



Relentlessly Pursuing Excellence

Safeguarding Parent Newsletter - 21 April 2023

Latest advice and guidance for parents and carers

Great Wyrley Academy Safeguarding Team

The Great Wyrley Academy Safeguarding Team has been trained to an advanced level on all aspects of safeguarding. The team is available to any student, parent or school staff member to discuss and report any safeguarding concerns.

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Mr D Fielder

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads: Mrs M McCarthy, Mrs J Foyle, Mr J McFarlane, Mrs S Herrington, Mr J Studholme

Overview

Welcome to our latest edition of the Newsletter from the Great Wyrley Academy Safeguarding Team. Our aim is to bring you all the latest, relevant help and advice on issues that we feel will be of importance to you.

At Great Wyrley Academy, both staff and students are trained and educated in many areas of safeguarding. Staff are informed of the signs and symptoms to look for and be aware of, that could be an indication that there is a concern and how to report concerns. Students are given appropriate information into safeguarding topics and given strategies on how to stay safe.

This issue will cover: Depression Rooms' on Roblox – Safeguarding concern

What is Roblox?

Roblox is an online game platform and game creation system developed by Roblox Corporation that allows users to program games and play games created by other users. Created by David Baszucki and Erik Cassel in 2004 and released in 2006, the platform hosts user-created games of multiple genres coded in the programming language Lua. For most of *Roblox's* history, it was relatively small, both as a platform and as a company. *Roblox* began to grow rapidly in the second half of the 2010s, and this growth has been accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Roblox is free to play, with in-game purchases available through a virtual currency called Robux. As of August 2020, *Roblox* had over 164 million monthly active users. Although *Roblox* has received generally positive reviews from critics, it has faced criticism for its moderation and microtransactions and accusations of exploitative practices directed toward children.

Safeguarding concern regarding Roblox

Due to the popularity of online gaming platform Roblox with children and young people under the age of 16, online safety experts have released this Safeguarding Update about a collection of games trending within the platform. The games depict themes of isolation, cutting, and suicide with some including chatrooms where users engage in unmoderated discussions around hopelessness, depression, self-harm, and suicide.

It is a worry that vulnerable children may be turning to these kinds of online communities for support and advice.

Several of these depression room games on Roblox have up to 5.6 million visits and are advertised as being appropriate for 'all ages'. Despite being explicitly against the platform's Terms of Service, Roblox have failed to remove most of these harmful games from the platform at this time.

What can parents/carers do to help

Parents can use the NSPCC's child protection helpline, 0800 800 5000, for help, advice and guidance.

Keeping children safe at home and elsewhere is everyone's responsibility. Online abuse should be reported as soon as possible, visit the Staffordshire Children's Advice and Support Service on 0300 111 8007 or visit the Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board website for more information