

Spring Term 1 Newsletter 2026

Safeguarding, everyone's responsibility

Useful Contacts:

Designated Safeguarding Lead/Prevent Lead: Mrs Walker b.walker@fulwoodacademy.co.uk
Preston Safeguarding Hub: 0300 123 6720 or out of hours 0300 123 6722 (5pm - 8am)

Understanding Teenage Relationship Abuse & Coercive Control

Dear Parents and Carers,

As part of our ongoing commitment to safeguarding and supporting young people, we want to share important information about teenage relationships — what healthy behaviour looks like, what to watch out for, and where families can find support.

We hope you find the information useful. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact Ms Walker directly, or feel free to **book onto our Safeguarding Parents' Evening on Tuesday 3rd February from 3:15 until 5pm**. Look out for the link coming soon.

Healthy vs Unhealthy Relationships

Most Teens begin exploring romantic relationships during their time at Secondary school. At their best, relationships can support confidence, friendship, and personal growth. However, some young people may experience behaviours that are controlling, coercive, or emotionally harmful — even when they don't look like traditional "violence". It's important to recognise that abuse doesn't have to be physical; it can include pressure, coercion, monitoring, jealousy, emotional manipulation, and more.

Signs to watch for:

Behaviour that may indicate an unhealthy dynamic includes:

- Excessive checking of phone/messages and location
- Pressure to spend all their time together
- Jealousy or criticism about friends or family
- Questions that invalidate feelings ("you're too sensitive")

These are common hallmarks of controlling and coercive behaviours in relationships.

How to Talk With Your Teen

Talking about relationships can feel delicate, but open, non-judgmental conversation really matters. Here are some practical tips:

- ✓ Ask questions rather than assume what's happening
- ✓ Listen more than lecture
- ✓ Validate feelings, even if you disagree
- ✓ Avoid ultimatums, which can shut down communication

If you are concerned about safety, it's important to act promptly and involve appropriate support; school staff, safeguarding leads, or external services.


See over for some practical tips on how to support your child and what to do if you are worried.


How You Can Support Your Teen

Here are some excellent resources tailored to parents and carers:

Understanding Relationships

 [Act On It Now – Parents & Carers Resources](#) — guidance on talking to your teen and spotting problems.

 [The Children’s Society – Teenage Relationship Abuse Advice](#) — clear explanations of abusive dynamics.

 [National Centre for Domestic Violence – Teenage Dating Abuse Advice for Parents](#) — practical insight into abuse and why teens sometimes stay silent.

Additional Support

You may also find helpful information and support from:

- **School Safeguarding Team** — for immediate concerns
- Local domestic abuse services
- NHS guidance on recognising harmful behaviours in relationships

If You Are Worried Your Teen Is in an Abusive Relationship

If you ever feel your child is at risk or in immediate danger, please contact:

- **999** for emergencies
- Your **GP or local safeguarding services**
- **School safeguarding staff**

We encourage parents to talk early and often about relationships — celebrating healthy behaviours and gently challenging behaviours that are controlling or make a young person feel unsafe.

Key Takeaways for Parents

- **Teen relationship abuse is common:** Nearly half of teens in relationships experience controlling or harmful behaviours.
- **Abuse isn’t just physical:** Emotional, digital and coercive behaviours are widespread.
- **Local incidents of domestic abuse are significant:** Lancashire’s policing and safeguarding data show high local need for awareness and support services.

Did you know?

- National research shows that around half of Teens in romantic relationships report some form of controlling or harmful behaviour, from monitoring phones to pressure to agree with a partner. Even when no physical violence is involved, these behaviours can affect a young person’s confidence, friendships, and well-being.
- Locally in Lancashire, tens of thousands of domestic abuse - related incidents are recorded each year, highlighting the importance of supporting young people to build healthy, respectful relationships from an early age.

Why This Matters for Parents

- Many Teens do not recognise controlling behaviour as abuse, especially if it isn’t physical.
- Relationship abuse often impacts emotional well-being, school attendance, friendships and self-esteem.
- Girls are slightly more likely than boys to report emotional or physical abuse from a partner, though both experience harmful behaviours.