

Autumn Term Safeguarding Newsletter 2024

Safeguarding, everyone's responsibility

Useful Contacts:

Designated Safeguarding Lead/Prevent Lead: Ms Walker b.walker@fulwoodacademy.co.uk
Preston Safeguarding Hub: 0300 123 6720 or out of hours 0300 123 6722 (5pm - 8am)
Food banks: Salvation Army - 01772 555425, Luv Preston - 01772 298107 Noor Food Bank - 07921 887383 or 07764 432643

Welcome

Welcome to our first Safeguarding newsletter of the academic year. In the newsletter you will find safeguarding updates for the half term, as well as any information you may find useful. Working together in partnership to safeguard our children will ensure that all pupils have the best possible outcomes.

All pupils have now had their termly Safeguarding training in assembly which covered a variety of topics such as:

- Mental health support and where to find it
- Keeping safe on social media
- Cyberbullying
- Vaping
- Explicit images, the law and keeping safe

Please speak to your child about the assemblies and ask them to discuss some of the content, this will help them to remember the important messages. If you have any questions about this or anything in this newsletter, please feel free to drop me an email.

Vaping

We do not allow any vapes to be brought into school. If we suspect that a pupil has a vape in school then we will follow our **Powers of Search Policy**, illegal drugs and tobacco products are prohibited items listed in this policy. Parents and carers should always be informed following a search.

Please do not allow your child to bring vapes into school and talk to them about the consequences and dangers of vaping. Here are some 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 exposes users to toxins which 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.

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We are proud to be working in partnership with The Mix Connect.

Powered by two of the UK's leading support charities for young people, The Mix and Shout, The Mix Connect offers emotional support and personalised signposting 24 hours a day, empowering pupils to take their mental wellbeing into their own hands. It includes:

- Over 2,000 pages of advice and information on everything from bullying and depression to self-harm and exam stress.
- A directory of 16,000 sources of online and local support services.
- Access to The Mix's moderated peer support community.
- 24-hour crisis support via text from trained volunteers.

Students can access the Mix Connect via the Safeguarding section on the Academy website.

Mobile Phone Safety

The vast majority of children attending high school have a mobile phone, and with that comes a number of risks associated with using the internet. If you're worried your child could be looking at unsafe content online, you might be wondering if it's OK to check their phone or other devices. It is always best to speak to your child about online safety and include them in setting rules and limits. This will help them to understand the risks and know what to do if they see something unsafe. However there is nothing wrong with checking and monitoring your child's mobile phone in order to keep them safe.

Here are some tips you may want to consider:

Look at the phone with your child

When your child first gets a phone, you can set the ground rules about how and when they use it. You might agree that:

- you will look at their social media accounts with them and make sure they know how to block and report content
- phones should be used openly in shared parts of the home and not in their bedroom
- they can only use their phones at certain times of the day or week

It is best to keep a closer eye on your child's online behaviour when they are younger. You can give them more freedom as they mature and you both feel confident that they can keep themselves safe online.

If you are going to look at your child or teenager's phone, make it part of your normal routine. Don't surprise them with it to 'catch them out' or as a consequence for behaviour. This could affect their trust in you and make them more secretive. Only look at their phone without their consent if you think they are at risk of harm and the risks outweigh their reaction.

Respect your child's privacy

Be clear about what you want to look at and why. For example, your child probably won't want to show you all their text conversations with their friends. This doesn't mean that they have anything to hide, but that they want to have privacy. Reassure them that you trust them and don't need to see all their conversations, but they can share with you if they get a message that worries them.

You might ask to see their messages if you're worried about them talking to someone they've met online. Explain to them in an age-appropriate way that people aren't always honest about who they are or their intentions online.

Know what you're looking for

It can be hard for adults to keep up to date with what their children like to do online and what the risks are. You might hear about the latest issues or trends in the news. In school, we will speak to children if we become aware of any issues, like students trying **harmful challenges or trends**. We may also use these newsletters to make parents and carers aware.

Some things you might look out for are:

- your child receiving or sending bullying messages
- strangers contacting your child
- social media accounts with violent imagery including self-harm
- social media accounts promoting extreme body ideals or eating disorders
- adult websites in your child's browser history
- your child sending or receiving explicit or sexual images
- websites or social media accounts sharing extremist views or fake news

Be aware of secret apps

Sometimes young people might try to hide their online behaviour. This might be because they feel ashamed of something they're doing or that someone has told them to keep something secret.

They might hide images or conversations in a 'secret app' or 'decoy app'. These apps are designed to look like other tools, such as calculators. Instead, they hide content people don't want others to see.

You can set your child's device so they can't download apps intended for adults. The website '**Internet Matters**' has tips for parents on **anonymous and decoy apps**.

Using an app to track your child's phone use

Setting up parent controls and filters on your child's devices will help to limit what they can access online. There are a number of apps that can help you do this. **Google Family Link** is one app where you can limit screen time, block certain apps, block particular websites and track your child's location. There is lots of advice online about which apps may work best for you and your family.

It's important to talk to your child about what you're installing and why and explain you're not spying on them.

If you find something worrying on your child's phone . . .

try to stay calm and reassure them that they can talk to you about it. Depending on what you find, you might need to:

- help them block and report content on social media
- update your parental control settings
- talk to school or the police