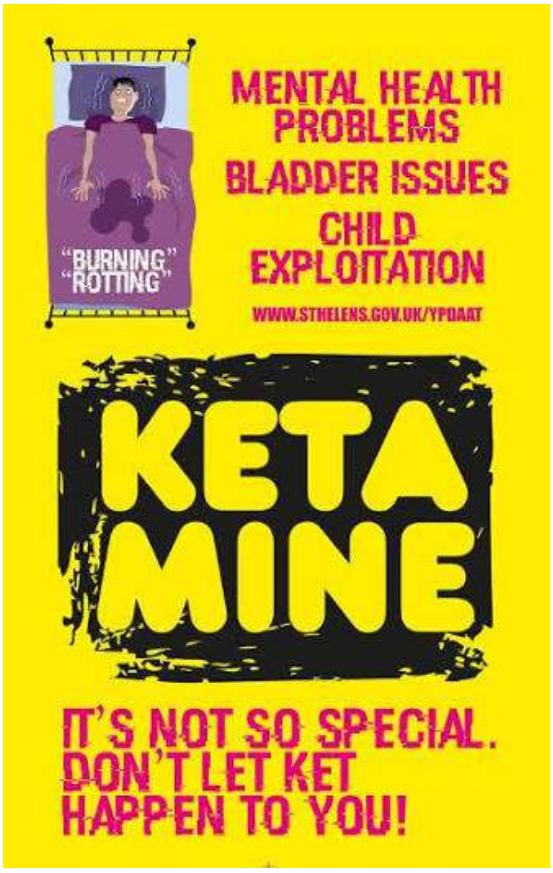
The session was filled with energy, smiles and teamwork as students learned new dance techniques, developed their performance skills and enjoyed working together with fellow dancers from across Key Stage 3. It was wonderful to see so many pupils embracing the opportunity to be active, creative and expressive during their lunchtime.

A special congratulations goes to Akanksha, who was awarded 'Dancer of the Day' for her outstanding effort, positive attitude and excellent performance throughout the session.

Well done to all 35+ students who attended and helped create such a positive and enjoyable atmosphere. We look forward to welcoming even more dancers in the coming weeks as the club continues to grow. Keep dancing, keep smiling and keep having fun! 💃🕺✨

YEAR 12 NHS HEALTH EDUCATION ASSEMBLY: UNDERSTANDING THE RISKS OF KETAMINE

As part of our ongoing commitment to safeguarding, personal development and health education, our Year 12 students recently attended an NHS-led assembly in Shirley Hall focusing on ketamine awareness and the risks associated with substance misuse.



The session provided students with factual, evidence-based information about ketamine, which has legitimate medical uses as an anaesthetic but is also used recreationally. Students explored how ketamine can affect the brain and nervous system, including changes to perception, coordination, judgement and memory.

They also learned that taking ketamine can increase the risk of accidents and unsafe situations, particularly when combined with other substances.

Importantly, the NHS team discussed the longer-term effects of regular ketamine use, including problems with concentration and mental wellbeing, as well as serious damage to the bladder and urinary system, sometimes known as ketamine bladder. Students were encouraged to understand that the risks can be significant even when a substance is perceived as being less harmful than other drugs.



The assembly also considered the wider impact of substance misuse on relationships, education, attendance, finances, families and future opportunities. Students were encouraged to think critically about information they may encounter online or from peers and to make informed decisions about their health and wellbeing.

A key message from the session was that asking for help early is important and there is no need to face concerns alone. Students can speak to a trusted adult, Form Tutor, Head of Year, Sixth Form team, pastoral or safeguarding staff, or a health professional if they are worried about themselves or someone else.

We would like to thank the NHS team for delivering such an informative and thought-provoking session, helping our students develop the knowledge and confidence to make safe and healthy choices.

OLD BLUE SHARES FINANCIAL WISDOM AT CAREERS BREAKFAST

On Wednesday 7th October, students had the opportunity to hear from David Eves, an Old Blue who has built a successful career in the finance sector, at our latest Careers Breakfast event.

David provided an engaging introduction to the world of finance, explaining how money and financial markets work and highlighting the skills and personal qualities needed to thrive in the industry. He also shared some valuable advice about making future education and career choices, encouraging students to pursue subjects and degrees they genuinely enjoy rather than focusing solely on earning potential.

The session sparked plenty of interest, with students asking thoughtful and insightful questions during the Q&A. Topics ranged from developing confidence and communication skills to gaining a deeper understanding of financial markets and the wider economy. Over juice and pastries, students enjoyed the opportunity to learn from a former Blue Coat pupil and gain first-hand insight into a professional career pathway.

We are extremely grateful to David for giving up his time to return to Blue Coat and share his experiences, knowledge and advice. Events such as these play an important role in helping our students explore future possibilities and make informed decisions about their next steps.



ENRICHMENT EXPERIENCE DRAW!

Congratulations to Katsiaryna, whose name was randomly selected as the first Enrichment Experience Draw winner of the academic year. She has received a £50 cash prize in recognition of her support for our enrichment programme.

The monthly draw is made possible through contributions from parents and carers, with funds going directly towards providing students with a wide range of opportunities beyond the classroom, including educational visits, clubs, competitions, leadership opportunities and cultural experiences.

A huge thank you to everyone who supports the scheme. Your contributions help us continue to provide enriching experiences for all our students.

Congratulations, Katsiaryna and good luck to everyone in next month's draw!



SIXTH FORM STUDENTS LEAD BREAST CANCER AWARENESS CAKE SALE

This week, our Sixth Form students organised a fantastic Breast Cancer Awareness Cake Sale, bringing the school community together to raise both funds and awareness for an issue that affects so many people and families.



The leadership shown by our Sixth Form students was outstanding. From organising the event and preparing cakes to promoting the cause and running the sale, they demonstrated initiative, teamwork and a real commitment to making a positive difference.

Alongside the cake sale, students also sold hundreds of Breast Cancer Awareness ribbons. It has been wonderful to see so many students and staff proudly wearing them around school, showing their support and helping to raise awareness of a cause that touches so many lives.

The response from the whole school community was tremendous, helping to raise a fantastic amount of money while also encouraging important conversations about breast cancer and its impact.

A huge thank you and well done to everyone involved. We are particularly proud of our Sixth Form students for their compassion, organisation and leadership, and of everyone across the school who has bought and worn a ribbon in support of this important cause.

INSPIRING A LOVE OF READING THROUGH BOOKBUZZ

This week and next, all Year 7 students at The Blue Coat School will receive a brand-new book that they have personally selected through the Bookbuzz programme. The initiative, run by BookTrust, aims to encourage young people to develop a lifelong love of reading by giving them the opportunity to choose and own a book that interests them.

Bookbuzz introduces students to a diverse range of high-quality fiction and non-fiction titles, helping them to discover new authors, genres and ideas. By placing a carefully chosen book into the hands of every student, the programme promotes reading for pleasure and supports the development of confidence, imagination and literacy skills.



We are delighted to be taking part in this national initiative and look forward to seeing our Year 7 students enjoying their new books. We hope that Bookbuzz will inspire many of them to continue exploring the wonderful world of reading both in school and at home.

SPORTING SUCCESSES CONTINUE ACROSS THE BLUE COAT

It has been another busy and successful week of sporting fixtures, with students representing the school with tremendous commitment, teamwork and determination. We would like to congratulate all of our teams on their performances and thank the PE Department for the time, expertise and enthusiasm they dedicate to organising, leading and supporting these opportunities for our students.

Football

Our Under 16 Football Team produced an impressive performance in the Liverpool Cup Tournament, finishing in 3rd place against strong opposition. The team demonstrated resilience, excellent teamwork and a competitive spirit throughout the tournament, representing the school superbly.

The Under 15 Football Team travelled to Neston for their ESFA fixture and were narrowly defeated 3-2 in a closely contested match. Despite the result, the team showed great character and determination, competing until the final whistle and producing a performance full of effort and commitment.

Looking ahead, our Under 18 Football Team travel to face Lymm in the ESFA competition on Wednesday, while the Under 12 Team have an away fixture against Woodchurch on Thursday. We wish both teams the very best of luck in their upcoming matches.

Our Under 15 Girls' Football Team will also be competing in the Liverpool Cup Tournament on Friday. We are excited to see the team continue their development and wish them every success as they take part in the competition.

Basketball

Congratulations to our Under 13 Basketball Team, who secured an outstanding 58-18 victory over Helsby. The team produced an excellent all-round performance, demonstrating strong teamwork, skill and determination throughout the game. It was a fantastic result and a well-deserved reward for the players' hard work and dedication.

Thank You to Our PE Department

None of these opportunities would be possible without the dedication of our PE staff, who invest countless hours organising fixtures, coaching teams, travelling to matches and supporting students to achieve their very best. These experiences help students develop confidence, resilience, teamwork and leadership skills while fostering a lifelong enjoyment of sport and physical activity.

Thank you to all staff involved and well done to every student who has represented the school this week. We look forward to celebrating more sporting successes in the weeks ahead. 🏆⚽🏀👏





LIVERPOOL CLASSICAL ASSOCIATION LECTURE

The Blue Coat School was delighted to host the first lecture in this year's series of talks under the auspices of the Liverpool Classical Association.



The LRC was full to capacity, with several of our students, including all of Year 12 Latin, joining members of the public for an enjoyable evening of Classical learning.

Dr Maria Haley gave a fascinating presentation entitled 'Meeting the Dead: Depictions of Necromancy in the Ancient World', exploring how often the dead speak to the living in ancient literature. Comparisons between depictions of necromancy in The Odyssey and The Aeneid were particularly revealing, alongside Dr Haley's thoughts on Christopher Nolan's forthcoming film adaptation of The Odyssey.

The audience also enjoyed learning how later Classical literature helped shape modern ideas and representations of witches.
We are very grateful to Dr Haley for such an engaging and thought-provoking lecture, and to everyone who attended.
For more information about future Liverpool Classical Association talks, visit the Liverpool Classical Association Facebook page.

CELEBRATING NATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR OUTSTANDING ATTENDANCE!

We are delighted to share some fantastic news! The Blue Coat School has received the FFT National School Attendance Award, placing us in the top 10% of FFT secondary schools in England for attendance during the Summer Term 2025/26.



This is a wonderful achievement and one that reflects the commitment of our pupils, the support of our parents and carers, and the hard work of our staff in making The Blue Coat School a place where young people want to be every day.

Excellent attendance is about much more than simply being present in school. It reflects a positive school culture in which pupils feel happy, safe, supported and enjoy coming to school. It also provides young people with the best possible opportunities to learn, develop friendships, participate in school life and achieve their full potential.

To be recognised nationally amongst the highest-performing schools for attendance is particularly pleasing and reflects the strong partnership between school and home. We know that parents and carers play a vital role in establishing good attendance habits, encouraging their children and reinforcing the importance of education.

A huge thank you to all our pupils and families for helping us achieve this national recognition. We are incredibly proud of our school community and grateful for the collective effort that has made this success possible.

Together, we will continue to ensure that The Blue Coat School is a place where every pupil feels valued, enjoys their education and looks forward to being part of our school community each day.

KEY DATES

Date	Event
Friday 09th October 2026 - Saturday 10th October 2026	Year 7 Residential Trip to Conway Centre
Thursday 15th October 2026	Year 7 Form Tutor Evening
Thursday 22nd October 2026	Ski Trip Parent Meeting at 6pm
Friday 23rd October 2026	Term Ends at 3.30pm
Monday 26th October 2026	Half Term Break
Monday 2nd November 2026	Students Return
Monday 09th November 2026 - Friday 13th November 2026	Y10 & Y12 Internal Assessment Week
Tuesday 10th November 2026	Year 11 Parents' Evening
Tuesday 24th November 2026	Year 13 Parents' Evening
Monday 30th November 2026 - Friday 4th December 2026	Y11 Mock Exams Week
Tuesday 8th December 2026	Christmas Carol Concert
Friday 11th December 2026	Christmas Markets
Wednesday 16th December 2026	Term Ends for Students at 3.30pm

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CYBER SECURITY REMINDER

SPOT THE PHISH!

Think before you click!



Phishing emails are designed to trick you into clicking a link, opening an attachment or sharing sensitive information. They can look convincing and may appear to come from someone you know.

WATCH OUT FOR:

If in doubt, check it out!

- **Unexpected emails** asking you to **click a link, open an attachment** or **make a payment**.
- **Urgent** or **threatening language** such as ***"your account will be disabled"***.
- **Links** that **don't match** the organisation or website they claim to be from.
- Requests for **passwords, MFA codes** or other **confidential information**.
- **Unusual requests from colleagues or senior staff** — even if the email address looks familiar.

STOP. CHECK. REPORT.

If something doesn't feel right, don't click the link or reply. Report the email to the IT Helpdesk so we can investigate.

Report to the IT Helpdesk

Remember: Cyber security is **everyone's responsibility.**

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about SNAPCHAT

SNAP STREAK 97

AGE RESTRICTION 13+

With over 900 million active monthly users and billions of 'Snaps' sent each month, Snapchat is a popular messaging app among children and young people. It allows users to share fun, spontaneous pictures and videos with friends and family while using playful filters. One of Snapchat's unique features is that pictures, videos and messages are only viewable for a short period of time.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Snapchat's use of artificial intelligence (AI) includes features like the 'My AI' chatbot and AI-powered filters, offering interactive experiences that can be fun but also pose risks. These tools may share unfiltered or inaccurate responses, promote unrealistic beauty standards, and collect personal data. Advanced filters and deepfake-style lenses can distort reality, potentially leading to manipulation, impersonation, or inappropriate content.

SNAPCHAT+

Snapchat+ is the platform's premium subscription service, offering early access to new and exclusive features. In June 2025, Snapchat introduced a new tier called Lens+, giving subscribers access to hundreds of lenses and AR experiences for playing, creating, and sharing Snaps. These paid features may encourage young users to spend money to access exclusive content, increasing the risk of overspending or feeling pressured to make in-app purchases.

SCREEN ADDICTION

Snapchat boosts user engagement and daily use with features like streaks (daily Snapchat exchanges between you and a friend). When a streak's been going for a few days, users will see a 🔥 emoji. The number alongside it shows the number of days, but if users miss a day and break the streak, the only way to restore it is to pay. This encourages daily use habits, and frequent notifications can keep users returning to the app even more often.

ACCESSIBILITY

Snapchat is now accessible from a web browser, meaning children can use it on a laptop or tablet without downloading the app. This can make activity harder to monitor, reduce the effectiveness of parental controls, and increase the risk of unsupervised communication or exposure to inappropriate content.

SEXTORTION

Because Snapchat's disappearing messages feature may foster a sense of safety, users may become targets of sextortion. For example, a predator may pressure someone into sending nude images, then somehow capture those images to threaten and intimidate the victim. This might involve claiming they will share the images with friends or family unless money is paid.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Some content on Snapchat 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.

Advice for Parents & Educators

ACCESS THE SNAPCHAT FAMILY SAFETY HUB

Created with guidance from Common Sense Media, Snapchat has developed a Family Safety Hub that explains how the app works and how to use its in-app protections for teens. It's recommended that you review this guidance before allowing a child to download Snapchat. Remember, the app is only intended for children aged 13 and over.

ENCOURAGE OPEN DISCUSSIONS

Snapchat's risks can be easier to handle if you nurture an open dialogue. 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.

BLOCK AND REPORT

If a stranger connects with a child on Snapchat and makes them feel uncomfortable by pressuring them to send or receive unwanted or inappropriate images, the child can tap the three dots on that person's profile to report or block them. There are options to state why they're reporting that user, with a tailored reporting section under the 'Nudity and Sexual Content' category. In this category, there's the option to report somebody for threatening to leak sexually explicit images, or 'nudes'.

USE PRIVACY SETTINGS TOGETHER

Sit down with the children in your care and explore Snapchat's privacy settings as a shared activity. You can help them adjust who can contact them, view their stories, or see their location on Snap Map. It's a good opportunity to explain why some settings are safer than others, reinforcing their understanding of online boundaries. Encourage them to regularly review these settings, especially after app updates or changes in their friendship groups.

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

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