



SAFEGUARDING & WELLBEING NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to our first Safeguarding Newsletter of the year. Safeguarding and child protection can be scary words, but in fact they are all about doing preventative work with our children to keep them safe.

As children grow up, we slowly allow them to become more independent. This means that they have more choices to make themselves and hence more opportunity for things to go wrong. We need this to happen in a controlled manner so they stay safe at all times. When parents, schools and agencies in the wider community communicate well and work together we can prevent most issues.



FAMILY RULES FOR USING DEVICES



Parents, carers and teachers all worry about the impact of the misuse or overuse of devices by our children. Young children are very vulnerable online and this leads to many safeguarding concerns.

Experts recommend drawing up a set of **family rules** agreed on with your children to promote the safe and responsible use of tablets, phones and computers. Agreeing and then sticking to a set of rules when your children are young will help you in years to come where the challenges may be greater!

The National College have produced a “Top Tips” [guide](#) to help you develop rules that work for your family. Important advice includes:

- Agree time limits and suitable times
- Charging all gadgets in the kitchen overnight to allow children to sleep undisturbed
- Adults to know all passwords



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Support for Mental Health



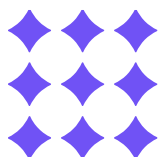
We know that being a parent can be very hard and that we all struggle with our mental health at

times. You might be feeling overwhelmed, scared or unsure of where to go for help. Both [Dudley](#), [Sandwell](#) and [Worcestershire](#) Councils provide directories of the support that are available in their local areas. Some of this support can be accessed through schools, and others, either directly or through your GP.

[Dudley's Happier Minds](#) website is particularly good, providing lots of useful advice and comprehensive links to national organisations, so definitely worth a visit wherever you live



Happier Minds



**STOUR VALE
ACADEMY
TRUST**

CEOP

CEOP is the Child Exploitation and Online Protections Command, part of the National Crime Agency. Their Website, [Thinkuknow](#), provides clear advice for parents of children of all ages about online issues such as privacy settings and what to do if your child has seen something inappropriate online.

Key advice from CEOPs is as follows:

- 1. Parental controls:** Parental controls have been designed to help you manage your child's online activities. There are various types, some of which are free but others which can be bought. For more information and step by step instructions on setting up parental controls, visit [Parental Controls & Privacy Settings Guides - Internet Matters](#).
- 2. Supervise their online activity:** Keep the devices your child uses in communal areas of the house such as the living room or kitchen, where an adult is able to supervise. Primary-age children should not access the internet in private spaces alone, such as in a bedroom or bathroom.
- 3. Explore together and chat little and often:** Ask your child to show you their favourite apps, games and sites and encourage them to teach you how to use these. Ask them if anything ever worries them online. Make sure they know they won't be in trouble and can get help by talking to you or another adult they trust if anything happens online that makes them feel worried, sad or scared.



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National Online Safety

National Online Safety (NOS) is an app for parents and carers. It is free to download for Apple or Android phones and is a great resource to help you understand how to keep children safe online. This is such a fast-moving area and what we like about the app is that new guides are released very regularly.

Recent posts include:

- The risks of more offensive voice chat and in-game spending on EA Sports FC 24 now that a much wider audience is connected with cross-platform play.
- How to disable private messaging and deal with strangers on Roblox.
- The challenge of fake accounts on X (formerly Twitter) and the likelihood that almost anything, including 18+ content and extremist views, could end up on your child's feed.

We highly recommend that you download the app so you can proactively manage your child's online activities. Amongst our schools, significantly more safeguarding issues are caused by our children's misuse and unchecked access to social media and games than are caused by physical bullying.



From playgrounds to parliament and our phones to our homes, this Anti-Bullying Week the Anti-Bullying Alliance is calling on everyone to 'Choose Respect'.

During the week – running from 11th to 15th November 2024 – children and young people will start a national conversation about how to handle disagreements and differences of opinion without resorting to bullying. The idea is to support each other to champion kindness, because being kind is not a sign of weakness but a mark of strength.





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AUTUMN 2024

Getting Support

School safeguarding information is available on our [website](#)

Police – 999 in an emergency / 101 for other calls

Pastoral team: Mrs Moulder, Ms Barnett & Mrs Stewart

(make appointments through the office)

Mental Health support – for young people experiencing a mental health crisis. Text YM to 85258

Emergency Duty Team – Children’s social care

0121 569 3100 (9am-5pm Mon-Fri) or

0121 569 2355 (out of hours)

Your GP (by phone)

Websites:

- Kooth.com
- Youngminds.org.uk
- Childline.org.uk
- Samaritans.org
- Ceop.police.uk/safety-centre

Everyone likes a podcast!

In our busy lives we don’t have much time to read – podcasts can be the answer. Anna Freud, the mental health charity, has produced a series of [expert podcasts](#) to help parents understand and manage child and family mental health problems. In our experience, parents have found these really useful.

The series, Child in Mind, is presented by BBC Radio 4 presenter Claudia Hammond. In each 20-minute episode, she discusses an important issue in child and family mental health with an expert and a young person or parent. Current titles cover issues such as Anxiety, ADHD, self harm, trauma and eating disorders.

