

## Autum Term 1 Newsletter 2025

### *Safeguarding, everyone's responsibility*

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### Supporting Your Child's Body Image in the Age of Social Media

Dear Parents and Carers,

As children move through adolescence, they become increasingly aware of their appearance – and how it is perceived by others. In today's digital world, social media plays a significant role in shaping these perceptions. While platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat can foster creativity and connection, they can also promote unrealistic and harmful beauty standards.

This newsletter aims to help you understand the pressures your child may be facing and offers practical ways to support them in developing a healthy body image.

### What Is Body Image – and Why Does It Matter?

Body image is how we think and feel about our bodies – not necessarily how we *actually* look. It is shaped by:

- Personal experiences
- Cultural expectations
- Peer influence
- Media exposure – especially from influencers, celebrities, and online trends

A positive body image helps young people develop confidence and self-worth, while a negative body image can lead to:

- Low self-esteem
- Anxiety or depression
- Disordered eating or excessive exercise
- Social withdrawal or self-harming behaviour



### How Social Media Influencers Shape Body Image



Social media influencers often portray curated versions of themselves. Even though many teenagers know these images are edited or filtered, the **constant exposure** can affect how they see themselves.

**What Teens See Online:**

- Perfect skin, toned bodies, and idealised lifestyles
- Extreme fitness or “glow-up” transformations
- Sponsored posts promoting weight loss products or cosmetic procedures
- Content comparing body types (e.g., “What I eat in a day” or “Hot girl/boy summer” trends)

**How This Affects Them:**

- Feeling “not good enough” compared to influencers or peers
- Increased pressure to meet unrealistic ideals
- Fear of missing out (FOMO) if they don't look or live a certain way

 **The Gender Perspective**

**For Girls:**

- May feel pressure to be slim, smooth-skinned, and always “camera-ready”
- Influenced by beauty tutorials, filters, fashion, and “fitspo” trends
- More likely to experience appearance-based bullying online

**For Boys:**

- May feel pressure to be muscular, tall, and “masculine”
- Exposed to gym culture, supplement ads, and alpha-male personas
- Body image issues often overlooked due to social stigma

**For All Genders:**

- Non-binary and gender-diverse teens may face **additional challenges**, including dysphoria and lack of representation in mainstream media

 **Spotting the Signs of Struggle**

It’s normal for teenagers to be self-conscious at times, but here are signs that body image issues may be affecting their wellbeing:

- Obsessing over appearance or photos
- Drastic changes in diet or exercise
- Withdrawing from social situations or avoiding mirrors
- Wearing oversized clothes to hide their body
- Expressing worthlessness, sadness, or self-hate

If you notice these behaviours, consider having a gentle, supportive conversation – and don’t hesitate to seek professional help.

 **What You Can Do at Home**

 **Encourage open, honest conversations**

- Ask questions like: “What do you think about what you see online?” or “Do you ever feel pressure to look a certain way?”
- Avoid lecturing – instead, listen with empathy and without judgment.

 **Promote media literacy**

- Discuss how influencers are paid to promote products.
- Teach them to recognise filters, editing, and clickbait.
- Explore how algorithms show more of what we already view – not what’s true.

 **Focus on body function over appearance**

- Celebrate what bodies can do – run, hug, dance, grow, heal.
- Compliment your child on their skills, efforts, and values, not just their looks.

 **Set a healthy example**

- Avoid negative body talk in front of your child.
- Be mindful of how you speak about food, weight, or appearance – yours and others’.

 **Help curate their online environment**

- Encourage them to follow diverse, body-positive influencers
- Suggest unfollowing accounts that make them feel bad about themselves
- Set boundaries for screen time and promote offline hobbies

## Useful Resources for Parents & Teens

### Websites:

- [Young Minds – Body Image & Mental Health](#)
- [BEAT – Eating Disorder Charity](#)
- [BodyHappy.org](#)

### Books:

- *“Body Happy Kids”* by Molly Forbes
- *“The Body Image Book for Girls”* by Charlotte Markey
- *“You Are Enough”* by Jen Petro-Roy

### Social Media (for teens):

- @i\_weigh (Jameela Jamil’s body-positive platform)
- @bopo.boy (for boys and body acceptance)
- @bodyposipanda

**Thought for the day - Social Media never shows the whole picture. Perfection is an illusion**

