



Sixth Sense

Which Week?

This Week: Monday 30th Jan (Week 2)

Next Week: Monday 6th Feb (Week 1)

Holocaust Memorial Day: Ordinary People

Last Friday marked this year's Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD), an international occasion that we mark as an Academy, through assemblies, tutor time and indeed were represented by several Yr10 students at the Solihull Council Chambers last Thursday as part of an annual memorial event.

As ever, this day marks a moment for everyone to remember the millions of people murdered in the Holocaust, under Nazi Persecution, and in the genocides which followed in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur. Every year, HMD has a theme attached to it, and this year's was 'Ordinary People', a contention that:

"Genocide is facilitated by ordinary people. Ordinary people turn a blind eye, believe propaganda, join murderous regimes. And those who are persecuted, oppressed and murdered in genocide aren't persecuted because of crimes they've committed – they are persecuted simply because they are ordinary people who belong to a particular group (eg, Roma, Jewish community, Tutsi)."

Ref: <https://www.hmd.org.uk/what-is-holocaust-memorial-day/this-years-theme/>

When reading the home page for this year's theme (link above), I was humbled to read a quote by Dr Martin Stern MBE, a Holocaust survivor and someone of whom had visited the Academy several years ago and spoken to our community about his experience, all of which can be read or listened to via the same link.

"And as a five year old, I could stand at the edge of the clearing where the trains were being loaded. People like sardines in those wooden trucks. And the people loading them in – they were railway men, they didn't look terribly different from the railway men who check my tickets these days – they looked like ordinary people."

Dr Martin Stern MBE, Holocaust survivor

Every year I reflect upon his moving account and encourage you all to take the time to engage with this and consider the resilience, strength of character and utter determination to navigate his way through this period.

Wednesday:

Normal Business

Some of you with your ears to the ground may be aware of National strike action by one of the main teaching unions next Wednesday.

Whereas this may affect other year groups within the Academy, I am pleased to confirm that it will be business as normal for us as a Sixth Form.

Wednesday is **NOT A DAY OFF SCHOOL** therefore, so please attend as normal.

Thursday Drop Down Day

Next Thursday is a calendared day in the academic year and was always planned as a Drop Down Day, where year-group specific activities will be taking place for both Year 12 and Year 13 in place of normal timetabled lessons.

We have a guest in from **Lincoln University** and the **SOLAR** team who will be speaking to both groups separately in addition to other **enriching activities** that will be shared by the your respective Assistant College Leaders.

Laptop Etiquette

For those of you who utilise the Sixth Form laptops, PLEASE can I ask for you to all observe the following key **RULES** of these **finite** resources.

- **No long term loans!** Please **DO NOT** borrow a laptop for a whole day. This is not fair on others who need to use them.
- Absolutely **no taking a laptop home**.
- **PLUG THEM BACK IN** when finished with.



Our series of information from National Online Safety, continues on this week with a focus on remaining safe on the social media platform, Twitter.

As ever, accessible advice a proactive tips are given to provide clarity as to how you can use this platform to best effect on the following page.

For any feedback, please email: (Yr12) Mr Curran: ccurran@kingshurst.tgacademy.org.uk, (Yr13) Miss Foster: jfoster@kingshurst.tgacademy.org.uk;

(Learning Mentor) Ms Akhtar: norakhtar@kingshurst.tgacademy.org.uk, Mr Bowers: jbowers@kingshurst.tgacademy.org.uk (Director of Sixth Form)

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about TWITTER

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Twitter is a social media network which allows users to post short messages ('tweets') of up to 280 characters. Tweets can consist of text, photos, videos, audio, links, polls and GIFs – often linked by hashtags if they share a common theme or message. Hashtags receiving high levels of interest are said to be 'trending'. Twitter users can engage with other people's posts by liking, retweeting (sharing) or tweeting back (commenting on). Since the entrepreneur Elon Musk acquired Twitter in October 2022 for \$44 billion, he has implemented several major changes to the platform.

AGE RESTRICTION
13+

INTERACTION WITH STRANGERS

Tweets are public by default, meaning that anyone can view and interact with posts, follow someone and send direct messages. The concern here is that young people may therefore connect and communicate with strangers. Some individuals may follow a young person's Twitter account simply because they have similar interests; however, others may turn out to have more sinister intentions.

FIXATION ON VIEW COUNT

Twitter has recently introduced a 'view count' feature – telling users how many people have seen their tweet (even if they haven't reacted to it). Previous research has found that unfavourable comparisons with other social media users can cause young people to experience feelings of insecurity, jealousy and low self-esteem – leading to an obsession with increasing their numbers.

TROLLS AND BULLYING

The anonymity offered by fake profiles encourages some users to send tweets designed to provoke a reaction; to disrupt conversations; to spark an argument; or to harass the recipient. Such trolling and bullying can impact the mental wellbeing of both the target and anyone who witnesses it. Encourage your child to come to you if they experience such behaviour on Twitter, or if they see it taking place.

PAID-FOR VERIFICATION

Previously, if a Twitter profile displayed a blue tick icon, it meant that the owner – usually a celebrity or a major organisation – had been verified as genuine. Now, however, anyone can pay for a Twitter Blue subscription to receive the tick, with the platform carrying out limited checks on the account's authenticity. This could easily lead to more fake accounts impersonating real people or companies.

CONTENT MODERATION CHANGES

In late 2022, Twitter stated that their 'policy enforcement will rely more heavily on de-amplification of violative content: freedom of speech, but not freedom of reach'. No policies have changed yet, but this wording suggests they may limit who can see posts rather than removing them. While supporting free speech, this could encourage an environment where some toxic content remains online.

HIJACKED HASHTAGS

The hashtag (#) is one of Twitter's most recognisable facets, allowing users to find specific trends or topics. But the sheer volume of tweets each hour can rapidly distort a hashtag's meaning: an initially innocent search term can quickly end up returning inappropriate results. This is common with 'trending' hashtags, as people know that using them will get their tweet seen by a larger audience.

Advice for Parents & Carers

SET ACCOUNTS TO PRIVATE

To reduce some of the fear of your child's tweets being seen and shared by anyone, you can always make their account protected. This means that your child has to give approval for another user to view their posts. You can change Twitter's privacy settings so that your child can't be messaged directly by other people on the platform and their geographical location won't be shared.

FOSTER CRITICAL THINKING

It can be difficult for anyone to ascertain if something online is real or false, but particularly for young people. Encourage your child to check several reputable sources to determine if a story they've seen is true; remind them to watch out for scams and think about the message's possible motive. Emphasise that it's not a good idea to retweet something if they aren't sure it's correct.

ENGAGE SAFETY MODE

When Safety Mode is activated, Twitter checks for abusive or spammy behaviour such as hurtful language or repeated negative replies. The platform then flags these suspect accounts and blocks them from responding to your child's tweets. The autoblock function then prevents these accounts from interacting with your child's again for seven days.

EXPLORE THE NEW SETTINGS

Previously, any user could reply to anyone else's tweets. However, the new conversation settings let your child determine who can reply to their posts – either by selecting everyone (the default option), people they follow or only people they mention (using the @ symbol). This improvement has given users extra control, providing them with more protection from trolls and online abuse.

PAUSE BEFORE POSTING

It's important that young people think about what they're about to post and whether they might regret it later. Twitter has developed 'nudges': little prompts which appear if someone is about to tweet using harmful or offensive language. These nudges promote more positive online behaviour by giving users an opportunity to pause and consider their words before they post something.

BLOCK, REPORT OR MUTE

If someone is upsetting your child on Twitter, you can block and report them. Blocking stops them from messaging or following your child, while reporting an account alerts Twitter to investigate possible misuse. The 'mute' feature, meanwhile, keeps tweets from a specific account (or which include certain words) out of your child's timeline. The other user won't know that they've been muted.

BE CAREFUL WHO TO FOLLOW

As accounts are no longer being as rigorously verified under the 'blue tick' system, it's essential that young Twitter users understand what this means, in terms of people not necessarily being who they claim. Anyone who your child only knows online is still a stranger, regardless of how long they've been communicating for. Remind your child never to disclose personal information on social media.

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.



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Source: <https://blog.twitter.com/common-thread/en/topics/stories/2022/how-twitter-is-nudging-users-healthier-conversations> | https://blog.twitter.com/en_us/topics/product/2022/twitter-blue-update
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