

# GAA Families' Safeguarding Newsletter

May 2025

Welcome to Great Academy Ashton's safeguarding newsletter for parents and carers. We send these out every half term and they are also available on our website.

We hope you find it useful and welcome any feedback you might have.

Every week in Form Time registration students have: **Wellbeing Wednesday**.

This is where students can improve their knowledge and understanding and are given tips on how to manage things that may cause them worry and concern – some are school-related, and some are more general.

Since January 2025, we have looked at online safety in detail:

- Privacy & digital footprint
- Online grooming
- Feeling good on social media
- Protecting yourself from scams online
- Spotting online scams
- Sextortion
- Online sexual harassment
- Fake news
- Deep Fakes & AI
- Disinformation/misinformation – how fake news spreads
- Clickbait – algorithms, filter bubbles
- Extremism
- Identity & digital resilience



## The Hidden Meanings Behind Emojis: A Lesson From Netflix's Adolescence Series

People of all ages use emojis in their digital communications. In addition to adding humour or emphasis to messages, for some communities and peer groups, these symbols can form a language of their own. This is particularly true of young people and teenagers, who sometimes use emojis as a code to disguise their true intentions from adults.

While hidden meanings behind emojis used by young people can be harmless, some may indicate risks including extremism, drugs, sexual interactions and bullying. This was recently brought to life on the Netflix limited series, Adolescence, which depicted the devastating consequences of harmful online interactions, and the warning signs (in the form of emojis) that are easily missed by adults.

To help schools and parents decode potentially harmful messages, we've compiled a list of emojis commonly used in dangerous contexts. This includes specific emojis used on the show, and others. Click on the link here to see the emojis and their meanings: [The Hidden Meanings Behind Emojis: A Lesson From Netflix's Adolescence \(smoothwall.com\)](https://smoothwall.com/the-hidden-meanings-behind-emojis-a-lesson-from-netflixs-adolescence)



## **The ONLINE SAFETY ACT:**

The Online Safety Act has recently been updated, the changes are intended to create a safer online environment for all users. Here are the key changes:

### **Additional protections for children**

The act now includes firmer expectations on social media platforms to protect children from viewing harmful content. Platforms are legally bound to act swiftly to block and remove illegal content or material that may put young people at risk.

### **Enhanced adult controls**

Adults will have more control over the content they see online. The act now requires platforms to provide clear options for users to manage their exposure to potentially harmful content.

### **Accountability and transparency**

Social media companies are required to provide greater transparency about the sort of content they allow on their platforms. They must also provide more accessible ways for users to report problems online.

### **Ofcom's expanded role**

Ofcom, the independent regulator, has been given broad powers to enforce compliance with the new safety framework. Ofcom's role includes risk assessments, publishing codes of practice and guidance, as well as enforcing regulations to ensure platforms conform to the new standards.

Ofcom is taking a phased approach to implementing the provisions of the act. This includes publishing codes of practice and guidance in three phases: illegal harms duties, child safety duties, and transparency/user empowerment duties.

If you want to read more about these changes, follow the links below.

[Online Safety Act: explainer - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/online-safety-act-explainer)

[Online safety - Ofcom](#)

## **Online safety - GAMING:**

SWGfL has produced an advice page for parents which has lots of information and a short video – click here to access the gaming advice page: <https://swgfl.org.uk/topics/gaming/>

## **Reporting a safeguarding concern**

If you are concerned about the welfare of a student, please contact a member of GAA's safeguarding team:



**Rachel Gill**  
Designated  
Safeguarding  
Lead (DSL)



**Kayleigh Davies**  
Deputy DSL



**Michelle Hughes**  
Deputy DSL

via [admin@gaa.org.uk](mailto:admin@gaa.org.uk) or tel: 0161 241 9555

★ Thank you for reading. ★