

# SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER

## Summer half-term one 2023/24

Welcome to the penultimate safeguarding newsletter of the academic year. This half-term, we are celebrating Mental Health Awareness Week, and have had visits from Kooth, the Amy Winehouse foundation and the Operation Banishing team. Students have also received assemblies on healthy relationships.

GCSEs are now well underway for our year 11 students, and we wish them all well during this crucial time. We are already exceptionally proud of the way that they are displaying the school values of resilience, determination and endeavour during this particularly stressful time!

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>

## Mental Health Awareness Week

Mental Health Awareness Week is celebrated during the 13<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> May this year, and the theme is 'Movement: Moving more for our mental health'.

The official statement from the Mental Health Foundation is:

*'Movement is important for our mental health.*

*But so many of us struggle to move enough. We*

*know there are many different reasons for this, so this Mental Health Awareness Week we want to help people to find moments for movement in their daily routines. Going for a walk in your neighbourhood, putting on your favourite music and dancing around the living room, chair exercises when you're watching television – it all counts!'*



# MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK

13-19 MAY 2024

In school, students will all have assembly this week, where they will be introduced to the [Happy – OK – Sad](#) website, which is an informative website for people who need support for their mental health. The website has a wealth of resources for both adults and children, covering a wide variety of issues – such as bereavement, exam stress, eating disorders and anxiety (to name a few).

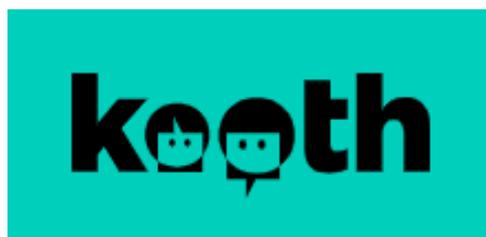
Next week, to celebrate the theme of moving for mental health, all year groups will go outside during form time to walk/run/dance...move!

## Kooth

To continue the theme of mental health awareness, all students have had assemblies from [Kooth](#), who have visited school especially to show students how their service works.

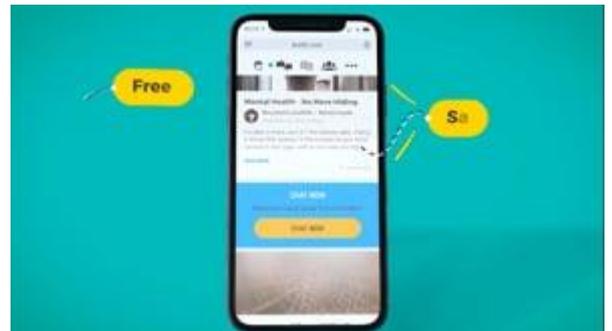
Kooth is a free to use website, where students can access online counselling at the touch of a button. Kooth is also

completely anonymous, and students can talk about anything. The service offers a range of options to support children's mental health, such as 1:1 counselling via direct messages. There is no waiting list, and children can speak to a trained counsellor within minutes (there may sometimes be a queue during busy times). There is also the option to pre-book appointments rather than waiting in a queue.



As well as counselling, there are forums for different topics, articles with advice and guidance, and self-care activities to try. Children are able to write articles themselves and have them published on the website.

We encourage students to make the most of this valuable service if they ever want to speak to someone about their mental health outside of school hours.



## Substance Misuse

As children enter their teenage years, the risk of them beginning to experiment with substances increases. As parents, carers and educators, understanding and addressing the complexities of substance misuse among adolescents is important so that we can reduce the risk to our children as much as possible.

In 2023, the UK government published a report into substance use in teenagers, which stated:

*'Cannabis remains the most common substance (87%) that young people come to treatment for. Around half of young people in treatment (46%) said they had problems with alcohol, 8% had problems with ecstasy and 8% reported powder cocaine problems.'*

*'The most common vulnerability reported by young people starting treatment was early onset of substance use (80%), which means the young person started using substances before the age of 15. This was followed by polydrug use (55%).'*

The report also stated that there has been a three-fold increase in people aged 16-24 years using ketamine. This has led to an increase in the number of people in this age group requiring bladder surgery ([Source](#)).

There has also been an increase in the number of children accessing vapes which contain THC (the part of the cannabis plant that makes people feel 'high'). This affects the brain in the same way that smoking cannabis does, and can be as equally harmful to mental health.

To learn more about the risks of cannabis, ketamine, vapes containing THC and other substances, please visit the [Talk To Frank website](#). This website also contains information about the appearance of drugs, as well as how they are consumed, and how to spot the signs that someone may be under the influence.

## Accessing Support

There has recently been a change in the service provider in Warrington with regards to drug and alcohol support. This is now provided by Change Grow Live,



who support both adults and young people. Details of their Warrington service can be found [here](#).

If you are worried about your child's substance use and require further support, please do not hesitate to get in touch with school.

# 10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators MANAGING EXAM STRESS

At some point in their education, children are almost certain to encounter exam stress, which can cast a shadow over their mental, emotional and physical wellbeing. Mental health charity YoungMinds estimate that a staggering 87% of pupils suffer from exam stress – highlighting the urgent need to minimise its impact on children's health and happiness.

## 1 PRACTISE WORKLOAD WISDOM

The build up to exam season is such a busy and pressurised time in a child's education that it can be difficult for youngsters to avoid feeling overwhelmed. Encourage them to consider whether their current workload is realistic and allows them sufficient time to relax and recharge. Work with them in crafting a revision timetable that's manageable and includes breaks and occasional days off.

## 2 ADVISE CLEARING THE CLUTTER

A disorganised work environment is proven to negatively affect our ability to focus, as well as our emotional state. Encourage children to keep their desk, notes and revision materials tidy – creating a dedicated, well-kept study space to promote maximum focus. Foster their creativity by suggesting they incorporate vibrant colours, mind maps and even quirky drawings into their revision notes.

## 3 MASTER THE MATERIALS TOGETHER

Revision seems far harder when a child is uncertain where to begin or what sources to consult. Support them in confirming revision materials with their various teachers – emphasising the importance of gathering a range of resources to get a more comprehensive understanding of the subject. Feeling more prepared should nurture the child's confidence and help to dispel some of their anxiety.

## 4 RECOMMEND CREATIVE NOTE-TAKING

Writing out notes in full – rather than simply bullet pointing – can be a strong start to a child's revision. Reinforce this idea, encouraging the use of flashcards (featuring shorter versions of previously taken notes) for effective repetition and memorisation. Discuss the power of regularly reviewing notes to help them stay in the child's memory.

## 5 USE VISUAL AIDS AND MNEMONICS

Encourage the use of visual aids like videos and sticky notes to enhance learning. Some children find these resources far more useful than simply reading their notes as written. Explore creating mnemonics for a fun and effective study approach – and it's also worth noting that the strategic use of colours is a proven means of triggering recall during exams.

## 6 GATHER A 'TECH TOOLKIT'

Technology can be a huge advantage in exam prep. Educational YouTube channels and revision websites like BBC Bitesize can be immensely powerful resources for helping children to expand and retain their knowledge. You could also recommend the use of flashcard apps and educational podcasts for revision and reminders when young people are on the go.

## 7 KEEP IT FUN

Revision tends to go far more smoothly if children are having fun in the process. Injecting some humour into their notes, for instance, can make details more memorable – as can relating information to their real-life experiences. Try to encourage a variety of study methods, such as incorporating physical activity (even simply taking a walk) into their revision routine.

## 8 SUGGEST ACTIVE REVISION STRATEGIES

Make sure children are aware of different study techniques. You could emphasise the effectiveness of spaced repetition by reviewing material regularly over time to reinforce learning and improve retention. Discuss the benefits of active recall methods – such as self-testing or explaining a concept aloud – in identifying where their strengths and weaknesses lie.

## 9 ENCOURAGE A POSITIVE MINDSET

It can be easy for children's thoughts to fall into a downward spiral when they're stressed about exams. Try to foster a growth mindset by emphasising the importance of giving it their all rather than aiming for complete perfection. Positive self-talk and the use of affirmations can build confidence and reduce anxiety, while visualising success and setting realistic goals can help them stay motivated and focused.

## 10 HELP THEM TO SEIZE THE DAY

There are lots of things children can do on the day of their exam to reduce stress and increase their focus. Talk them through some helpful exam-day strategies – such as arriving early, reading the instructions and the questions carefully, and pacing themselves during the test. Suggest some relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing or visualisation, to help them manage any nerves before and during the exam.

### 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 Gillett – a learning and development specialist who is also Associate Vice-Principal for Personal Development at Penistone Grammar School.

