

ISSUE 42

Mount Kelly's Safeguarding Bulletin aims to provide parents and carers with the information needed to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with their children about potential risks and issues in the wider world and online. This week's bulletin provides information about Disney+ and wellbeing support from Kooth over the holiday.

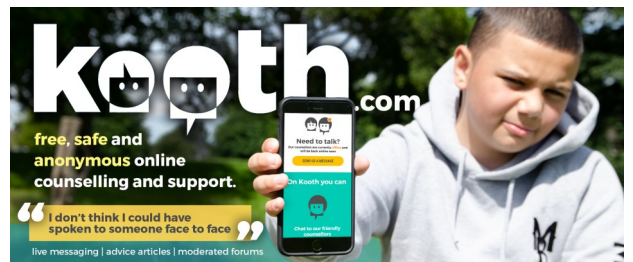
Disney+

In 2019, media titan Disney launched its own streaming platform, intending to challenge the likes of Netflix and Amazon Prime. Giving (often exclusive) access to shows and movies – such as the legendary studio's animated classics and the revered Star Wars back catalogue – Disney+ has been a colossal success, proving popular with viewers of all ages.

Despite Disney's reputation for wholesome, child-friendly content, however, there's far more material available on their platform – some of which is aimed exclusively at adults. This could easily fly under the radar, given the company's general image. This week's **#WakeUpWednesday** guide has useful tips to help your family sit back, relax and enjoy what Disney+ has to offer.

Kooth support over the holiday

With the winter break fast approaching, we appreciate that there will be some young people who may struggle during the holidays without the access to the daily pastoral support, teaching staff and friends that the school community provides. Seasonal illness and the closure of many services at this time of year can also lead to extended wait times for support across both adult and young people's NHS and community services.



Kooth Digital Health offers free and anonymous therapeutic mental health and wellbeing support to young people aged 11-18. Their services remain available over the winter period, offering 'on the day' wellbeing support from the comfort of your own home, via any web-enabled device via the following website

Ages 11-18: www.kooth.com

- Kooth offers free access to online text-based practitioner chats, self help tools and activities, journal spaces and advice from their non-judgemental, safe and moderated peer-to-peer communities.
- With no threshold, waiting list or referral process, young people can access support for ANY issues they may be experiencing. These may include; body image, self-esteem, loneliness, bereavement, academic pressures, stress, anxiety, friendships, sexuality, life changes etc.
- The registration process is quick, anonymous and safe, simply by registering at www.kooth.com using non-identifiable information.

If you have any questions regarding the service, you can contact Kooth directly—simply email parents@kooth.com. A selection of Parent/Carer resources can be accessed using this link: [Kooth Parent & Carer resource](#)

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about DISNEY+

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

The Walt Disney Company's streaming service, Disney+ combines entertainment from the famous animation studio itself with Pixar, Star and National Geographic, plus the Marvel and Star Wars franchises. With access to the latest releases, Disney classics and original series, there's plenty of content to explore. While parents may have noted that adverts have now been introduced on some versions of the service, the platform is – unsurprisingly for a Disney product – designed to be appropriate for the whole family.

LESS SUITABLE CONTENT

While Disney+ is predominantly family friendly, there are some movies and shows in its library which are aimed at an older audience: these may scare younger ones or contain themes or language that you'd rather your child wasn't exposed to. You could avoid such situations by enabling Junior Mode (see 'Adjust content settings', below) or specifying a content age rating for your child's profile.

BINGE WATCHING

With the option to view content on any internet-enabled device and a growing catalogue of movies, cartoons and documentaries, Disney+ can make managing screen time difficult. This could result in children binge watching content, distracting them from activities like homework or socialising. Too much screen time has also been shown to negatively impact mood, sleep patterns and weight.

PHISHING EMAILS

Be especially cautious if you receive emails or text messages purporting to be from Disney+. There have been numerous reports of online scammers impersonating Disney+ staff in an attempt to gain access to subscribers' personal information. Disney+ states it will never email or call customers asking for their payment details, their private information or their password.

ENCROACHING ADVERTS

Disney+ has introduced a new subscription package – Disney+ Standard with Ads – which plays commercials before movies and during shows (like many TV channels). There are no adverts in Junior Mode, but profiles with a content rating of 6+ years will see ads appropriate for that age category. Adults who give consent will see personalised adverts based on their location and viewing history.

ACCESSING ADULTS' PROFILES

If adults don't set a PIN for their profile, children could access it and encounter content which isn't age appropriate. In the settings, Junior Mode has a toggle titled 'Kid-Proof Exit' which requires the user to read four words (numbers, spelled out) and enter them to switch profiles. For older children who can read, though, this isn't secure enough – so using a PIN for adult profiles is recommended.

Advice for Parents & Carers

ADJUST CONTENT SETTINGS

When setting up an account, there's an option to create profiles in what's called Junior Mode. This generally covers material that's suitable for children up to age 6 and is therefore fairly limited. You can give older children a wider choice of viewing by building a standard profile, then going into the settings and choosing a content rating from one of the pre-set alternatives: 6+, 9+, 12+ or 14+.

TURN OFF AUTO-PLAY

When a cartoon, show or movie finishes, Disney+ uses algorithms to identify content with similar themes, which it thinks your child will also enjoy. This suggestion will then automatically begin to play by default. There's an option to turn off this auto-play function in the profile settings, which will encourage your child to take a break from the screen and move on to a different activity.

ADD PIN PROTECTION

Disney+ enables you to effectively lock profiles behind a four-digit PIN. In particular, some of the shows on the platform's Star content hub are far more oriented to adults (including several hard-hitting dramas from US networks), so protecting parents' or older siblings' profiles with a PIN will help to prevent younger children stumbling across material which isn't intended for them.

ENJOY AS A FAMILY

When your child watches a movie or show on Disney+ for the first time, you may want to sit with them to ensure it's suitable. You could do the same when introducing them to older films that you haven't seen for years: your perception of what's appropriate has very probably changed, and some of the language and attitudes in movies from your own childhood may seem quite shocking today.

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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