BAS INCLUSIVE

"Children are our most precious and vulnerable members of society. They are deserving of love, care, and protection. We must ensure their safety and well-being, and create an environment where they can grow, learn, and thrive."

~Fatima Whitbread

WHO TO CONTACT IF YOU HAVE A CONCERN ABOUT A CHILD?

If you are worried about a Child's safety or welfare, please do not hesitate to contact any of the Designated Safeguarding Leads straight away via the school or nursery office or via

safeguarding@battleabbeyschool.com

The following members of staff are the DSLs for Battle Abbey School:

Whole School DSL:

Rebecca Ingall (ingallr@battleabbeyschool.com)

Senior School Deputy DSL:

Emma Maxwell

Prep School Deputy DSLs:

Joshua Barraclough and Trudy Golding

Nursery/EYFS:

Amy Brown and Jackie Richards

Safeguarding together

Spring 2025- Issue two



NOTE FROM THE DSL

As the days grow longer and Spring is really springing, it's hard to believe how quickly the school year is moving. The lighter mornings and brighter days bring a renewed sense of energy, but they also provide an important opportunity to reflect on the challenges young people may be facing and how we, as a school community, can best support them.

In this edition, we are addressing a range of key safeguarding topics that continue to impact the lives of children and young people. The recent Netflix show 'Adolescence' has sparked important conversations about online safety and the pressures of growing up in a digital world—something we encourage you to discuss openly with your child. We are also shining a light on county lines exploitation, self-harm, and the differences between peer relational difficulties and bullying, all of which can have a significant effect on a young person's wellbeing.

Additionally, we explore the importance of sleep hygiene in supporting mental health and developing minds. Good sleep is linked to attendance and attainment, and we have a responsibility in ensuring children are in school regularly, as it is key to their success. We are here to support families who may be facing difficulties in this area.

As always, safeguarding is a partnership, and we encourage you to stay engaged with these topics, have open conversations at home, and reach out if you need support. If you have any concerns, please don't hesitate to contact a member of the Safeguarding or Welfare team. A reminder that our Whole School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is available on our main website via the policies page. Please note that this is updated annually for September start.

Thank you for working with us to keep our young people safe.

Best wishes,

Rebecca Ingall

Deputy Head Pastoral and Safeguarding/DSL

LESSONS FROM 'ADOLESCENCE'

If you haven't heard about it yet, 'Adolescence' is rapidly becoming one of the most talked-about shows on Netflix, sparking intense debate about the realities of growing up in a digital world. The premiere episode alone attracted 6.45 million viewers, with the second episode drawing in 5.9 million—outpacing its nearest rival by 1.5 million and cementing its status as a cultural phenomenon. This gripping drama offers an unfiltered, unapologetic and often unsettling portrayal of the challenges young people face online, highlighting issues we frequently address in this newsletter and within the school curriculum. From social media pressures and cyberbullying to the more insidious dangers lurking in digital spaces, Adolescence does not shy away from difficult conversations.

Of particular concern is the show's raw depiction of how toxic online communities - such as the 'incelosphere' - can influence vulnerable young minds. The rise of online spaces promoting misogyny, male entitlement, and extremist ideologies has made it crucial for parents and guardians to understand the risks their children may encounter. *Adolescence* provides a timely and necessary look at these realities, making it an essential conversation starter for families, educators, and young people alike.

Exposure to inappropriate content: Throughout the series, characters frequently encounter ageinappropriate content on social media and video-sharing platforms. This serves as a reminder that even

seemingly harmless platforms can expose young people to harmful material, such as violent imagery, misinformation, or exploitative content. The parental characters in the series sit aghast, stating that because their child was at home, they assumed they would be safe. These dangers are readily available and in our pockets, bags, in our hands every day and we need to support our children and young people to know how to manage these.

Vodafone released a short video last year, titled 'The Rise of the Aggrorithm'. It highlights the harmful algorithms targeting young boys. It's certainly worth a watch as well as learning about the terrifying statistics accompanying it: Al: Rise of the Aggo-rithims

Cyberbullying: The anonymity of the internet can sometimes lead to unkind or harmful interactions between peers. A major theme in *Adolescence* is the impact of online bullying. The show portrays how social media amplifies peer pressure and allows negative interactions to escalate quickly, sometimes leading to real-life consequences. This highlights the importance of fostering supportive online environments and teaching young people about digital empathy and resilience.

Predatory behaviour: While rare, the series does not shy away from showing how predators can manipulate and exploit vulnerable individuals online. By depicting these dangers, it serves as a cautionary tale about the importance of privacy settings, avoiding interactions with strangers, and recognising red flags.

The allure of the 'Dark Web': As we previously discussed in our Spring 2023 newsletter, the dark web poses significant threats, including exposure to illegal activities and cybercriminal networks. The show explores the curiosity some teens have about these hidden corners of the internet, reinforcing the importance of educating young people about the real risks involved.



Online, young people are communicating in ways that most adults completely miss. What looks innocent could have a much darker meaning. Here are some of the codes being used:

Red Pill — "I see the truth." Used in toxic male spaces to mean waking up to supposed hidden 'truths' about women and society, often linked to misogynistic ideologies.

Blue Pill – Represents those who are "blind to the truth" or still believe in mainstream views about relationships and gender dynamics.

Dynamite Emoji – An "exploding red pill," meaning someone is a radicalised incel.

Kidney Bean – A symbol linked to incel culture, sometimes mocking women.

100 Emoji – Tied to the "80/20 rule," the belief that 80% of women are only attracted to 20% of men.

■ Black Hole – Used to express depression, hopelessness, or being sucked into negative online spaces.

Tornado – Represents chaos or feeling overwhelmed, sometimes used to indicate mental distress.

Frog Emoji – Associated with alt-right and extremist meme culture, often linked to Pepe the Frog, which has been co-opted by some toxic online groups.

Eagle – A symbol of extreme nationalism, sometimes used in far-right online spaces.

Skull – While often just slang for "that's funny" or "I'm dead (from laughing)," in certain groups, it can signal darker themes like nihilism or self-harm.

Heart Colours - Not just about love!

= Love

= Lust

= "Are you interested?"

= Interested but not in sex

= "You'll be okay"

So what should parents do?

- 1. **Get Curious, Not Combative** Ask open-ended questions: "I saw something about emojis meaning different things. Have you heard of this?" Keep the conversation light.
- 2. Create a Judgment-Free Zone If your child feels like they'll be punished for opening up, they won't. Make it clear you're there to listen, not just lecture.
- 3. **Decode Together** Ask them to explain their digital world. What do different symbols mean? Who are the influencers they follow? Don't assume—ask.
- 4. **Teach Critical Thinking** Help them question online content. "Why do you think some groups push this idea? Who benefits?" Arm them with questions, not just rules.
- 5. **Monitor Without Spying** Open conversations work better than secret surveillance. Make checking in on their online spaces a normal part of parenting, not a crisis move.
- 6. **Be Real About Manipulation** Explain how toxic online groups groom young people by making them feel special, included, or like they have 'insider knowledge.'
- 7. **Build Their Offline Confidence** The more they feel valued and confident in the real world, the less they'll seek validation in dangerous online spaces.

The digital world is evolving faster than most adults can keep up. But we don't have to be in the dark! #DecodeTheCode #ProtectThem

Find out more here: 2025 Emoji Meanings: An Ultimate Emoji Dictionary for Parents and Guardians

Masculinity and social media influences:

Beyond online safety, *Adolescence* also delves into the pressures surrounding masculinity in the digital age. We recognise how social media platforms, influencers, and online echo chambers shape all young people's perceptions of success, dominance, and self-worth.

A particularly relevant discussion is the portrayal of hyper-masculine influencers who propagate harmful stereotypes. This aligns with our previous discussions on figures like Andrew Tate, whose online presence has raised concerns about promoting toxic masculinity, unrealistic expectations, and misogynistic narratives. The series encourages young viewers to critically assess the content they consume and to develop a healthy, balanced sense of identity free from damaging ideals.

As a school, we are actively exploring ways to support all members of our community in navigating these complex issues. Recognising the growing impact these themes have on young people's identity, relationships, and wellbeing, we are committed to creating thoughtful, inclusive spaces for discussion and growth. Adrian Blake, who works closely with our Pastoral team, is currently collaborating with several Heads of Year to develop and deliver tailored enrichment sessions that delve deeper into these important topics. These sessions aim to promote critical thinking, empathy, and healthy self-expression, equipping our students with the tools to engage confidently and responsibly in both digital and real-world environments. This initiative is part of our broader commitment to fostering a respectful and informed school culture where every voice feels heard and valued.

Advice for Parents to keep Children Safe Online:

As reinforced through our ongoing discussions and lessons around online safety and digital literacy, online safety requires a proactive approach. Here are some key strategies to help protect young people from digital risks:

Maintain Open Conversations: Regularly talk to your children about their online experiences. Show interest in their digital lives without judgment and encourage them to speak up if they feel uncomfortable or threatened. The online world can be incredibly isolating- children need an advocate.

Be Aware of the Platforms and Influencers They Follow: Stay informed about the apps, social media platforms, and online personalities your children engage with. Discuss the messages they receive from these sources and encourage critical thinking.

Discuss the Potential for Unrealistic Portrayals: Adolescence effectively illustrates how online content can distort reality, especially in areas like body image, wealth, and relationships. Help young people differentiate between curated online personas and real life.

Educate Them About Online Safety: Reinforce best practices such as not sharing personal information with strangers, avoiding suspicious links, and understanding the dangers of the dark web. Useful resources include the SHARE checklist and Childline advice, which were also featured in our Spring 2023 newsletter.

Monitor Their Online Activity: While respecting privacy is crucial, it's also important to be aware of your child's digital footprint. Set appropriate boundaries and consider using reputable parental control tools and ISP content filters. Consider boundaries like no phones in the bedroom or having regular check ins with each other about online activity.

Recognise Signs of Radicalisation: As previously discussed, certain online communities can expose young people to extremist ideologies. Be vigilant for warning signs such as secrecy, withdrawal, or the adoption of extreme viewpoints.

Report Concerns: If you have any concerns about your child's online safety, please do not hesitate to contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Rebecca Ingall, or any member of the Safeguarding Team.

By working together, we can help our children navigate the digital world safely and develop a positive sense of self.

UNDERSTANDING COUNTY LINES IN EAST SUSSEX



While our school newsletters aim to provide comprehensive safeguarding information, it's important for parents to be aware of broader issues that can affect young people in our community. One such National Crime Agency concern is County Lines.

What are County Lines?

County Lines is a term used to describe drug dealing networks that use mobile phones to run drug supply businesses, often exploiting children and vulnerable adults to move and sell drugs. These networks typically operate between urban areas and smaller towns, often crossing county borders - hence the

Young people aged 14-17 are most likely to be recruited or targeted by criminal groups but there are

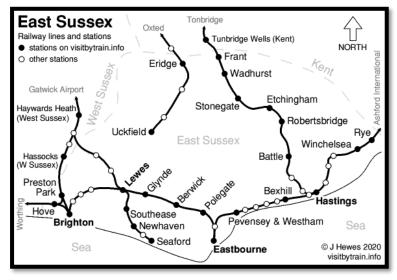
Why is this relevant to East Sussex?

East Sussex, like many other areas in the UK, can be affected by County Lines operations due to its geographical location and transport links.

Young people in our communities can be targeted by these networks and coerced into criminal activity.

We know that this is a prevalent issue in our wider community, and regularly work with the transport police and our Police School Liaison officer when there is a concern.





Is it just an East Sussex problem?

No. We know that County Lines isn't in the news as much as other issues in society, but that doesn't mean that it isn't a problem. We know that across the county, Police forces are dealing with County Lines issues. In fact, it is estimated that 90% of Police forces have seen an increase of activity and violence.

It's important to note that this isn't just a metropolitan problem: It is far reaching and can touch even a small town like Battle. It affects all communities, no matter what social background or community: any child can be groomed into county lines activity. However, we know from experience that those who may have issues in the home, poor attendance or a vulnerability of some kind are more susceptible.

How are young people exploited?

Children and young people involved in County Lines may be:

- Forced to carry and sell drugs.
- Used to transport cash.
- Coerced into allowing their homes to be used as a base for drug dealing ('cuckooing').
- Subjected to violence, threats, and intimidation.
- At risk of sexual exploitation.

What can parents do?

Be vigilant: Be aware of any changes in your child's behaviour and their friendships.

Maintain open communication: Talk to your child about their life, both online and offline, and create an environment where they feel comfortable talking to you about any concerns I

Educate your child: Explain the dangers of drug dealing and exploitation.

Know their friends: Be aware of who your child is spending time with.

Monitor their phone use: Be aware of increased phone activity or new devices.

Trust your instincts: If you are worried, seek help.

Signs that a young person might be involved in County Lines:

- **Changes in behaviour:** Becoming more secretive, withdrawn, or anxious.
- Unexplained absences from school or home.
- **Sudden increase in money** or new possessions they cannot account for.
- Increased use of **mobile phones**, often with new or burner phones.
- Association with older or unknown individuals.
- Signs of physical harm or neglect.
- Talk of gang involvement or pressure.

Protecting our children is a **community responsibility**.

By being informed and vigilant, we can help safeguard young people from exploitation.

Where to Get Help

If you are worried, below are some key contacts:

School Safeguarding Team: Your school's safeguarding lead is available to discuss concerns confidentially (see details earlier in the newsletter)

Sussex Police: You can contact them on 101 or 999 in an emergency.

Local Authority Safeguarding Hub: Reach out to your local authority's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) for advice on child protection issues.

Childline: Children can call 0800 1111 for confidential support 24/7.

NSPCC Helpline for Parents: Call 0808 800 5000 for guidance on safeguarding or child protection issues

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Please click the links for the topic explained more in depth:

National Crime Agency- County Lines

NSPCC- Protecting children from County Lines

The Children's Society- County Lines and Criminal exploitation

The Slang Dictionary



SLEEP HYGIENE AND THE IMPACT ON LEARNING

"Sleep is the golden chain that ties health and our bodies together"- Thomas Dekker

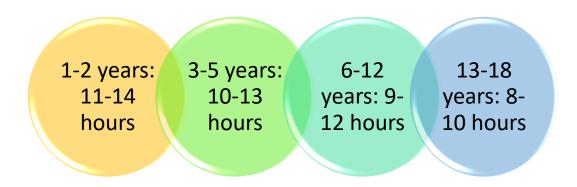
As parents and guardians, we often dream of uninterrupted sleep - something our younger selves took for granted. We crave those extra minutes in bed, savouring the rare moments of rest amidst the chaos of daily life. Yet, while we cherish sleep, many young people resist it as if it were a chore. The irony isn't lost on us! However, the truth is, sleep is just as crucial for them as it is for us- if not more. Ensuring that children develop healthy sleep habits can make all the difference in their physical health, mental well-being, and academic success.

Sleep is essential for young people as it plays a crucial role in their overall health and development. Physically, sleep allows the body to repair and rebuild tissues, strengthens the immune system, and is vital for growth. Without adequate rest, young individuals may experience a weakened immune response and hindered physical development. Beyond physical health, sleep significantly impacts mental well-being. Getting enough rest helps regulate mood, manage stress, and reduce the risk of anxiety and depression. Young people who consistently lack sleep may find themselves more prone to emotional instability and mental health challenges.



Cognitive function is another critical area influenced by sleep. It plays a key role in memory consolidation, learning, and concentration. Well-rested students are better equipped to focus in class, absorb new information, and perform well academically. On the other hand, sleep deprivation can lead to difficulty retaining knowledge and a decrease in overall cognitive performance. Additionally, sleep affects behaviour, as insufficient rest can cause irritability, impulsivity, and trouble regulating emotions. Young people who do not get enough sleep may struggle with mood swings and poor decision-making, impacting their social interactions and daily responsibilities.

So how much sleep does my child really need?



Source: NHS



To promote good sleep hygiene, establishing a consistent sleep schedule is essential. Encouraging children to go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, even on weekends, helps regulate their circadian rhythm. A relaxing bedtime routine can also signal the body that it is time to sleep. Activities such as taking a warm bath, reading a book, listening to calming music, or practicing relaxation techniques can ease the transition into restful sleep. Creating a sleep-conducive environment is equally important. A bedroom that is dark, quiet, cool, and equipped with a comfortable bed can make falling and staying asleep easier.

Limiting screen time before bed is another crucial step in promoting healthy sleep. The blue light emitted from electronic devices can interfere with melatonin production, making it harder to fall asleep. Encouraging a "screen-free" period of at least an hour before bedtime can improve sleep quality. Similarly, avoiding caffeine and sugary drinks before bed is beneficial, as these substances can be stimulating and disrupt sleep patterns. Regular exercise also plays a role in promoting better sleep, but intense workouts should be avoided close to bedtime. Additionally, maintaining a healthy diet by avoiding heavy meals or snacks before bed can prevent discomfort and disturbances during sleep.

Daytime naps should be approached wisely. While short naps can be beneficial for recharging energy levels, long or late-afternoon naps can interfere with night-time sleep. If a child experiences persistent sleep issues, it is important to talk to them about potential stressors or underlying concerns. Seeking advice from a general practitioner may be necessary if sleep problems persist.

Parents play a significant role in shaping their children's sleep habits. By prioritising their own sleep and establishing healthy bedtime routines, parents can model positive behaviours that encourage good sleep hygiene. Creating a supportive environment that values rest will contribute significantly to a child's overall health, well-being, and academic success. By understanding the importance of sleep and making it a priority, young people can develop habits that will benefit them throughout their lives.

A World Health Organisation study found that one in four 11 to 15year-olds in England are not getting enough sleep.

Specifically, 32% of girls and 23% of boys reported insufficient sleep. This lack of rest has been linked to difficulties in concentrating during lessons, with 27% of students feeling too tired to focus.

54% of parents observed their children struggling to concentrate.

30% noted increased arguments within the family.

A study reported by The Guardian found that teenagers spending more than four hours daily on screens are 3.5 times more likely to sleep fewer than five hours at night.

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators DEVELOPING HEALTHY

Quality sleep is paramount for wellbeing as it impacts our cognitive function, emotional balance and overall health. A World Health Organisation study highlighted that 44% of young people reported difficulty sleeping – potentially affecting their mood, concentration and immune system. Our guide offers expert tips for helping children to sleep more healthily.

MINDFUL TECH



EFFECTIVE SLEEP PRACTICES

Offer practical advice on reinforcing certain one practical value of memoral gental habits that have a positive influence on sleeping patterns. Children could start keeping a diary which they add to each evening, for example – or they could use up excess energy by exercising during the day.

HYDRATION **HABITS**

Underline the importance of drinking plenty of water throughout the day, while limiting drinks close to bedtime to prevent disruptions during the night: it's a lot harder to switch off if you keep needing to get out of bed for the toilet.

Avoiding caffeinated drinks later in the day also allows the body and brain to slow down naturally, without any chemicals firing them back up

CONSISTENT BEDTIME SCHEDULE

Assist children in developing consistent bedtime routines that tell the body it's time beduine routines that ten the body it is time to wind down, promoting a more relaxed state. Establish specific activities for young ones right before going to bed — such as brushing their teeth — to set up an association between that action and falling asleep

OPTIMAL SLEEP ENVIRONMENT

Ensure that the bedroom is comfortable, dark and free from distractions, fostering an ideal space for quality rest. The room's temperature should also be suitable for sleeping – that is, not too hot and not too cold – while rooms should be kept as tidy and free of clutter as possible

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 a large secondary school.





The National

RELAXING EVENING

Recommend activities that have a calming effect on the mind – such as reading or gentle stretching – in the lead up to bedtime, to prepare the mind for a peaceful night's sleep. Doing something quiet, relaxing and low in

PRIORITISING ADEQUATE SLEEP

Emphasise the crucial role of sleep in maintaining physical and emotional wellbeing. It's especially important to sustain a healthy sleep pattern during challenging and intensive periods in our lives: during the exam season for children and young people, for instance

NUTRITIONAL BALANCE

Highlight the significance of a healthy, balanced diet – and its role in establishing a more consistent sleep pattern. Try to lean towards preparing meals with plenty of fruit and vegetables, served in reasonable portion sizes: not only is this a fot healthier, but it also reduces the above of facilitate full to be confertable.

PARENTAL SUPPORT

Parents and carers, of course, are uniquely situated to support their children in establishing and maintaining healthy sleeping habits. Parents can review their own sleep habits (incorporating anything from this list that they don't do already) to model a balanced bedtime routine and reinforce the importance of self-care.

10 MILITARY SLEEP

Look up 'the military sleep method'; it's a took up the minitary sleep mentod it is a technique for falling askeep quickly, which incorporates deep broathing exercises. You could encourage children to try it or even use it yourself. While it can take a good deal of practice to perfect, eventually it will start to feel natural - and the results are often extremely

Meet Our Expert



College



PREVENT: OUR DUTY

From the DSL, Rebecca Ingall

I was 12 years old in 2001 when the Twin Towers fell, almost 25 years ago.

Like many others of my generation, I can vividly remember where I was and what I was doing when the news broke: coming home from school to find the television playing the same harrowing footage on a loop—planes crashing into skyscrapers, plumes of smoke billowing across the skyline, and the stunned silence of news anchors struggling to process what had just happened. At that age, I didn't yet have the language to fully understand what I was seeing. That day was the first time I ever heard the word "terrorism," and I had no benchmark by which to measure or comprehend it.



Fast forward only four years, and I was witnessing the first terrorist incident on home soil in my living memory- the 7/7 bombings- just 10 miles from where I lived. Suddenly, terrorism wasn't something happening in another country, thousands of miles away. It was on my doorstep, and it was terrifying.

Skip ahead to 2017, and I found myself standing in front of the entire school during assembly, desperately trying to help our young community process and navigate the horrors of the Manchester Arena bombing and the London Bridge attacks. I could see the same confusion, fear, and helplessness in their eyes that I had felt as a child. It was clear then, more than ever, that these conversations with young people were not just necessary, they were urgent.

Since then, the world has changed dramatically. The threat of terrorism, once something abstract and distant for many in the UK, has become a far more present reality. We have seen not only a rise in international threats but, increasingly, in home-grown extremism, often facilitated and amplified by the internet and social media. Alarmingly, though unsurprisingly, many of those being drawn into extremist ideologies are young people.

According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), terrorism-related arrests involving individuals under the age of 18 in the UK have more than doubled in the past five years.

The Prevent programme (one of the government's key strategies for countering radicalisation) received **6,406** referrals in the year ending March 2022. Of these, over **30**% (1,906 individuals) were **under the age of 20**. Specifically, 15% (approximately 956 individuals) were under 15 years old, a striking reflection of how early vulnerability to extremist ideologies can begin.

Within Prevent, the Channel programme (a voluntary, multi-agency initiative aimed at providing tailored support to individuals at risk of radicalisation) has also seen a significant youth presence. In 2022, **nearly half** (49%) of all cases adopted by Channel involved individuals aged 20 or under, with the largest proportion being **teenagers between 15** and 17- a brutal and stark indicator of how early this vulnerability can begin.

As the Safeguarding Lead at Battle Abbey School, I see it as a critical part of our role to ensure that our students not only understand the world around them, but are also equipped to critically question the messages they encounter, especially online. The Prevent strategy is not about policing thoughts or curbing freedom of expression; it's about early intervention, education, and building resilience. In this article, I want to explore what Prevent means in a school context, how we can approach these sensitive topics with care, and why now- more than ever- it matters.



What is the Prevent strategy?

Prevent is the Home Office,
GOV.UK government strategy designed to
stop people from becoming terrorists or
supporting extremist causes. It is important to
understand that the Prevent strategy covers all types
of radicalisation, terrorism and extremism,
including the extreme right wing, violent Islamist groups,
and other causes.

How does the Prevent strategy apply to Battle Abbey School?

Since July 2015, all schools, including Battle Abbey School, have been required to have a duty to safeguard children from radicalisation and extremism. This means we have a responsibility to protect children from extremist and violent views in the same way we protect them from other dangers such as drugs or gang violence.

At Battle Abbey School:

- We aim to create a safe and supportive environment where pupils feel they can discuss sensitive issues and learn how to protect themselves from harmful influences.
- We actively promote fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs.
- We take steps to protect children from the risk of radicalisation, for example, by using filtering and monitoring systems on the internet to limit access to extremist and terrorist material.
- We assess the suitability of any external agencies or individuals who work with our students to ensure their messages align with our school ethos and do not promote extremist views.
- Our staff are trained to understand the risks of radicalisation and to recognise when a pupil may be vulnerable.

- We have clear procedures for reporting any concerns about a pupil who may be at risk of radicalisation. Staff are aware of the local guidance for reporting radicalisation and extremism. All concerns are recorded using our secure system, MyConcern.
- Where a concern is identified and a referral is made, we will cooperate with the police
 Prevent team and the local 'Channel' programme, which offers voluntary support to individuals who are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Battle Abbey School will have a representative at these meetings.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Isn't my child too young to learn about extremism?

The Prevent strategy is not just about discussing extremism directly, which may not be suitable for younger children. Our approach is **proportionate and age-appropriate**. It also involves **teaching children positive values such as tolerance, mutual respect, and understanding of difference**. Our curriculum includes the social and emotional aspects of learning to support this.

How does Prevent relate to safeguarding?

Safeguarding children from radicalisation is an integral part of our broader safeguarding responsibilities. We have a whole-school approach to safeguarding, and Prevent is embedded within our policies and procedures.

What if I have concerns about radicalisation?

If you have any concerns about your child or another young person, please do not hesitate to contact our Designated Safeguarding Lead, Rebecca Ingall who has had specific training around Prevent, or one of our Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (contact details can be found at the front of this newsletter or our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy). We will discuss your concerns, and work with you on the next steps to access support and guidance.

Further Information

You can find more details about radicalisation and our approach in our **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**, which is available on the school website.

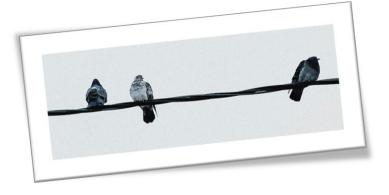
We also have information about spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development and British values in relevant school documentation.

For more information on the Prevent strategy, you may find the following external resources useful:

Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales, HM Government

What is Prevent? Let's Talk About It

East Sussex Safeguarding Partnership guidance



SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD THROUGH PEER RELATIONAL DIFFICULTIES

Friendship fallouts and peer relational difficulties are a common part of growing up. While they can be upsetting for both children and parents, learning to navigate these situations is an important aspect of social and emotional development.

Please note, that should the difficulties or falling out exhibit <u>bullying</u> <u>behaviour</u>, then please get in touch with a member of staff at school who can provide support and report to the relevant teams.

Understanding Your Child's Feelings

The first and most crucial step is to listen to your child and validate their feelings. Avoid dismissing their concerns as trivial or "just a silly argument." For them, this can feel like a significant loss or betrayal. Let them express their sadness, anger, or frustration without interruption.

Helping Them Process the Situation

- **Encourage them to talk about what happened:** Ask open-ended questions like, "What happened that made you feel this way?" or "How are you feeling about this?"
- **Help them identify their role (without blame):** Gently guide them to consider their own actions in the situation. This isn't about assigning blame but about fostering self-awareness and learning from the experience.
- **Emphasise that disagreements are normal:** Explain that friendships can have ups and downs and that disagreements don't always mean the end of a friendship.
- Focus on problem-solving (age-appropriately):
 - o For younger children: Help them brainstorm simple solutions, like saying sorry or taking some time apart.
 - o For older children: Encourage them to think about different ways to communicate their feelings or resolve the conflict.
- **Discuss the importance of empathy:** Help them consider the other person's perspective, even if they don't agree with it.



Knowing When to Intervene (and When Not To):

It's natural to want to fix things for your child, but often the best approach is to empower them to work through the issue themselves. However, there are times when intervention might be necessary:

- Bullying: If the relational difficulty involves repeated harmful behaviour, intimidation, or exclusion, this is bullying and should be addressed by the school immediately. Please contact your child's form tutor, Head of Year, or a member of the Safeguarding Team.
- Significant distress: If your child's emotional well-being is significantly impacted, leading to low mood, anxiety, or changes in behaviour, seek further support (see the article on Self-Harm and Low Mood).

The School's Role:

Our Pastoral Care team is experienced in supporting children with peer relationships. Form tutors and Heads of Year can provide a listening ear, mediate conflicts (when appropriate), and offer guidance to students. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have concerns about your child's social well-being.

Navigating friendships is a learning process. By providing a supportive and understanding environment at home, you can help your child develop the skills they need to build and maintain healthy relationships.



UNDERSTANDING SELF-HARM AND LOW MOOD IN YOUNG PEOPLE

It can be deeply concerning for any parent to suspect their child is struggling with low mood or engaging in self-harm. Mental health and well-being are of paramount importance and understanding the signs and knowing where to seek support can make a critical difference in a young person's life.

"Sara had always known her daughter, Lily, as a bright and cheerful teenager. She loved painting, spent hours chatting with her friends, and always had a book in hand. However, over a few months, Sara noticed small but unsettling changes—Lily no longer wanted to paint, she spent more time alone in her room, and she often wore long sleeves even on the warmest days. At first, Sara thought it was typical teenage mood swings, but when she noticed small scars on Lily's wrists, her heart sank.

Panicked but determined, Sara approached her daughter gently. "I've noticed you've been feeling down lately," she said one evening. "I just want you to know that I'm here for you, and you don't have to go through this alone." Initially, Lily resisted talking, but over time, with patience and support, she opened up about her struggles with anxiety and feelings of self-doubt. With the help of a counsellor and a support network, Lily started on the path to healing. Sara's experience highlights an important truth: early recognition and compassionate intervention can help turn the tide for young people struggling with their mental health."

Understanding Low Mood

It's normal for young people to experience fluctuations in mood. However, persistent low mood that interferes with daily life may indicate a more serious issue. Signs to watch for include:

- Persistent sadness, tearfulness, or irritability
- Loss of interest in activities they usually enjoy
- Changes in appetite or sleep patterns
- Fatigue and lack of energy
- Difficulty concentrating
- Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
- Social withdrawal

Understanding Self-Harm

Self-harm is when someone intentionally damages or injures their body, often as a way of coping with overwhelming emotions. Often, it is attributed to cutting, but it can be any form of injury such as burns, picking, hair pulling etc.

It is not necessarily a suicide attempt but can increase the risk of suicide if left unaddressed. Signs may include:

- Unexplained cuts, bruises, burns, or other injuries
- Wearing long sleeves or trousers even in warm weather
- Secretiveness about injuries
- Withdrawal from social activities
- Changes in mood or behaviour
- Talk of self-hatred or wanting to punish themselves



Myths and facts

Myth: Young people who self-harm are just looking for attention.

 Fact: The phrase 'attentionseeking' dismisses the real reasons causing someone to injure themselves. Consider what's being communicated.

Myth: It's just a phase – they'll grow out of it.

 Fact: Self-harm can affect any person at any age and is not something that only young people struggle with.

Myth: Self-harm is a suicide attempt.

Fact: Self-harm can occur without suicidal ideation. Individuals who self-harm often do not intend to end their lives.
Instead, they are using self-harm to cope with emotions or trauma.

What to Do if You Are Concerned

- Stay Calm and approach with empathy

Reacting with anger or panic can make it harder for your child to open up. Instead, approach them with care, letting them know you are there to support them.

- Listen Without Judgment

Create a safe space for them to express their feelings without fear of criticism. Listen actively and acknowledge their pain.

- Let Them Know They Are Not Alone

Reassure them that mental health challenges are common and that help is available.

- Seek Professional Help.

It's important to seek support from professionals. There are various avenues for professional support, including:

Your GP: A first point of contact for mental health concerns, offering advice and referrals.

NHS 24 Mental Health Hub (III): Available when a GP isn't.

Young Minds Parents Helpline (0808 802 5544): Free, confidential advice for parents.

Samaritans (116 123): A 24/7 helpline for anyone in distress.

SHOUT (text 85258): A 24/7 text support service.

School's Safeguarding and Welfare Team: Schools often have dedicated staff members who can offer support and signpost to external services.

Click on the icons below for local support services











Open up the conversation with your young person: Self Harm | Feelings | Health for Teens

Promote Healthy Coping Mechanisms

Encourage activities that support mental well-being, such as:

Listening to calming music or podcasts

Talking to trusted friends or family members

Deep breathing or relaxation techniques

Limiting screen time and social media use Practising mindfulness or meditation

Setting realistic goals and celebrating small wins Spending time in nature

Maintaining a regular sleep routine

Creative expression (art, music, writing)

Exercise

Volunteering or helping others Engaging in hobbies or learning something new Journaling to process thoughts and emotions Young Minds Mental Health charity also have some downloadable resources for young children to help manage their feelings in a healthy way

stress-bucket-activity.pdf

mindfulness-hand-breathing-andgrounding-techniques.pdf



Family Hub: Parenting courses

The East Sussex Parenting Team offers free online courses and webinars for parents and carers.

These sessions aim to strengthen parent-child relationships and enhance understanding of children's needs across various age groups, from infancy to adolescence.

Topics covered include **positive parenting techniques**, managing challenging behaviours, **online safety**, and supporting children with **additional needs** or anxiety. Furthermore, courses are available to assist with **co-parenting** and **improving communication within couples**.

Click on the link here for more information and to sign up: Family Hubs



FURTHER SOURCES OF SUPPORT FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

Being a Parent or Guardian can be hard. If you feel like you're struggling right now, you're not alone. We've gathered contact information for some helplines, so you know where you can turn to if you need some help.

Supporting family life:

Family Lives (support on any aspect of parenting and family life. Freephone) | 0808 800 2222 | askus@familylives.org.uk | familylives.org.uk

Care for the Family (support with promoting strong family life) | 029 2081 0800 | careforthefamily.org.uk

Mental health:

For you:

Samaritans (free) | 116 123 | jo@samaritans.org | samaritans.org | Mind (calls charged at local and network rates) | 0300 123 3393 | info@mind.org.uk | mind.org.uk

If you're worried about your child:

Young Minds Parents Helpline (free) | 0808 802 5544 | https://bit.ly/3p8kpDp

Domestic abuse:

According to the Office of National Statistics (ONS) about 4.2% of men and 7.9 % of women suffer domestic abuse in the UK during 2018. This equates to about 685,000 male victims and 1,300,000 women. If you find yourself suffering in an abusive relationship. Please note, we are an Operation Encompass school and work in close liaison with Sussex Police to support the children and young people in our setting who may have witnessed domestic violence in the home.

National Domestic Abuse Helpline (free) | 0808 2000 247 | nationaldahelpline.org.uk Men's Advice Line (free) | 0808 8010 327 | mensadviceline.org.uk Galop (free, LGBT+) | 0800 999 5428 | galop.org.uk Safe in Sussex – phone 0330 333 7416

Alcohol, drugs and gambling:

Drinkline (free) | 0300 123 1110

Drinkchat (calls charged at local and network rates) | 0300 123 1110 | bit.ly/2NoQx7T **Frank** (for support around drugs and alcohol. Calls charged at local and network rates) | 0300 123 6600 | talktofrank.com

National Gambling Helpline, run by Gamcare (free) | 0808 8020 | 133 | gamcare.org.uk

Adfam (for families of those affected by drug, alcohol and gambling problems) | find local support on their website: adfam.org.uk

