

ISSUE 13 • JANUARY 2026

**wqe** | Wyggeston & Queen Elizabeth I College

# SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER



## UPDATE: EMOJIS - WHAT DO THEY MEAN?

Emojis are commonplace in our digital language, but do you know what they mean? These small icons are used to express ideas and emotions, and they are programmed with 'official' meanings. However, social use of emojis often create 'secret' or 'hidden' messages.



Below are some examples.

**Goat**  
Greatest of all time

**Broccoli**  
Marijuana

**Four Leaf Clover**  
Marijuana

**Green Check Mark**  
Marijuana

**Electric Plug**  
Represents a drug dealer

**Baseball cap**  
A lie or not true

**Smirk Face**  
Symbolises the person is being flirtatious

**Eggplant/Aubergine**  
Male genitalia

**Banana**  
Male genitalia

**Cherries**  
Breasts

**Peach**  
Bottom

**Eyes**  
Can be used to request that someone sends an explicit picture

**Drooling Face**  
Response to someone being attractive

**Skull**  
Used to show something is funny

**Rainbow**  
LGBTQ+

**Snowflake**  
Derogatory term to describe a young person who is easily offended, or used to represent cocaine

**Avocado**  
Basic

**Rat**  
Snitch

**Dizzy Face**  
Response to seeing something x-rated

# GLOBAL EVENTS: IRANIAN PROTESTS

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*(Information taken from BBC News website, correct as of 2pm, Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2026)*

Ongoing anti-government protests, that started over the economy and inflation in Iran, have been taking place in Tehran, Iran's capital city, since 28th December 2025. Recently the protests have grown to become the largest Iran has seen in years.

Video footage has been circulating news agencies that appears to show extreme violence being used towards protestors, with over 2,400 protestors reportedly killed or detained. In an effort to try to stop the unrest, the Iranian Government have implemented a near-total internet blackout, which means since Thursday 8th January, Iranians have no means of contacting the outside world.



The violence seen on the news has been condemned by a number of countries including the UK and USA. Donald Trump, President of the United States, has warned the Iranian Government that 'very strong action' will be taken if detained protestors are executed. Given the ongoing internet blackout in Iran, it is difficult for news and security agencies to gather accurate information.

### **WQE Community**

WQE College understands that there will be members of our community impacted by these events. If you have been affected by the events in Iran, and feel you need support, please reach out to the Safeguarding Team: the Safeguarding emergency freephone number is **0800 061 4222**, or you can email [safeguarding@wqe.ac.uk](mailto:safeguarding@wqe.ac.uk).

## GROK AI DEEPFAKES



'Grok' is X's (formerly Twitter) own Artificial Intelligence tool. The social media platform is under pressure after reports of the AI tool allowing users to create sexual images, particularly of women and children.

One of the main concerns is '**digital-undressing**', where users ask Grok to remove clothing in images.

The UK's online regulator, Ofcom, has said it is urgently investigating whether Grok has broken British online safety laws. The UK Government is also working on a bill to make the creation of non-consensual intimate images with AI a criminal offence.





# INSIDE THE MIND OF A 16-YEAR-OLD

In November 2025, **Demos**, Britain's leading cross-party think tank, published research titled 'Inside the Mind of a 16-year-old.' Researchers travelled across the UK and ran workshops with 16-18 year olds, asking them questions about their lives on and off social media, the people who influence them, the politics this fuels and the futures they hope for. From the workshops, **5 archetypes of young people** were designed:



## THE ACTIVIST

- **Politics:** Left-wing, socially progressive, environmentally conscious
- **Interests:** Climate change, social justice, human rights, LGBTQ+ rights, feminism
- **Outlook on Life:** Optimistic but frustrated with slow political change; believe in radical systemic reform and big changes to the way society is run
- **Lifestyle:** Engage in protests, support ethical brands, involved in online activism, might vote Labour, Green, or a smaller leftist party

## THE ENTREPRENEUR

- **Politics:** Centrist to right-leaning, pro-business, believes in meritocracy
- **Interests:** Startups, side hustles, cryptocurrency, AI, financial independence
- **Outlook on Life:** Opportunistic and individualistic; focused on personal success over systemic change
- **Lifestyle:** Invests in stocks/crypto, follows business influencers, engaged in self-improvement and productivity culture

## THE CRITICAL REALIST

- **Politics:** Apathetic or anti-establishment, distrusts mainstream parties, often cynical and despondent
- **Interests:** Memes, alternative media, conspiracies, gaming, dark humour
- **Outlook on Life:** Feels powerless in a broken system; distrusts institutions, often disengaged from traditional politics
- **Lifestyle:** Spends a lot of time online, sceptical of the news, more likely to engage in passive resistance than activism

## THE TRADITIONALIST

- **Politics:** Right-leaning, socially conservative, patriotic, possibly religious
- **Interests:** History, British history and traditions, cultural preservation, Royalist
- **Outlook on Life:** Believes the country has lost its way due to cultural and social changes; values tradition and order
- **Lifestyle:** Supports Brexit, follows figures like Nigel Farage or GB News, may aspire to careers in the military or law enforcement

## THE CONNECTOR

- **Politics:** Believe people should live the life they want, disengaged from political discussions
- **Interests:** Pop culture, reality TV, influencer trends, nightlife, social media
- **Outlook on Life:** Focused on personal enjoyment, status, and social life over political issues
- **Lifestyle:** Active on TikTok and Instagram, follows celebrity gossip, more concerned with lifestyle trends than political debates.

Of course, not every young person will fit perfectly into one of these categories. However, they give a good overview of the concerns of our young people and what they are passionate about. It is important to engage young people in topical discussions.

Click [here](#) to read more from the Demos report or scan the QR code.



# YOUTH HOMELESSNESS



ENDING YOUTH  
HOMELESSNESS

In 2023-2024, an estimated **118,134** young people in the UK approached their local authorities because they were at risk of homelessness. In England, the figure increased by 12% from the previous year.

One young person faced homelessness approximately **every 4 minutes** in the UK in 2023-2024.

Reasons for youth homelessness:

- Family or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate (50%)
- Domestic abuse (10%)
- End of assured shorthold tenancy (8%)
- Required to leave accommodation provided by Home Office as asylum support (6%)
- Evicted from support housing (5%)



Click [here](#) to read more or click on the Centrepoint logo at the top of the page.

## LEICESTER AND LEICESTERSHIRE DSL NETWORKING EVENT 2026

HOSTED BY WQE COLLEGE

WQE are planning to host an event later this term for all local DSLs to facilitate the sharing of key information and updates, continuing to build upon collaborative working between Leicestershire schools and colleges to effectively safeguard our young people.

All DSLs will receive an email with a poll regarding dates and online/in-person preferences.

