

# Trafalgar Newsletter

10<sup>th</sup> February 2023

Welcome to the latest edition of our Parent Bulletin!

This week we held our third PD day of the year, focusing on child-on-child abuse and a host of subjects, from gangs and drug culture, to prison and keeping yourself safe online. The day was incredibly thought provoking and our students behaved brilliantly, embracing the sessions and the challenging discussions they encouraged. Whilst these are tough subjects, it is increasingly important for young people to have the space to safely discuss these issues and know how to combat them if they arise to keep themselves safe.

The week is National Apprenticeship Week and as part of that we had the Apprenticeship Bus visit Trafalgar School to talk to our Year 10 students. This was an invaluable opportunity to talk to apprentices and gain insight into the sort of experiences you can expect on an apprenticeship. We were also excited to host a media event relating to the bus, with people from the Portsmouth News and Express FM coming to speak to our students and the apprentices about the opportunity.

This week we also held our "Live Well Trafalgar" event, which saw lots of providers come to Trafalgar to offer advice and support to our parents, staff and community as a whole. There was a really nice turn out which created a positive atmosphere and the chance to ask questions to a range of services all in one place. Thank you to our Director of Inclusion, Mrs Seal, for organising this informative and helpful event.

Take care and stay safe and we'll see you after half-term!

## Team Trafalgar

## Young Writer's Competition Success

A massive congratulations to Keke for being one of the top 5 out of 7000 entries nationally to win the Young Writer's competition!

In addition to providing resources to inspire children of all ages and abilities, Young Writers also runs award winning national writing competitions, which result in their work being published. They help turn imagination and creativity into confidence and improved writing ability.

Miss Newell and team English could not be prouder!



### Key Dates

**Mon 13<sup>th</sup> - Fri 17<sup>th</sup> Feb** - Half Term

**Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb** - Year 8 Parents Evening  
(virtual)

**Mon 27<sup>th</sup> Feb - Fri 3<sup>rd</sup> Mar** - Year 7 RAP  
Meetings (onsite)

### Mobile Phones in School

Please remember that students are not allowed to use their mobile phone in school for safeguarding reasons. Whilst we understand that students use their mobile phones to communicate safe arrival at school etc, please remind your child that on arrival to school, mobile phones should be turned off or on silent.



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## MFL Department Update

The Year 7s are now finishing their first language journey and have consolidated all their learning through a game of Escape Room.

Congratulations to those students who managed to crack the code and escape!

Have a great half term!



## Community Circles Update

The question in this week's check-out community circle was **"Do you care more about pleasing people or speaking the truth?"** Most students said it depended on the situation and who they were speaking to. If it was a case of keeping someone safe, there was a general consensus that telling the truth is very important.



The work done on PD day 3 around the bystander effect - and having uncomfortable conversations in order to help to keep our community safe - was something people could identify with. Most students said people pleasing might take place either to help make friends feel better when they're down or when there's an incentive attached. Some said they felt a real high from making others feel better, even when it's at their own expense.

How do you think your child answered? #joinin #teamtrafalgar

## Apprenticeship Bus visits Trafalgar!

The Apprenticeship Bus came to Trafalgar this week as part of National Apprenticeship Week!

The bus travels around Portsmouth taking apprentices from Portsmouth-based businesses and organisations to schools, giving students a real, first-hand look at what life is like as an apprentice.

Additionally, Trafalgar hosted a media event related to the opportunity, which you can read on the Portsmouth [News website](#) and listen to on Express FM.



## PD Day 3

This week we held our third PD Day of the year. These are days spent off timetable focusing on elements of our core values and PSHE curriculum. We were fortunate to have a range of speakers come in to talk to the students, dealing with a range of hard hitting issues such as gangs, drugs, child-on-child abuse and keeping yourself safe online.



These are tough subjects, but increasingly important for young people to have the space to discuss the issues and know how to combat them and keep themselves safe.

The students handled the day brilliantly and our support teams were on hand to help any students if they found the subject matter a little intense.

Thank you to all our guest speakers.



# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about GROUP CHATS

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Occurring through messaging apps, on social media and in online games, group chats are among the most popular ways that young people engage with their peers online. Involving, by definition, three or more individuals, these groups allow users to send messages, images and videos to everyone in one place. While they are useful for helping friends, people with shared interests or members of a club to communicate and coordinate activities, they can also leave young people feeling excluded and bullied – as well as providing opportunities for inappropriate content to be shared and viewed.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### BULLYING

Unkind comments or images which are purposely aimed at an individual can be shared freely in a group chat – allowing and often encouraging others to join in the bullying behaviour. If this content is shared in a group of their peers (especially a larger group), it serves to amplify the hurt, embarrassment, anxiety and isolation that the victim feels.

### EXCLUSION AND ISOLATION

This common issue with group chats can happen in several ways: starting a new group, for instance, but deliberately excluding a certain child. Likewise, the chat may take place on an app which one child doesn't have access to, meaning they can't be involved. A child can also feel isolated when a group chat is used to discuss or share images from an event that everyone else but them attended.

### INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Some discussions in group chats may include inappropriate words, swearing and unsuitable images or videos. These could be viewed by your child if they are part of that group, whether they actively engage in it or not. Some chat apps have a disappearing message function, so your child may be unable to report something they've seen because it can only be viewed once or for a short time.

### SHARING GROUP CONTENT

It's important to remember that – while the content of the chat is private between those in the group – individual users can easily share a message, photo or video with others outside of the group or screenshot what's been posted. The risk of something your child intended as private becoming public (and potentially going viral) is higher if there are people they don't know well in the group.

### UNKNOWN MEMBERS

Within larger group chats, it's more likely your child will be communicating with people they don't really know. These strangers may be friends of the host, but not necessarily friendly toward your child. It's wise for young people not to share personal details and stay aware that they have no control over the messages and images they share after they've put them online.

### NOTIFICATIONS AND FOMO

A drawback of large group chats is the sheer number of notifications. Every time someone in the group messages, your child's device will be 'pinged' with an alert: potentially, this could mean hundreds of notifications a day. Not only is this highly distracting, but young people's fear of missing out on the latest conversation results in increased screen time as they try to keep up with the chat.

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## Advice for Parents & Carers

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### CONSIDER OTHERS' FEELINGS

Group chats are often an arena for young people to gain social status. This could cause them to do or say things on impulse, which could upset others in the group. Encourage your child to consider how other people might feel if they engaged in this behaviour. If your child does upset a member of their group chat, support them to reach out, show empathy and apologise for their mistake.

### PRACTISE SAFE SHARING

In any online communication, it's vital for young people to be aware of what they're sharing and who might potentially see it. Discuss the importance of not revealing identifiable details like their address, their school or photos that they wouldn't like to be seen widely. Remind them that once something is shared in a group, they lose control of where it may end up and how it might be used.

### GIVE SUPPORT, NOT JUDGEMENT

Remind your child that they can confide in you if they feel bullied or excluded in a group chat, instead of responding to the person who's upset them. Validate their hurt feelings and help to put them back in control by discussing how they'd like to handle the situation. On a related note, you could also empower your child to speak up if they're in a chat where others are being picked on.

### AVOID INVITING STRANGERS

Sadly, many individuals online hide their true identity to gain a child's trust – for example, to gather information on them, to exchange inappropriate content or to coax them into doing things they aren't comfortable with. Ensure your child understands why they shouldn't add people they don't know to a group chat – and, especially, to never accept a group chat invitation from a stranger.

### BLOCK, REPORT AND LEAVE

If your child is in a chat where inappropriate content is being shared, advise them to block the user's sending the material, report them to the host app or platform and exit the group. If any of this content could be putting a minor at risk, contact the police. Emphasise to your child that it's OK for them to simply leave any group chat that they don't feel comfortable being a part of.

### SILENCE NOTIFICATIONS

Having a phone or tablet bombarded with notifications from a group chat can be a massive irritation and distraction – especially if it's happening late in the evening. Explain to your child that they can still be part of the group chat, but that it would be healthier for them to turn off or mute the notifications and catch up with the conversation at a time which better suits them.

## 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.



Sources: <https://www.thinknow.co.uk/117/its-talk-about-what-happening-online/group-chats/> | <https://www.nos.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/social-media/chat-apps/>



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