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Safeguarding Newsletter

Spring Half-Term Two 2025-26



Welcome to the final newsletter of the spring term, which contains information about a new government campaign aimed at supporting parents/carers to have the confidence to approach conversations about online safety with their children.

There is also information about the growing risks of AI, including cheat sheets from Childnet.

The Early Help team have also provided details of parenting drop-in sessions, which many parents have found invaluable when it comes to parenting adolescents.

If you require any further support, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Kind regards,
Ms Jones and the Keep Kids Safe team.

Key Numbers

<p>01925 443322 (Option one, followed by option one)</p> <p>Warrington Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)</p> <p>For urgent safeguarding concerns about a child</p>	<p>01925 444400</p> <p>Out of Office Emergency Duty Team</p> <p>For urgent safeguarding concerns about a child outside of office hours</p>	<p>0808 800 5000</p> <p>NSPCC</p> <p>For adults who are worried about a child</p>
<p>0800 1111</p>	<p>111</p>	<p>999</p>
<p>Childline</p>	<p>Police Non-Emergency</p>	<p>Emergency Services</p>
<p>For children who are worried about their own safety or need some advice</p>	<p>For reporting any crimes or concerns</p>	<p>For anyone in immediate danger (including if you are worried about the immediate risk to a child)</p>



Online Safety - Artificial Intelligence (AI)

AI technology has rapidly become easily accessible to everyone in a relatively short time-frame. Most social media platforms now have some form of AI element to them, and these are readily available for children to use – some children may even use AI technology without even realising. Whilst the use of AI has benefits – as with most things, there are also some risks that must be taken into consideration.

Some examples of AI technologies that children regularly use now include:

- Chatbots with real-time messaging (e.g. the 'My AI' chatbot on Snapchat).
- Generative AI which produces images, writing, music etc.
- Deepfake technology which can produce realistic images/videos.
- Online search summaries.

The risks associated with these technologies, can include children unknowingly being exposed to misinformation, manipulation, cyberbullying, radicalisation and online sexual abuse. It is important that children are taught about these risks and how to report something if they see something that makes them uncomfortable.



‘You Won’t Know Until You Ask’

In February, The Department for Science, Innovation, and Technology launched the ‘You Won’t Know until You Ask’ campaign, which aims to give parents/carers the tools and the confidence to know how to approach conversations with their children about the content they see online.

The resources include advice on how to build critical thinking skills in children in order for them to be able to better identify harmful content including misinformation, extremist ideologies, conspiracy theories and deepfakes. They provide parents/carers with examples of reflective questions that you can ask to further understand content they have seen, for example “how do you think this was supposed to make you feel?”

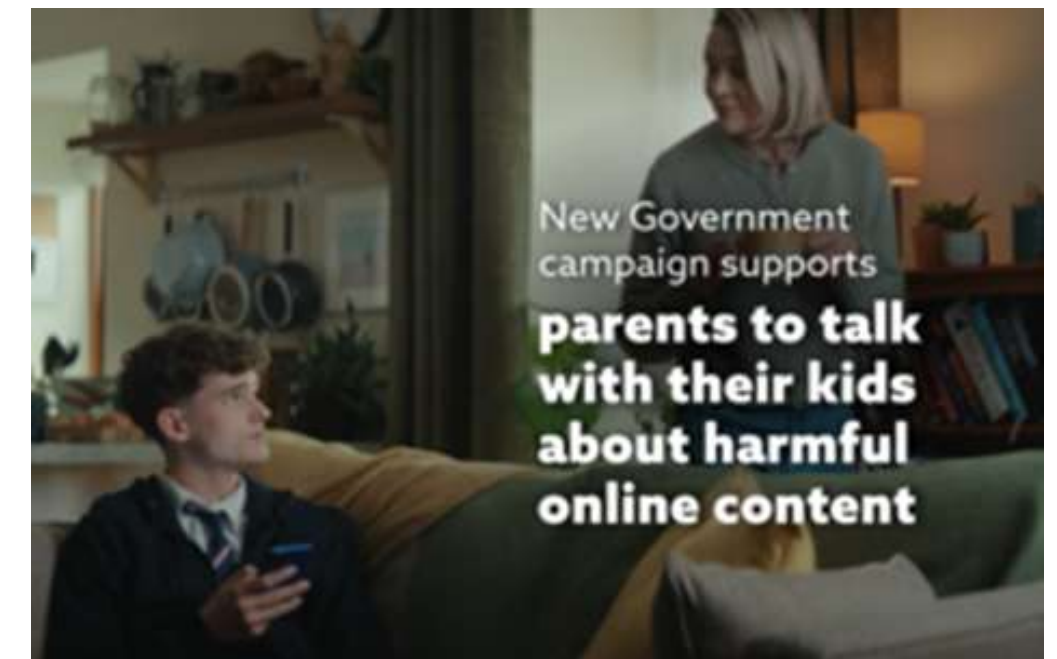
The campaign also includes guidance around parental controls, and information about how parents/carers can support their child to develop healthy online habits. Further information is provided in the links below:

[Online safety: how to get started](#)

[Find the right questions to talk with your child about toxic online content](#)

[How to start talking to your child about being safe online](#)

[Parental controls](#)





Exam Stress

GCSE exams are rapidly approaching, and this will therefore be a nerve-racking time for our year 11 students. Understandably, stress and anxiety levels are likely to be high, however we want all of our children to be able to manage this in a healthy way, where they still manage to maintain a work-life balance and practice self-care.

Qwell have provided a useful guide for parents, advising how to support your child through this stressful time. The guide may also be useful to parents of children in other year groups, who may also be sitting assessments/mock exams in school.

If you feel as though your child requires additional support for their mental health, please do not hesitate to get in touch.



Supporting your child through exam stress

This article was written by a Qwell mental health writer and contains mentions of the following: exams, stress, relaxation, pressure

It's coming up to that time of the year that many students dread: exam season. Whether it's coursework, assessments, or exams, this can be a really overwhelming period for students, and many are understandably stressed.

As a parent, it's natural for you to want to make this time easier for your teen. And whilst you don't need to be a science whiz or an English tutor, there are some things that you can do to support, encourage, and motivate your child during this time.



How does exam stress manifest?

Exams and assessments have a level of uncertainty around them. For many people, these tests might be (or feel like) the way to unlock new opportunities or career paths, so carry a lot of weight. Many also feel pressure from outside sources, such as family or society, to do well and highly achieve. Exams can also clash with other life stressors, making this time extra challenging.

Stress is a natural response to this uncertainty and pressure, and it can actually be helpful. The stress response can improve oxygen flow to the brain, which can result in increased focus, energy, and awareness. This level of stress can often be a good motivator for those going through exams, encouraging young people to meet deadlines or prepare.

However, some levels of stress can also be harmful: for example, if someone experiences a bout of extreme stress, or if someone experiences prolonged stress (also known as chronic stress). Here are some of the signs and symptoms of unhelpful stress to look out for in your teen:

- Tiredness
- Irritability or trouble focusing
- Headaches or frequent illness
- Expressing negative thoughts
- Withdrawing from regular activities such as socialising
- Changes in sleeping or eating patterns

How to support your child during exam season

1) Ask, don't assume

Every person responds to and experiences stress differently, and there is no-one-size-fits-all solution. For instance, some teens might need a good hug and someone to talk to, whereas others might need some space and flexibility with other responsibilities.

Don't be afraid to ask your child what support they would like.

It's also important to not assume that the stress they are feeling is down to exams. Whilst exams may contribute, there can often be overriding

factors making stress harder to handle. Make sure you take some time to ask how they are doing, allowing your child space to talk about whatever is on their mind, whether it's exams or not. Just knowing that you are there to listen and that there is a safe space to talk (whenever they are ready) can often help with breaking down stress in others.

2) Be their biggest supporter, not their coach

You understandably want to give your child the best chances and ensure that they fulfil their potential.

While this is great, it can often be easy to slip into the trap of telling your child how you think they should be preparing - for instance, how, when, or where you think they should be revising. Everyone has different methods of working, and if your child works better alongside others, later in the evening, with music, or by doing flow diagrams, then try to encourage and trust them to do this, even if it's not how you would approach work.

You can still be there to provide logistical support if they want it, such as helping set up a revision schedule or providing lifts to the library, but try to practise allowing your child to be autonomous and independent. Pressuring or bribing into certain ways of working is unlikely to lead to your child to be fully focused or highly motivated. In fact, it can actually make them feel much more overwhelmed, with research showing that parental pressure is a leading cause of stress around exam season.

If you are worried about your teen's working levels, try to gently encourage them by enhancing their intrinsic motivation - talk to them about their goals, ask what they enjoy studying the most, and chat about why their exams are meaningful to them. This, coupled with understanding and working through any worries or barriers to studying, can really motivate students to put in the time and effort - however works for them.

3) Give practical support

One of the most helpful ways a parent can support their child is by ensuring they have everything they need to feel prepared and to optimise the conditions for learning. The exam season can often be a time where it can be easy to neglect basic

healthy habits, so having you on hand to support this can be really useful.

This could involve:

- Providing snacks and meals
- Being flexible with any other responsibilities, such as chores or clubs
- Making time for treats and breaks
- Encouraging a good sleep routine
- Suggesting a walk outside
- Providing lifts, if you can
- Supporting their preferred working environment the best you can

Some of these tips will vary depending on the age of your child. For instance, younger children may need more support with food and sleep, whereas older children may not want this input. Be sure to ask your child if you're unsure!

4) Keep yourself calm

Exam season can be an unsettling time for the whole family, not just the person going through it. You might have some of your own worries or feel stressed on behalf of your child, and that's really understandable.

However, children often mirror the behaviour of their parents. If you display that you are concerned or distressed about their exams or work, it reinforces any worries your child might have, and they will be more likely to feel that way, too.

Instead, having a calm and reassuring approach and letting your child know that you'll be there for them no matter what can really help to boost their confidence and self-esteem. They're also likely to feel more comfortable coming to you for advice in the event that something does go wrong, or when they need support with something. For some tips on keeping yourself calm, take a look at how grounding can help you.

5) Work to develop relaxation techniques

Especially before exams, your child might need some support with relaxing and handling their nerves. Feeling calm and composed (with a little bit of helpful stress) can help your child perform at the best of their ability, whereas feeling very overwhelmed during the exam can make it difficult

to concentrate and think clearly. How your child calms their nerves before an exam is ultimately down to their individual preference. You could suggest:

- Adopting some breathing techniques
- Listening to music, a podcast, or a grounding meditation
- "Brain dumping" their worries and thoughts, or knowledge on the assessed subject, to help organise thoughts, declutter their mind, and help with overthinking
- Developing an exam morning routine to ensure they are prepared
- Moving or getting outside

After an exam or big assessment, it can also be a great stress reliever to chat and debrief with your child (if they want to do this). Discussing the exam and their feelings towards it can help settle any worries and provide reassurance. When they are ready, try to move on from talking about it, as it is no longer in their control. Some people really benefit from taking a break after an exam to do something nice and totally unrelated to working.

6) Contact professional support if needed

Whilst stress is normal around exam season, do not hesitate to reach out for professional support if you are concerned about your child's stress levels. You might want to encourage them to visit the GP, or signpost them to Kooth, a digital mental health platform where they can access 1:1 support, self-help resources, and many articles and podcasts.

*All names are pseudonyms used to protect anonymity.

Would you like a safe space to explore the issues raised in this article?

At [Qwell.io](https://www.qwell.io), you can read more, use an online journal, chat with our community and access confidential and anonymous support - all for free, with no waiting lists.

[qwell.io](https://www.qwell.io)



Holidays and Food Programme (HAF)

Bookings for the HAF programme over the Easter holidays are now open. Places on the scheme are available free of charge to children aged 5-16 who receive benefit related free school meals.

There are spaces available at a reduced rate for those children that are not eligible for benefit related free school meals.

Each local programme will provide healthy meals, allow kids to get active, help them learn new things, make friends and have fun. To book your child's place, please visit:

<https://www.warrington.gov.uk/haf>

HAF
Holiday Activities and Food

Children on
benefit related
free school meals...

Can book fully funded activities
over the Easter holidays!

[warrington.gov.uk/haf](https://www.warrington.gov.uk/haf)

WARRINGTON
Borough Council

Department
for Education



Parenting Drop-in Sessions

Parenting adolescents can be both rewarding and challenging: at times it can feel as though you don't know what to do for the best and that every conversation is a battle.

The Early Help team regularly hold friendly parenting drop-in sessions at various locations, which offer a relaxed, informal space where parents/carers can talk openly about the ups and downs of raising teenagers. Whether you're looking for practical ideas, reassurance, or simply a chance to share experiences with others who understand, the team are there to support you.

These sessions are completely non-judgemental and supportive. There is no expectation to share more than you feel comfortable with; you can listen, ask questions, or just have a chat. Staff will be on hand to offer guidance on topics such as communication, boundaries, wellbeing, and supporting young people through the changes of adolescence. No appointment is needed – you can just drop in when it suits you. The sessions will explore ways to strengthen relationships, build confidence in your parenting, and support your teenager as they grow. Details of times/locations are as follows:



**FAMILY
HUB**



Parenting Drop In

No need to book, just turn up at the days/times below

3rd Mon of the Month	4th Tue of the Month	2nd Wed of the Month	1st Thurs of the Month
Barnes Close Family Hub WA5 1SB	Youth Hub WA2 0JF	Admirals Road Family Hub WA3 6QG	Tinsley Street Family Hub WA4 1RE
9.30am-11.30am	1.30-2.30pm	2-3pm	10am-11.30am
On the Following Dates: 12 th Jan 16 th Feb 16 th Mar 20 th Apr 18 th May 15 th Jun	On the Following Dates: 27 th Jan 24 th Feb 24 th Mar 28 th Apr 26 th May 23 rd Jun	On the Following Dates: 11 th Feb 11 th Mar 13 th May 10 th Jun 8 th Jul	On the Following Dates: 8 th Jan 5 th Feb 5 th Mar 7 th May 4 th Jun 2 nd Jul

Generative AI

Giving parents and carers everything they need to know about online issues, including insights and experiences direct from young people.

What is generative AI?

AI systems are designed to complete tasks and solve problems that in the past would have needed human thinking. Generative AI (genAI) allows us to ask AI to create things for us, such as photos, music, emails, and recipes. GenAI is able to work with and process vast amounts of information to complete the task it is set. GenAI can be found on many different platforms, apps and websites.



Where are young people using genAI for?

- Asking questions
- Studying and revision
- Getting advice
- Planning
- Coding
- Being creative through art or music
- For ideas and inspiration
- Drafting messages and emails
- Analysing data



One of our youth board members loves to use GenAI to answer random questions that pop into their head

What do young people like about genAI?

- Easy to use
- Can be accessed on many platforms
- Explains and breaks down complex information
- Offers them a different way to learn
- Can create a range of things
- Gives freedom to ask questions without judgement from another person

What strategies do young people use to keep themselves safe when using genAI?

Lots of young people we speak to are aware of some of the challenges of using genAI and are already finding ways to keep themselves safe. For example:

- Fact checking information they received from genAI using other sources
- Being aware that content they see online may be created by genAI and how this could impact what they see
- Using clues like unusual language in text, and strange shadows or glitches in pictures and videos
- Actively looking at other people's opinions in the comments to see if it is reliable
- Not clicking on any links in messages they suspect to be sent by genAI
- Looking for genAI labels on content they view

What are young people's concerns about genAI?

- How much they can trust the information it provides
- It can be used to create scams, deepfakes or nude images
- Being falsely accused of using genAI in their school work
- Concern about bias in some information that genAI provides
- Using genAI might limit their own skills and creativity
- Other young people using it to write their homework or essays and taking the credit
- Replacing human connections and interactions

Key term explainer: Deepfakes

A deepfake uses genAI to create images or videos that show something that never happened. For example, a real person saying something that they never said, often very realistically. These can be created to bully and harass people and can include pornographic images. Celebrities are often the victims of deepfake images and videos.



How can you help?

Talk

- Talk to your child about genAI. Ask if they are using it or would like to. Discuss how they may be using it and the positives of using AI but also make them aware of how they can use it safely
- Talk about the difference between talking with GenAI and people. Remind your child that genAI cannot experience emotions, empathise or understand the nuances of a situation, so there's always a place for talking to a person, whether that is a trusted adult or a medical professional
- Remind your child that genAI tools may collect data they enter, so they should think carefully about what they are sharing with it

Research

- Research the age rating for genAI platforms your child wishes to use
- Be aware of any policies your child's school has for genAI and support your child to follow them
- Be aware that genAI technology is developing rapidly and work together to help keep your child up to date with signs that something has been created using genAI

Support

- Remind your child that genAI can be a useful tool to help inspire them or to start a task, but they should also use their own ideas in anything they create
- Young people tell us they may turn to genAI to learn about a topic without judgement, so do remind your child that they can always reach out to you or other trusted adults for support
- Help your child understand that not all the content they see online will be true and how they can check information they see using different sources
- Help your child to report any content that worries or upsets them

"I have experienced many teen girls crying because boyfriends dumped them with AI. At 17/18, young love is important, and it's not right to get dumped in that way. I have really pushed up some of my emails using AI, for emailing CEOs but I would never dump a partner. Social interactions need to be protected." Anna, 17



Talking about GenAI with your family

Top tip - Try to keep the conversation positive but if something concerning does come up please visit our [help page for parents and carers](#).

Explore

Have you heard of generative AI or genAI?
What do you think genAI does?
What do people use genAI for?
Would you like to use genAI?
Have you ever used genAI? If so, which ones?

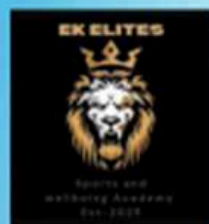
Discuss

How do you think genAI works?
What do you think about genAI?
Do you trust genAI?
How could we test how trustworthy genAI is?

Examine

What would you use genAI for?
Is there anything you would not use genAI for? Why?
What are people better than genAI at?





Delivered in partnership with
EK Elites & More than Men



FREE SPORTS

DROP IN SESSIONS

We cover a variety of sports, each week, so there's always something new to try.



TUESDAYS 3.30PM-4.30PM

at Valiant Close Basketball Court

TUESDAYS 5PM-6PM

at Sutton Trust Games Area

WEDNESDAYS 3.30PM-4.30PM

at Valiant Close Basketball Court



Try a different sport each week in a relaxed, fun environment.
Everyone welcome!

