



Outwood Academy Ripon
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Principal: Rachel Donohue, M.Ed; FCCT

Friday 15th May, 2026.

Dear Parents and Carers,

We would like to make you aware of a current safeguarding concern that North Yorkshire Police have raised with the academy relating to a viral online trend that is placing children and young people at risk of serious injury.

We have been informed of incidents involving children heating soft “squishy” toys (sometimes known as NeedDoh or jelly cube toys) in a microwave after viewing online videos suggesting this makes the toys softer. Unfortunately, when heated, these toys can burst and release extremely hot contents, which may result in severe burns to the hands, face and skin.

There have been reported incidents both in the UK and internationally, including a recent case in Bristol. We ask parents and carers to support us in helping to keep children safe by discussing the dangers of online trends and challenges with their child.

Please remind your child that:

- Not everything seen online is safe or accurate
- Online challenges can sometimes be dangerous, even if they appear harmless
- Squishy toys and similar items should never be heated or placed in a microwave
- They should speak to a trusted adult if they see anything online that worries or confuses them

We encourage all families to remain vigilant about online content and to continue having open conversations about online safety at home.

Thank you for your continued support in helping us to safeguard all children and young people.

Yours sincerely,

David O'Brien

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David O'Brien', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Vice Principal