

SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER

Autumn half-term one 2023/24

Welcome to the first safeguarding newsletter of the year. It has been lovely to welcome the students back to school after the summer holidays – and it has been a delight to get to know all of the new year 7s!

In this newsletter, there are the details of several services which may be of use, including a drop-in service for parents/carers, information regarding online safety, vaping and World Mental Health Day.

Kind regards,

Ms Jones and the Keep Kids Safe team.

KEY NUMBERS

Anyone can contact the services below directly, regardless of whether you are a child, parent, carer or a member of staff. If you have a safeguarding concern, please ensure you pass it on: safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

<p>01925 443322 (Option one, followed by option one)</p> <p>Warrington Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)</p> <p>For urgent safeguarding concerns about a child</p>	<p>01925 443322 (Option two)</p> <p>Out of Office Emergency Duty Team</p> <p>For urgent safeguarding concerns about a child outside of office hours</p>	<p>0808 800 5000</p> <p>NSPCC</p> <p>For adults who are worried about a child</p>
<p>0800 1111</p> <p>Childline</p> <p>For children who are worried about their own safety or need some advice</p>	<p>101</p> <p>Police Non-Emergency</p> <p>For reporting any crimes or concerns</p>	<p>999</p> <p>Emergency Services</p> <p>For anyone in immediate danger (including if you are worried about the immediate risk to a child)</p>

Early Help Advice Sessions

We are pleased to announce that a representative from Early Help will be based in school on a regular basis to offer appointments for parents/carers who need advice regarding the support available for their child, without requiring a formal Team Around the Family meeting.

Early Help provides a range of support and signposting to families regarding variety of different situations. We are often asked what Early Help actually is, and it is often confused with social care.

Early Help means taking action to support a child, young person and their family early on when a situation emerges. It can be required at any stage in a child's life from pre-birth through to adulthood and applies to any situation or need that the family cannot deal with or meet on its own. Early Help is a strength-based approach enabling families to develop the skills to prevent issues from getting worse by offering the right support at the right time.

If you would like to book an appointment with our Early Help representative, please contact Ms Jones on kjones@padgateacademy.co.uk. These advice sessions will be available during the following dates/times:

10th October between 2pm-4.30pm

14th November between 9.30am-12pm

12th December between 9.30-12pm

Youth In Mind

Youth In Mind is a free and discrete service offered by Warrington Youth Zone. It is available seven-days a week, offering early intervention support for young people experiencing problems with their mental health or emotional wellbeing. All sessions are open to 7–19-year-olds, or up to 25 with additional needs. No referral or appointment is necessary, and young people do not have to be members of the Youth Zone to attend. Drop-in sessions run from 3.30pm to 7.30pm, Monday to Sunday. The key workers will support the young person to create a support plan of wellbeing activities, which they can access in the Youth Zone, or through other services in the community.

Occupational Therapy

The Speech and Language Team often work with young people who have sensory needs, or who display some sensory behaviour but aren't necessarily aware or do not want an actual referral to Occupational Therapy.

The Children's Occupational Therapy service have an advice line, which could be a useful way for parents to get some general advice about managing a young person's sensory needs, or any other issues relating to their child in their daily activities/function.

The advice line is open Wednesday mornings 9am to 11am on 01925 946097. Parents can call for advice for young people up to the age of 16.

Their website also has some videos and advice around sensory needs in the resources section: [Children's Occupational Therapy – Warrington – Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust](#)



Youth in Mind
at Warrington Youth Zone

Youth In Mind is a free and discrete drop-in service for young people aged 7-19 (up to 25 with additional needs) who are experiencing problems relating to their emotional wellbeing.

Opening Hours
Monday to Sunday
3.30pm - 7.30pm

Open 7 Days a Week

Free & Discrete

No appointment or referral is necessary.

WARRINGTON
YZ
An OnSide Youth Zone

NHS
Mersey Care
NHS Foundation Trust

The service is commissioned by Cheshire & Merseyside NHS as part of 'Warrington Place' Starting Well plans to support 'Children and Young Peoples Emotional and Mental Health & Wellbeing'. The project delivery is a partnership between Warrington Youth Zone and Merseycare 'Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services' (CAMHS). WYZ Charity Number: 1101086

Online Safety

This half-term, all students have had assemblies about keeping safe online. This topic is something that is addressed throughout the year across various areas in the curriculum as it is so vast and there are lots of areas to consider, such as password safety, sharing pictures, cyberbullying, and fake news to name a few. It is an issue that the majority of children and parents/carers have consider.

The NSPCC website has some useful advice regarding talking to your children about online safety:

[NSPCC - Talking to Children about Online Safety](#)

Below are some apps for parents/carers to be aware of which may be of concern (Wizz, Wink and Yubo). These are set up to mimic dating apps such as Tinder, and children can use them in a similar way. Age verification restrictions are easily bypassed, and children can easily be contacted by adults posing as teenagers. We recommend that parents/carers regularly monitor their child's phone, and ensure these apps are not installed*:



*This is not an exhaustive list of apps with this function, however they are some of the most popular with teenagers.

Vaping

Data has recently been published which has shown that the numbers of young people (aged 11-17) trying vaping has risen by almost 50% in the past year; with 11.6% of children in this age bracket having experimented with it. This is a concern, as there are many unknowns about the short and long-term health effects of vaping.

At the end of this newsletter, there is an information sheet with further details about vaping, including the risks and effects. If parents/carers wish to learn more, there is an online parental information webinar by Livewire Stop Smoking Service being held on 11th October at 6pm-7.30pm. To book your place, visit:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/parental-vape-education-session-tickets-663522974077>

World Mental Health Day

It is World Mental Health Day on 10th October, and the theme this year is 'Mental health is a universal human right'. This has been chosen as the theme by the World Federation for Mental Health because statistically, people who struggle with poor mental health, are more likely to suffer from poor physical health and at a greater risk of being discriminated against due to harmful stereotypes.

In school, we will be raising awareness of this through assemblies and a competition open to all students which is an opportunity for their work to be published in a booklet by the Mental Health Support Team. We are asking students to produce a poster which tells other young people what they can do to help themselves feel better when they are struggling. These will then be submitted to the MHST who will announce the winners in due course.

Good luck to all who enter!



What Parents & Carers Need to Know about SHARING PHOTOS ONLINE

School is often a time chock-full of milestones for your child, and you may well be eager to share their accomplishments with the world. In today's digital age, sharing images of such precious moments on social media is commonplace, and – while that's a lovely thing to do – it does come with some risks attached. Our guide can help parents and carers to consider the potential dangers and make informed choices about safely sharing photos of their children online.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

INVASIONS OF PRIVACY

Even with the right settings in place, absolutely nothing online is 100% private. Anyone who can view your photos could take screenshots and potentially share them elsewhere. Privacy settings are still important, though, so it's always wise to ensure your social media accounts have them set up; just bear in mind that you can't completely control what happens to anything once it's gone online.

REVEALING PERSONAL DETAILS

Small details in photos can often reveal personal information. Backgrounds can give clues to where you live, for example, while school logos on uniforms, sports kits, or bags could help someone identify which school your child attends. With interactive maps and reverse image searches commonplace online, information like this could easily be misused by an individual with malicious intentions.

MISUSE OF IMAGES

Once something's been shared online, it's almost impossible to get it deleted. Photos can show up in search engine results and be downloaded, manipulated, and shared without consent. There's the potential for someone's images to be used for advertising purposes (which in many cases, isn't illegal) or even more inappropriate reasons, such as cyber-bullying or serious forms of exploitation.

ONLINE GROOMING

Pictures that convey details about your child's interests, activities, or daily routines could arm an online predator with the kind of information they can deploy to gain a child's trust. They might use this knowledge to pretend to be the same age as the child or to have a shared hobby. Essentially, the more a predator knows about a young person, the easier it is for them to invent some 'common ground'.

PRESSURE TO PLEASE

When their parents or carers share notable moments and accomplishments in a child's life on social media, some children may begin to feel an expectation to *always* meet certain standards, to achieve things, or to behave in ways that are "worth sharing". Knowing that other people (even friends and family) can see these posts on social media might also add to the pressure they're feeling internally.

IMPACT ON DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

Every photo of a child posted online contributes to their digital footprint. Young people's lives have never been so closely and publicly documented as they are now, and this permanent online presence could affect a child's future opportunities or the choices they make as they grow up – in addition to influencing how they see themselves and, consequently, their emotional wellbeing.

Advice for Parents & Carers

REVIEW SETTINGS REGULARLY

Make sure your social media's secure in terms of who can view your content or see your location (only family and trusted friends, for example). Privacy settings aren't totally foolproof, but they do make it tougher for strangers to access your pics. Reviewing your settings regularly is also a good starting point for conversations with your child about managing their own social accounts when they're older.

CONSIDER OTHER CHILDREN

When taking a group photo, make sure you get parents' or carers' permission to share it on social media. There may be an important safeguarding reason for them not wanting their child's photo posted publicly online, or it might simply not tally with their personal beliefs or cultural background. A quick conversation in advance, just to make sure, is usually hugely appreciated.

CHECK YOUR PHOTOS

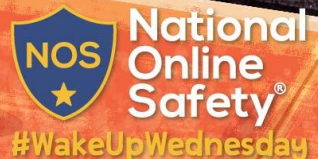
Photos of your child shouldn't provide any clues to where they live or go to school: even a house number, street name, or car number plate could be a giveaway. Cover up or blur out school logos, too. If you *really* want to share a particular pic, you could post a watermarked or low-res version, which can help to discourage misuse as those images are less appealing to download or reproduce.

THINK AHEAD

Try to consider the longer-term implications of what you post. Would you be happy with that photo being online in 10 years' time? Would your child still be OK with the image when they're older? Once your child is mature enough, you could ask for their consent before posting: it respects their privacy, fosters trust and understanding, and helps them to start thinking about their own online life.

Meet Our Expert

Gabriella Russo is a safeguarding consultant with more than 30 years' experience working with children, families, and adults in education, local authority, and mental health settings, both in the UK and internationally. She has developed online safety training for local authorities and foster care agencies across Britain and is the online safety expert for FosterWiki.



What Parents & Carers Need to Know about THE DANGERS OF VAPING

Data collected for ASH (Action on Smoking and Health) shows an increase in 11 to 17-year-olds experimenting with vaping: from 7.7% in 2022 to 11.6% in 2023. It's concerning that these age-restricted products are getting into the hands of under 18s as most contain nicotine, which can be detrimental to brain development and cause long-term addiction. Some schools have reported students having their focus in lessons affected by nicotine cravings; vaping in school toilets; and even trying vapes found in their local park. Raising awareness of the risks among young people could help to prevent these problems from escalating and reduce the number of young vapers.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

NICOTINE ADDICTION

Since they were initially developed to help people stop smoking, the vast majority of vape liquids contain nicotine. Not only is this a highly addictive stimulant, but it can also have detrimental effects on brain development in the under-25s. Nicotine can decrease the ability to pay attention, weaken impulse control, affect mood and increase the likelihood of substance addiction as an adult.

WHAT IS VAPING?

Vapes contain a liquid (vape juice/e-liquid) that is heated by a battery and evaporates, creating a chemical vapour which the user inhales. They can be disposable (once the liquid or battery runs out, the vape is thrown away) or rechargeable (the user replaces the liquid and recharges the battery on demand). Most vape liquids contain nicotine and other chemicals.

LACK OF AWARENESS

A proportion of young people tend to view vapes as harmless, mainly because of the products' appearance and the perception (often strengthened on social media) that "vaping is cool" and on trend. In many instances, young people don't fully appreciate the concept of addiction: that is, they aren't adequately aware of the risk of becoming hooked on nicotine before trying a vape.

POTENTIAL TOXICITY

Many vape liquids have been found to contain "heavy" metals such as lead, tin, nickel and (in some cases) mercury – all of which are toxic. These metals often take the form of tiny shards inside a device's liquid tank, which are then inhaled into the body. Some media reports have suggested these metals are particularly prevalent in illegally imported vapes which don't comply with UK regulations.

WIDER HEALTH CONCERNS

Studies are already showing a link between vaping and oral health problems such as tooth decay and gum disease. This is because vaping reduces the amount of saliva in the mouth, while increasing bacteria – resulting in bad breath and a build-up of plaque. There are also concerns that, in some users, vaping could lead to the development of asthma, a persistent cough and breathing difficulties.

UNCLEAR LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES

The liquids in vapes also contain solvents, which can create carcinogens at the point of evaporation. Vapes were only introduced into the UK in 2005 – and, because of the relatively short timeframe involved, there is insufficient medical evidence to assess the long-term harms that regular inhalation of these chemical fluids might have on the human body.

UNREGULATED VAPING PRODUCTS

The number of retailers willing to sell vapes to under-18s is a worry, as the chance of these products being unregulated (and therefore containing illegal chemicals and higher levels of nicotine) is high. A related concern is that the mechanisms inside unregulated products are unlikely to have been tested and safety checked – presenting a possible fire risk if the liquid and battery come into contact.

ATTRACTIVE PACKAGING

The packaging of many disposable vapes is very appealing to young people, frequently echoing the colours and flavours of the sweets or fizzy drinks they're used to buying. There's a relative lack of regulation around vape marketing, and vaping is often depicted positively on social media – which can lead young people to develop favourable views of vaping and overlook the possible harms.

SCARCE INFORMATION

The lack of information about the ingredients and potentially harmful chemicals in a vape is troubling. Some vape fluids (unregulated in the UK) contain traces of nuts, which can cause an allergic reaction or anaphylactic shock. To date, medical warnings aren't required on vape packaging – with only medical disclaimers being found on the websites of the various brands.

ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

In the UK alone, around 5 million disposable vapes go to landfill every week. Due to such significant numbers of these products not being recycled, their components – a lithium battery and a chemical liquid – pose a toxic risk to the environment, the ecosystem and wildlife. Vapes are also predominantly made of plastic and metal; materials that, of course, do not naturally decompose.

VAGUE INGREDIENTS LISTS

Early research has suggested that the chemicals used to produce some strawberry and banana flavour e-liquids can kill cells in the blood vessels and heart. These ingredients aren't identified on the packaging, instead falling under the umbrella term "natural and artificial flavourings". Such vague listings mean that consumers aren't aware of the liquid's content so can't identify potential risks.

Meet Our Expert

Run by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Healthy Schools Service (Commissioned by Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council), Catch Your Breath is a school-based project aimed at young people. Its goal is to embed a proactive, coordinated approach among both primary and secondary schools in discouraging smoking and vaping behaviours.



HEALTHY SCHOOLS
CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH

The National College

Source: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-65809924>



www.thenationalcollege.co.uk



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