

Holmer C. E. Academy—Safeguarding Newsletter

Issue 2 - October 2023



The Safeguarding team.
If you have any concerns
about a child's welfare
or safety, please speak
to a member of the
schools safe- guarding
team



Jayne Maund Designated
Safeguard Lead



Anna Keating Deputy
Designated Safeguarding Lead



Rachel Anderson
Deputy Designated
Safeguarding Lead

Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome to the second edition of our parent safeguarding newsletter.

Safeguarding children is the action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Every single person who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play.

It was wonderful to see many of you at our well-being afternoons last week. This month's newsletter focuses on mental health and wellbeing and how we can support children and how we can work together to support them.

At Holmer, we believe Mental Health and Wellbeing is how we feel, think and act. It determines how we handle stress, manage relationships and make choices. It is important to all of us, at every stage of our lives from childhood through to adulthood.

Any questions, please do ask.

Jayne Maund

Head Teacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead

Spotlight on: What is Mental Health?



We all have mental health. Mental health is about our feelings, our thinking, our emotions and our moods. Looking after our mental health is important. We all have 'small' feelings every day. These are sometimes strong and overwhelming, whether happy or sad, but they go away before too long. Sometimes we experience 'big' feelings which are strong and overwhelming for a longer period of time. They stop us doing what we want to in our lives.

How can I help my child's mental health?

1. Make conversations about mental health a part of normal life. Anywhere is a good place to talk: in the car, walking the dog or cooking dinner together. Model every day talk about this for example by talking about a TV or book character's feelings.
2. Give your full attention. We all know it's horrible to be half-listened to. Keep eye contact, focus on the child and ignore distractions.
3. Check your body language. Try to keep it open and relaxed and make sure you come down to the child's level.
4. Take it seriously. Don't downplay what the child is saying or tell them they're 'just being silly'. Resist the urge to reassure them that 'everything is/will be fine'.
5. Ask open questions. These will help extend the conversation.
6. Calmly stay with the feelings that arise. It can be our automatic reaction to steer away from difficult emotions.
7. Offer empathy rather than solutions. Show that you accept what they are telling you but don't try to solve every problem.
8. Remember we are all different. Respect and value the child's feelings, even though they may be different from yours.
9. Look for clues about feelings. Listen to the child's words, tone of voice and body language.
10. Some ways to start a conversation about feelings might be: "How are you feeling the moment?" "You don't seem your usual self. Do you want to talk about it?" "I'm happy to listen if you need a chat."

Ten more ideas proven to help anxious children:



Quiet Hugs: Help your child feel safe by reassuring them that you are there and willing to help. Words can sometimes exacerbate anxiety so sitting quietly with lots of cuddles and empathising can often work better.

See your calm space: Remember a time when you were happy, calm and peaceful. See it in your mind with as much detail as possible. Always use the same calm place to enhance the effect.



5x5 Grounding: See 5 things, hear 4 things, touch 3 things, smell 2 things and taste 1 thing.



Draw your anxiety: Draw a picture of what you are worried about.



Blow bubbles: Research has shown that taking 10 deep breaths resets the automatic nervous system and helps to calm the amygdala in the brain. Blowing bubbles is a great way to get a child to blow deep breaths. Party blowers or a straw and balled up paper offer other ways to do the same.

Pet a furry friend: Research has shown that petting an animal reduces the heart rate and calms the body. Sitting for 10-15 minutes petting a furry friend is a wonderful way to relieve anxiety and bring some smiles to a child.



Jumping Jacks: Anxiety often causes shallow breathing. Asking your child to do an exercise forces them to take deep breaths that can reset the anxious feelings.

Remember past success: Encourage your child to think about the last time they overcame their anxiety. Remind them that they can do this, even though it may be hard.

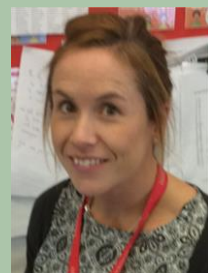


Problem solve the fear: Help your child talk through what solutions could be used if their fear were to come to fruition. Knowing they can handle the worst, can help calm the fear.

Destroy the worry: Have your child write their anxiety on a piece of paper, then tear it up and throw it away.



Zoe Jackson
Deputy Safeguarding Lead



Katie Thomas
Deputy Safeguarding Lead

Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub
(MASH)

To speak to the team - [\(01432\) 260800](tel:01432260800)

To email the team
- cypd@herefordshire.gov.uk

Emergency Duty Team

[\(01905\) 768020](tel:01905768020)

(out of hours number for when
MASH are unavailable)

Social media and online gaming can also have a detrimental affect on children's mental health And well being. Always supervise your child and be aware of what apps and games they are playing, what sites they are visiting and who they are interacting with online. For guidance on how to set parental controls on TVs, devices, games and apps please visit:

[Parental Controls booklet 2023 \(primarysite-prod-sorted.s3.amazonaws.com\)](https://primarysite-prod-sorted.s3.amazonaws.com/Parental%20Controls%20booklet%202023.pdf)



A screenshot of a Facebook post. The post header reads "Anyone who wants to tag along is more than welcome" with a timestamp of "12:00 AM". Below the text is a video thumbnail showing a boat on water. Underneath the video are two profile pictures of women, each with a play button icon and a timestamp of "12:00 AM".

AGE RESTRICTION
16+



What parents need to know about

WhatsApp

Since May 2018, the minimum age for using WhatsApp is 16 years old if you live in the European Union, including the UK. Prior to this, the minimum age was 13, which still applies for the rest of the world. WhatsApp has not yet stated whether it will take action against anyone aged between 13 and 16 who already hold accounts under the old terms and conditions, such as closing their account or seeking parental permission.

Occasionally on WhatsApp, people receive spam messages from unauthorised third parties or from fraudsters pretending to offer prizes to 'lucky people', encouraging recipients to click on a link to win a prize. A common scam involves messages warning recipients that their WhatsApp subscription has run out with the hope that people are duped into providing their payment details. Other scam messages include instructions to forward the message in return for a reward or gifts from WhatsApp or another person.

WhatsApp has been linked to enabling the spread of dangerous viral rumours. In India, for example, a number of attacks appear to have been sparked by false rumours shared on WhatsApp.

Cyberbullying is the act of sending threatening or taunting text messages, voice messages, pictures and videos, with the aim to hurt and humiliate the receiver. The group chat and group video call features are great for multiple people to chat simultaneously, but there is the potential for people to hurt others with their comments or jokes. The 'only admin' feature gives the admin of a group chat greater control over who can send messages. Whilst this can be good for one-way announcements, the group admin has the power to block somebody from responding to an offensive message in a chat, which could result in a child being upset and unable to reply.

To start a chat in WhatsApp, you need to know the mobile number of the contact you want to speak to and they also need to have the app downloaded. WhatsApp can find contacts by accessing the address book of a device and recognising which of those contacts are using WhatsApp. If your child has shared their mobile number with some-body they don't know, they can use it to get in touch via WhatsApp.

WhatsApp's 'Live Location' feature enables users to share their current location in real time to their contacts in a chat, allowing friends to assess their movements. The feature, which can be found by pressing the 'attach' button, is described by WhatsApp as a 'simple and secure way to let people know where you are'. Location-sharing is already a common feature on other social apps, including Snapchat's Snap Map and Facebook Messenger and can be a useful way for a child to let loved ones know they are safe. However, if your child is in a group chat with people they do not know, they will be exposing their location.



**National
Online
Safety**

Top Tips for Parents

Even though somebody would need your child's phone number to add them as a contact, as an extra security measure we suggest altering their profile settings to control who can see their profile photo and status. The options to choose from are 'Everyone,' 'My Contacts' and 'Nobody.' We suggest selecting 'My Contacts' or 'Nobody' to ensure their profile is protected.

If your child has received spam or offensive messages, calls or attachments from a contact, they should block them. Messages and status updates sent by a blocked contact will not show up on the phone and will stay undelivered. Blocking someone will not remove this contact from the contact list - they will need to be removed from the phone's address book. To block a contact, your child needs to open the person's chat stream and tap on the settings.



Advise your child not to tap, share or forward any message that looks suspicious or sounds too good to be true. When your child receives a message from an unknown number for the first time, they will be given the option to report the number as spam directly inside the chat. They can also report a contact or a group as spam using the following steps: 1) Open the chat. 2) Tap on the contact or group name to open their profile information. 3) Scroll to the bottom and tap 'Report Spam'.

If your child is part of a group chat that makes them feel uncomfortable or has been added to a group they don't want to be part of, use the group's settings to show them how to leave. If someone exits a group, the admin can add them back in once. If they leave again, they cannot be added again.

If your child needs to use the 'Live Location' feature to share with you or a friend, advise them to only share it for the amount of time they need to. WhatsApp gives the options of either 15 minutes, one hour or eight hours. However, your child can choose to stop sharing at any time.

If your child has sent a message to the wrong chat or if a message they sent has contained a mistake, they can delete it. To do this, simply tap and hold on the message, choose 'Delete' and then 'Delete for everyone.' The app allows seven minutes to delete the message after it has been sent, but it is important to remember that recipients may have seen and screenshot a message before it was deleted.

A 2017 study found that by the age of 14 the average child will have sent more than 35,000 texts, 30,000 WhatsApp messages and racked up more than three solid weeks of video chat. Although it is inevitable that your child will use technology, you can still set boundaries. This is not easy, especially since teens use their devices for both schoolwork and free time, often simultaneously.

