

Keeping Your Daughter Safe

This leaflet is designed to help you keep your Daughter safe.

It offers useful Information and Advice on Online Safety, Domestic Violence, Abusive Relationships, Gangs, Alcohol, Drugs and Child Sexual Exploitation including websites and phone numbers.

Please take the time to read it and visit the websites or call the advice lines if needed. If you would rather talk to someone in school, please call 0121 464 8346 and ask for the Head teacher: Mr N Jones, the Designated Safeguarding Lead: Mrs K Southall or your Daughter's Head of Year.

Online Safety for your Daughter



The more you know about the kind of social networking sites your child belongs to and what information they like to share, the more likely you'll be able to keep them safe:

Stay involved and updated

- Make sure you talk and stay interested in what your Daughter is doing. Don't be afraid to bring up challenging issues like sexting, pornography and cyberbullying. It could be embarrassing, but you'll both benefit from the subjects being

out in the open. The most popular social networks include [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), [Twitter](#), [Tumblr](#), [Ask.fm](#) and [Snapchat](#).

Keep their information private

- Set privacy settings on social networking sites so that only close friends can search for them, tag them in a photograph or share what they've posted. Information shared between friends can be easily copied and may spread widely.

Stay safe on the move

- Use safe settings on all mobile devices but be aware that if your child is accessing the internet using public WiFi, filters to block inappropriate content may not be active. Some outlets, like McDonald's, are part of family friendly WiFi schemes.

Be responsible

- The lower age limit for most social networking sites is 13 years. Talk to your daughter about being responsible when they're online as they often feel they can say things online that they wouldn't say face-to-face. Teach them to always have respect for themselves and others online. Not everyone your child meets online will be who they say they are.
- Chatrooms and forums are one of the places that online groomers go to make connect with children. They can also be places where people use a lot of sexual language and engage in online flirting. This is sometimes done through video chat programs such as Skype.

Talk about online reputation

- Let them know that anything they upload, email or message could stay around forever online.
- Remind them they should only do things online that they wouldn't mind you, their teacher or a future employer seeing.

Adjust controls

- Think about adjusting your parental controls to match your Daughter's level of maturity. Have a chat about it with them.

Don't give in

- Remind them how important it is not to give in to peer pressure to send inappropriate comments or images. Point them to the Send this instead and Zipit apps which will help them deal with these types of requests.

Alcohol and Young People



More and more young people are choosing not to drink alcohol or are waiting until they are older. However, those who do drink are drinking a lot more than 10 years ago. For some of them, “drinking alcohol” may equal “getting drunk.”

Drinking alcohol can be seen by young people as a solution to problems. It can give them confidence or simply make them forget about what was worrying them.

Some good reasons why teens should not drink:

You want your child to avoid alcohol: Clearly state your own expectations about your child's drinking. Your values and attitudes count with your child, even though she may not always show it.

To maintain self-respect: Teens say the best way to persuade them to avoid alcohol is to appeal to their self-respect. Give them examples of how alcohol might lead to embarrassing situations or events – things that might damage their self-respect or alter important relationships e.g. Postings or photos on social media.

Better exam results: Drinking once or twice a week has been associated with scores around 20 points lower at GCSE (equivalent to 3 grades, or the difference between an A and a D in one subject); and drinking on most days may mean 80 points lower scores (equivalent to 13 grades) (National Centre for Social Research 2010).

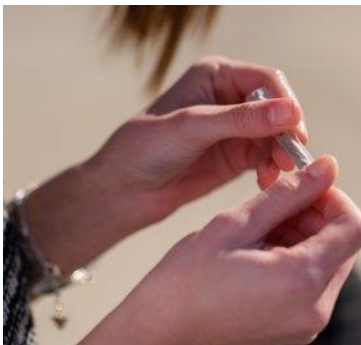
Agree rules and boundaries around alcohol

- You may feel there's little point in having rules and boundaries, they'll only break them – it's what teenagers do! But in fact we know that while kids push against rules they feel safer having them, and they do pay attention. If you've talked them through your expectations and agreed boundaries with them, they 'buy in' and feel the rule is theirs to keep.
- Rules can be very useful for them to quote at friends – “No thanks, I would join in, but my parents/carers will make life hell for me if I do so I'll give it a miss.”
- Help them to see they can say 'no' to alcohol. You could show your child how to avoid being pressured to do something by being assertive. The best way to learn is to talk it through with you, to practise how to turn down things they should be allowed to refuse.
- Drinking with friends often happens because kids are bored and have little else to do. If they're busy with exciting or interesting activities such as reading, playing games, getting in touch with friends or taking part in sport then they won't have time to be bored.

Knowing and welcoming their friends

- If children think their parents/carers don't like their friends then they are not likely to spend time with them at their home. But that could then lead to not parents knowing where they are, who they are with or what time they will be home.
- Of course they want privacy and independence. Consider offering them the chance to spend time with their friends on their own at home, you may be surprised how eagerly they take it up. Welcome their friends, where appropriate, but always drop by their room to see if they're OK.

Drugs and Young people



Drugs - what are the signs?

To avoid making assumptions or worrying unnecessarily, it can be useful to be able to recognise the signs that your child may be taking drugs.

The following changes in behaviour or appearance could be a sign that something is wrong. However - even if you think you've noticed some or all of these signs, it's important not to jump to conclusions. It may not mean that your child is taking drugs - it could just be part of the usual growing up phase as your teenager comes to terms with new hormones, new responsibilities and a new identity.

- Your child may start asking you for money, or cash could start going missing with no indication of what has been bought.
- You may find unusual equipment lying around the house, such as torn cigarette packets, small sealable bags or empty aerosols.
- They may experience a lack of appetite or you could notice sores or rashes around the mouth or nose.
- Your child may experience mood swings, start staying out late, or begin socialising with new friends.
- They may appear drowsy, lack motivation and lose interest in their personal appearance.
- If you're worried, the best thing to do is have a calm, open talk with your child, making sure to listen to whatever they have to say. Try not to be emotional or judgemental as this could ruin your chance to have an honest conversation.

If you discover that your child is taking drugs

- Don't panic: Although you may have a strong emotional reaction, shouting at your child is not going to help.
- Stay calm, don't just fire questions at them - make sure that you're listening to what your child has to say. Being able to communicate with your child will help to prevent and limit the problems caused by drug misuse.
- Be supportive: If your child is taking drugs, you need to understand why. They may be being bullied or feeling stressed about school. Make it clear that you're there for them and are willing to help them with any problems they're having.
- Do your homework: There are lots of myths and misconceptions around drugs which may cloud your judgement. Until you're well informed, you'll be unable to offer your child sound advice. [FRANK's information on drugs](#) and [Adfam's resources](#) on how families can be affected by drugs will help provide you with the tools you need to manage a difficult conversation.

Domestic Violence – the facts

- 2 women are killed every week in England and Wales by a current or former partner (Office of National Statistics, 2015) – 1 woman killed every 3 days
- 1 in 4 women in England and Wales will experience domestic violence in their lifetime (Crime Survey of England and Wales, 2013/14)
- On average, a woman is assaulted 35 times before her first call to the police (Jaffe, 1982)
- 20% of children in the UK have been exposed to domestic abuse (Radford et al. NSPCC, 2011)
- In 90% of domestic violence incidents in family households, children were in the same or the next room (Hughes, 1992)
- 62% of children in households where domestic violence is happening are also directly harmed (SafeLives, 2015)



It might not always be obvious if what's happening at home is domestic abuse. But if somebody in your family uses bullying or violence to get another adult to do what they want, that's domestic abuse.

It can include:

- Physical violence - Like hitting, kicking, punching, pushing, hair-pulling.
- Threats - This includes threatening to hurt you, another person in your family, a pet or threatening to stop money for food or bills.
- Sexual violence - Making another person do something sexual when they don't want to, or making someone watch sexual material on the internet or television.
- Controlling someone's finances - This includes not allowing somebody to spend their own money or not giving them money for basic things such as food, nappies for babies, or clothes.
- Controlling someone's life - This could include stopping someone from going to work or school.
- Cultural or 'honour' violence - This includes being hurt or abused as a punishment for something that's not seen as culturally acceptable by your community or family. It can include being forced to marry someone.

Effects of domestic violence on children

Living in a home where there's domestic abuse is harmful. It can have a serious impact on a child's behaviour and wellbeing. Parents or carers may underestimate the effects of the abuse on their children because they don't see what's happening.

Children witnessing domestic abuse is recognised as 'significant harm' in law.

The effects can last into adulthood, but once they're in a safer and more stable environment, most children are able to move on from the effects of witnessing domestic abuse.

The physical, psychological and emotional effects of domestic violence on children can be severe and long-lasting. Some children may become withdrawn and find it difficult to communicate. Others may blame themselves for the abuse. All children living with abuse are under stress.

That stress may lead to the following:

- Aggression or bullying
- Withdrawal
- Tantrums
- Vandalism
- Problems in school, truancy, speech problems, difficulty learning
- Attention seeking
- Nightmares and Insomnia
- Bedwetting
- Anxiety, depression, fear of abandonment
- Feelings of inferiority/worthlessness
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Eating disorders
- Constant colds, headaches, mouth ulcers, asthma, eczema

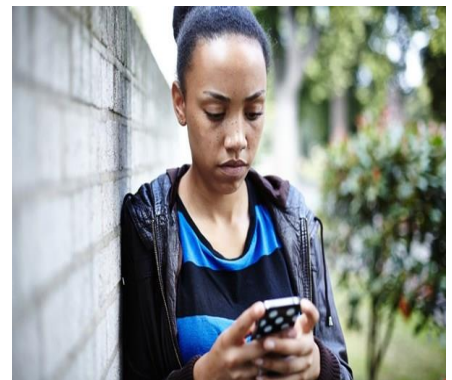
Witnessing or experiencing domestic violence represents one of the most serious risks to children in our society.

If your daughter has a boyfriend or girlfriend, are under 16 and are being abused or abusive, this is relationship abuse.

Relationships Abuse & Young People

You're daughter will have lots of relationships throughout their life, and while they'll often be great experiences, you might also find that they're in a relationship that's unhealthy or abusive. The word 'abusive' can mean lots of different things, and it might not always be obvious that this is what's going on.

Abusive relationships of any kind are **NOT** normal or acceptable. Everyone has a right to be safe and respected, and should always take action if you feel like you're being mistreated.



Most common forms of abuse in relationships:

- **Emotional abuse** - In young relationships, this is the most common kind of abuse. A partner might insult them, manipulate them or humiliate them, particularly in front of their friends.
- **Verbal abuse** - Yelling, name-calling, swearing or threatening is also common in young relationships. Recent research reveals that up to 40% of teenage girls have been verbally abused by a partner.
- **Controlling behaviour** – Includes monitoring your texts or Facebook messages, creating rules about what they can or can't wear, or dictating how they should spend their time. If you think they are being treated in this way, they might feel they are losing a sense of independence and start making decisions based on their partner's reaction.

- **Physical and sexual abuse** – Though less common, they may experience physical violence or assault. This could include being hit or pushed over, being or feeling forced into sex or being touched intimately without consent.
- It is common for young people to feel ashamed about what has happened, and they might be scared of their partner's reaction if they find out they've told anyone. **Unfortunately, it is also very natural for those in abusive relationships to convince themselves that their partner's behaviour is acceptable or that they are in the wrong. This isn't true.** Everybody has the right to be treated with love, care and respect.

CSE – Child Sexual Exploitation



It is important to know that most children do not encounter child sexual exploitation, but if your child is affected it is important to know it is not your fault and you are not alone. There are many organisations that can help you and your daughter. CSE can be hard to identify and a change in behaviour in a young person may often seem like normal teenage behaviour. But for some, these could be the signs of something far more serious. By being aware of some of the warning signs below you can help stop abuse. Any combination of the following may be an indication that something is wrong and you need to get help or report it.

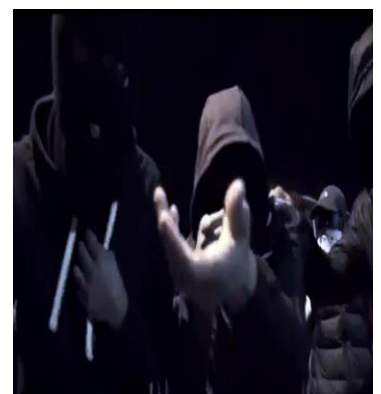
- Skipping school - Staying out late or staying out overnight without explanation - Drop in school performance - Disengaged from family, friends and other support networks
- Change in appearance - Or dressing in a more sexualised way - Always tired or sleeping at unusual times
- Being secretive - Unexplained money or gifts, including mobile phones, which they couldn't normally afford - New or unexplained relationships with older people, having an older boyfriend or girlfriend
- Signs of physical abuse – Bruising on their arms and body, mood swings – Being more aggressive towards others
- Self harm, such as cutting or eating disorders, regularly using drugs or drinking alcohol

It's not always easy to know what young people are up to and abusers can be very clever in their manipulations. A young person may feel they are in a loving relationship, while perpetrators will often seek to break the bond between the child and their family.

Gangs - Why young people become involved with gangs

A group of young people is not necessarily a gang. Young people often find safety in numbers by staying with a particular group of friends, and usually avoid trouble. Knowing what a gang is and how it is classified can be useful for parents who are worried about their child.

There are lots of reasons why young people feel pressured to join gangs.



They might be bored and looking for excitement or feel attracted to the status and power it can give them. They might join due to peer pressure, money or family problems. Gang membership can also make a child feel protected and that they belong.

What is a gang? A group may be classed as a gang if it:

- has a name, has a defined territory, uses symbols shown in tattoos or graffiti
- uses a specific colour, particularly in clothing, uses specific hand gestures or signs

A person can be identified by the police as a gang member if he/she:

- admits membership to a group which meets the criteria of a gang, is identified by a reliable informant as a gang member
- lives in or frequents a gang's area and adopts its style of dress or other signs – or associates with known gang members
- has been arrested in the company of identified gang members for offences consistent with gang activity.

Being a member or in association with a particular group of people is not illegal in itself – however, gangs are often linked to criminal activity, so it can be useful to recognise certain types of behaviour and signs that your child may be involved in gang-related crime. We have listed some of the more common signs below.

- Withdrawing from the family, being increasingly secretive or vague about their whereabouts, activities or friends, a new nickname
- Loss of interest in school, changes in behaviour reported by the school, dropping positive activities like sports
- Unexplained extra money or new possessions such as clothes, trainers, jewellery, computers / games, mobile phones, dressing differently, perhaps in a particular style or colour
- Staying out late without permission, unexplained physical injuries
- Using tags or graffiti on books and possessions, using hand signals or code to speak with friends

What can parents/carers do to keep their children safe from gangs?

- Understanding the issues, recognising the signs and getting further help and support if you need it. Talk to your child openly – ask them questions and listen to what they have to say without making direct accusations.
- Set clear boundaries around what is acceptable behaviour and what is not. Remember that they are growing up in a different time from you, facing unique challenges. Discuss their hopes and aspirations as well as their fears and worries. Praise them for their achievements.
- Take an active interest and involvement in your child's life. Talk to them about their school work and their personal interests. Get to know their friends, and their friends' families.
- Know about the social networks your child uses. Most of the time, using social media is harmless. However, it's important to be aware that gangs do sometimes use these sites to organise their activities.

We pride ourselves in helping our pupils grow into successful and happy young women by supporting them through their school years both academically and pastorally. Parents/carers have an important role in helping to build resilience and confidence in their children. The greater a young person's self-esteem, the greater their ability to bounce back from difficult situations

If needed, below are some ways you can help build your daughter's resilience and self-esteem?

- By always showing you love them even when you're not happy about their behaviour.
- By helping them learn they can overcome difficulties.

- By praising them when they do try hard and encouraging them to do their best, whatever.
- By having rules and routines, a 'can do' attitude and by encouraging strong connections with family and friends and by listening to and respecting them.

When children see themselves as capable of solving problems they develop resilience and good self-esteem.

Useful websites and helplines

Childline 0800 1111

NSPCC 0800 800 5000

PAUSE Mental Health (previously CAMHS) 0300 300 0099

Contact the 24-hour National Domestic Violence Freephone Helpline on 0808 2000 247

If you or you think someone you know might be in an abusive relationship you can call the number for advice and support - **Family Lives helpline on 0808 800 2222.**

www.seeme-hearme.org.uk/parentsandcarers

www.forwardthinkingbirmingham.org.uk/services/13-pause

www.mentoruk.org.uk/information-and-advice/parents-and-carers/

www.familylives.org.uk/advice/teenagers/behaviour/gangs/

www.youngminds.org.uk/

www.drinkaware.co.uk/advice/underage-drinking/how-to-prevent-underage-drinking/

www.youngminds.org.uk/Helpline

www.mind.org.uk/

www.familylives.org.uk/advice/teenagers/drugs-alcohol/

www.nspcc.org.uk

www.drinkaware.co.uk

www.familylives.org.uk/advice/teenagers/drugs-alcohol/underage-drinking/

www.internetmatters.org/advice/

www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents

www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/staying-safe-away-from-home/gangs-young-people/