

# SAFEGUARDING

# NEWSLETTER

## Spring half-term two 2023/24

Spring is just around the corner – as are GCSEs for year 11 students. We are very aware that next half-term will be an anxious one for many, so we have provided lots of support with this in mind. Year 11 have had talks from the NHS about stress management linked to exams. The NHS have also completed smaller, tailored workshops with some students. The Amy Winehouse Foundation have visited and delivered inspirational assemblies for all year groups, which also covered stress management for the year 11s.

In this newsletter, you will find advice about healthy sleep patterns, gaming/gambling, the HAF programme, and vaping/smoking.

We hope all have a restful and safe holiday over the two week break.

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

## Holidays Activities and Food Programme

Warrington Borough Council are running their Holiday Activities and Food programme again over the school holidays to support families with the additional costs that the holidays bring. The programme includes a variety of activities such as sports, crafts, games, etc. Please see below for the following statement from Hannah Green (HAF co-ordinator):

*"We are thrilled to announce the launch of our Easter 24 Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme. You can now book Easter activities with providers using the attached information. HAF is for young people in receipt of benefit related free school meals and we have a limited number of places for vulnerable young people. For any questions about eligibility, please email [haf@warrington.gov.uk](mailto:haf@warrington.gov.uk)."*

Whilst the scheme was originally launched for children who are entitled to free school meals, this has now been extended to any child who has a social worker, is open to Early Help, or has SEND. If your child does not fall under this criteria but you believe they have circumstances which mean they would benefit from attending the activities in this programme, please enquire using the above email address. To view the details of the activities, please follow this link: [HAF Programme](#).



In Warrington we're running a  
**free holiday club programme**  
for children on free school meals.  
**#HAF2024**

HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES  
AND FOOD PROGRAMME

Department  
for Education

## Gaming and Gambling



According to the Gambling Commission 2023, 43% of 11-13 year olds spent their own money on gambling in the last 12 months. Often this is disguised as in-game purchases, where children do not know what content they are buying until they spend the money and open the packs. There has also been an increase in children playing age-inappropriate games, which can have a detrimental impact on their mental health. Many children have reported sleep issues, such as experiencing nightmares linked to the games.

YGAM are an organisation who offer information and training for parents/carers about managing gaming/gambling in children. To view their parent hub, please follow this link: [YGAM Parent/Carer Hub](#)

## Smoking and Vaping

All students have had assemblies this half-term about the dangers and risk of smoking and vaping. Over the past few years, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of children taking up vaping as a habit.

The health risks of smoking are well documented, and are caused by the many seriously harmful toxins contained in cigarettes. According to the NHS England website, vaping is recommended to adults who want to quit smoking, because vapes contain nicotine, and much fewer toxins. However, vaping is not advisable for children due to the health risks – many of which are still unknown.

### The Law

Selling vapes to under 18s is **illegal** and it is against the law for an adult to buy cigarettes/vapes for people under the age of 18.

Disposable vapes will become **banned in the UK** as part of a government plan to tackle the rise in youth vaping and protect children's health. The Prime Minister announced this on 29th January 2024.

### The Risks

Vapes contain **nicotine**, which is highly addictive and can alter brain chemistry. There are also many toxins which are contained in vapes that can cause health problems such as **breathing difficulties** known as 'popcorn lung'.

### In School

We continue to educate children on the risks involved with smoking and vaping. Students in year 7 and 8 are starting a four-year learning programme in their personal development lessons called 'Intent'. In this programme, the goal is to help adolescents to avoid having a first cigarette/vape by using implementation intentions called 'IF - THEN plans'. The idea is that if they pre-plan how they will say no to an offer of a cigarette then they can automatically say it if/when they are offered a cigarette/vape.

Cigarettes and vapes are banned in school, and will be confiscated if a student is found to possess them. An appropriate sanction will be issued, and parents will be informed. For further information, please visit the [Talk to Frank](#) website.

#### Information from NHS website:

Parents, carers and anyone working with children can make sure young people understand the health facts about vaping and know about vaping and the law.

#### Facts to tell young people about vaping:

- [Vaping is a way for adults to stop smoking](#) – not something for non-smokers, especially children and young people to try.
- Vaping is substantially less harmful than smoking but that does not mean it is harmless.
- Vaping exposes users to some toxins, and we do not yet know what the risks might be in the longer term.
- Most vapes contain nicotine, which is an addictive substance that can be hard to stop using once you have started.
- Nicotine is more risky for young people than for adults, as evidence suggests the developing brain is more sensitive to its addictive effects.
- In the UK, it is against the law to sell nicotine vaping products to under-18s or for adults to buy them on their behalf.
- Some disposable vapes on sale are illegal and do not meet UK safety regulations. They can contain high levels of harmful substances.

# 10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

## DEVELOPING HEALTHY SLEEP PATTERNS

Quality sleep is paramount for wellbeing as it impacts our cognitive function, emotional balance and overall health. A World Health Organisation study highlighted that 44% of young people reported difficulty sleeping – potentially affecting their mood, concentration and immune system. Our guide offers expert tips for helping children to sleep more healthily.

### 1 MINDFUL TECH USE

Encourage a balanced approach to screen time. While phones, laptops, tablets and so on can serve as a helpful means of stress relief, it's advisable to minimise their use right before bed. These devices can keep the mind racing long after they're switched off, impacting how easily and how well a person can sleep.

### 2 EFFECTIVE SLEEP PRACTICES

Offer practical advice on reinforcing certain habits that have a positive influence on sleeping patterns. Children could start keeping a diary which they add to each evening, for example – or they could use up excess energy by exercising during the day.

### 3 HYDRATION HABITS

Underline the importance of drinking plenty of water throughout the day, while limiting drinks close to bedtime to prevent disruptions during the night: it's a lot harder to switch off if you keep needing to get out of bed for the toilet. Avoiding caffeinated drinks later in the day also allows the body and brain to slow down naturally, without any chemicals firing them back up.

### 4 CONSISTENT BEDTIME SCHEDULE

Assist children in developing consistent bedtime routines that tell the body it's time to wind down, promoting a more relaxed state. Establish specific activities for young ones right before going to bed – such as brushing their teeth – to set up an association between that action and falling asleep.

### 5 OPTIMAL SLEEP ENVIRONMENT

Ensure that the bedroom is comfortable, dark and free from distractions, fostering an ideal space for quality rest. The room's temperature should also be suitable for sleeping – that is, not too hot and not too cold – while rooms should be kept as tidy and free of clutter as possible.

### 6 RELAXING EVENING ACTIVITIES

Recommend activities that have a calming effect on the mind – such as reading or gentle stretching – in the lead up to bedtime, to prepare the mind for a peaceful night's sleep. Doing something quiet, relaxing and low intensity signals to the brain that it's time to rest and makes falling asleep much easier.

### 7 PRIORITISING ADEQUATE SLEEP

Emphasise the crucial role of sleep in maintaining physical and emotional wellbeing. It's especially important to sustain a healthy sleep pattern during challenging and intensive periods in our lives: during the exam season for children and young people, for instance.

### 8 NUTRITIONAL BALANCE

Highlight the significance of a healthy, balanced diet – and its role in establishing a more consistent sleep pattern. Try to lean towards preparing meals with plenty of fruit and vegetables, served in reasonable portion sizes: not only is this a lot healthier, but it also reduces the chances of feeling too full to be comfortable in bed.

### 9 PARENTAL SUPPORT

Parents and carers, of course, are uniquely situated to support their children in establishing and maintaining healthy sleeping habits. Parents can review their own sleep habits (incorporating anything from this list that they don't do already) to model a balanced bedtime routine and reinforce the importance of self-care.

### 10 MILITARY SLEEP METHOD

Look up 'the military sleep method': it's a technique for falling asleep quickly, which incorporates deep breathing exercises. You could encourage children to try it or even use it yourself. While it can take a good deal of practice to perfect, eventually it will start to feel natural – and the results are often extremely impressive!

## Meet Our Expert

Minds Ahead design and deliver the UK's only specialist postgraduate mental health qualifications. Winner of the Social Enterprise UK: 'One to Watch' award, the charity provides training and support to education organisations and local authorities. This guide has been written by Adam Gilllett – a learning and development specialist who is also Associate Vice-Principal for Personal Development at a large secondary school.

