

THE APPLETON SCHOOL



Safeguarding Newsletter - Summer term

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we approach the end of the academic year, we want to thank you for your continued partnership in keeping our students safe. The summer holidays bring well-deserved rest, but they can also introduce new safeguarding challenges for teenagers.

Please review this newsletter for vital updates, practical tips, and support resources to help ensure a safe, happy summer for your child.

1. Online Safety & Screen Time

With more free time, students naturally spend more hours online.

- **The Risk:** Increased exposure to inappropriate content, online grooming, and cyberbullying.
- **Action for Parents:** Review privacy settings on apps like TikTok, Snapchat, and Instagram. Keep gaming consoles in communal family spaces.
- **Our Advice:** Agree on daily screen-free times, especially in the hour before bed, to support mental wellbeing.

Quality sleep is essential for children's growth and development. A decent night's sleep will help them to do better at school, allow them to react more quickly to situations, have a more developed memory, learn more effectively and solve problems, plus it will make them less susceptible to colds and other minor ailments, less irritable and better behaved!

Sleep deprivation causes increased hyperactivity and other behavioural problems, as well as damaging physical and mental development. Poor sleep habits from an early age can lead to long term sleep problems.

There are so many different factors which can affect children's sleep which you can read about at:

<https://thesleepcharity.org.uk/information-support/children/>

2. Community Safety & Peer Influence

Warmer weather and lighter evenings mean teenagers spend more time socializing outdoors.

- **The Risk:** Peer pressure can lead to risky behaviors, including vaping, underage drinking, or trespassing in dangerous areas like derelict buildings or open water.
- **Action for Parents:** Always know who your child is with, where they are going, and when they will be home.
- **Our Advice:** Talk openly about how to say "no" to peers, and establish a "no-questions-asked" emergency plan if they ever feel unsafe and need a ride home.

3. Mental Health & Wellbeing

The break from school routines and peer networks can sometimes lead to feelings of isolation or anxiety.

- **Signs to Watch For:** Significant changes in sleeping patterns, eating habits, or withdrawal from family activities.
- **Action for Parents:** Encourage regular sleep schedules and physical activity. Check in regularly with open-ended questions like, "How are you feeling about the summer break?"

4. Key Summer Safety Reminders

Water Safety: Remind your child never to swim in quarries, rivers, or lakes. Stick to lifeguarded beaches or public pools.

Vaping and Substance Awareness: Be vigilant about local trends regarding illegal vapes or substances targeted at young people.

Where to Get Help During the Holidays

School staff will not be monitoring emails regularly over the summer. If you have immediate concerns about a child's safety, please use the following resources:

- **Emergency Services:** Call **999** if a child is in immediate danger.
- **Local Children's Social Care:** [Insert Local Authority Phone Number/Link]
- **NSPCC:** Call 0808 800 5000 or email help@nspcc.org.uk for advice on protecting children.
- **Childline:** Students can call 0800 1111 or visit childline.org.uk for free, confidential support.
- **Shout:** Text "SHOUT" to 85258 for 24/7 mental health crisis support via text.

Thank you for your dedication to our school community. We wish you and your family a safe, restful, and enjoyable summer break. We look forward to welcoming students back in September.

Warm regards,

Mr Stockdale

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Mental Health and Wellbeing

We know the last few years have been challenging for our young people. We thought it would be useful to signpost additional support that is available for those who need it.

Useful Websites:

NSPCC: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

Childline: <https://www.childline.org.uk/>

Self harm: <https://www.selfharm.co.uk/>

Youngminds: <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-a-z-mental-health-guide/self-harm/>

CAMHS: <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/>

Kooth: <https://www.kooth.com/>

Families can listen to these podcasts produced to help parents and carers understand mental health problems in young people

<https://www.annafreud.org/parents-and-carers/child-in-mind/>

NHS: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/getting-help-for-domestic-violence/>

MindCare@Appleton

This page has been thoughtfully crafted with your needs in mind, offering practical strategies and valuable resources to support your physical, emotional, and psychological well-being.

Here, you'll discover strategies, tips, and insights to cultivate a healthy and balanced lifestyle. Whether it's dealing with stress, managing emotions, or finding ways to stay active and positive, we've got you covered.

It's also a place to access essential resources and information shared for significant wellbeing events that matter to our Appleton community. Whether it's exam preparation, or wellness campaigns, you'll find timely updates and helpful resources right here.

Remember, your well-being is of utmost importance, and we are committed to providing you with the tools and knowledge you need to flourish. Together, let's make Appleton a place where every student shines brightly!



E-safety

The online world is a wonderful place for young people to explore, with unprecedented opportunities for learning and creativity. But just like the real world there are risks and dangers they should be aware of, and which we can act to protect them from. Although the academy teaches students e-safety as part of the curriculum, it is vital that parents are aware of the risks too, and what they can do to develop a culture of e-safety in the home.

This page has some helpful resources for parents that will enable you to help your child stay safe online. If you have any concerns about your child's e-safety, there is always someone at the academy who is available to talk to you. Simply call the school and ask for our Safeguarding Officer, Steven Stockdale, or speak to any member of staff. Our e-safety policies can be found at:

https://www.theappletonschool.org/user/pages/08.legal-information/07.policies/ICT_and_Internet_Acceptable_Use_Policy.pdf

https://www.theappletonschool.org/user/pages/08.legal-information/07.policies/Online_Safety_Policy.pdf

Monitoring online activity

We monitor students' use of the internet by using filters and monitoring systems (SENSO/SMOOTHWALL). SENSO is monitoring software that can monitor a wide range of devices. It monitors against an inbuilt library of keywords and phrases organised into categories with each one given a default severity rating. SMOOTHWALL filters any inappropriate searches/content.

The library is developed in partnership with a number of charities and specialist organisations within law enforcement and child protection. The programme monitors both online and offline material and recognises inappropriate or harmful content, words and phrases.

A screen shot (known as a 'capture') plus other details is taken of every incident triggered, showing what was displayed at the time, who was involved and when the incident took place. This information is shared with the DSL and Headteacher, allowing staff to implement further actions or interventions as required.

Think You Know

The [Think You Know website](#) is created by the police for parents of children at secondary school. It contains useful information about:

- what children are doing online
- how to talk to children about what they are doing online
- what risks your child might face
- what tools are there to help them stay safe.

Think You Know have also produced a [Parents Guide to E-Safety](#) and also the following booklets to provide parents/carers with helpful information on how to explore and monitor their children's apps.

- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [Kik messenger](#)
- [Snapchat](#)
- [WhatsApp](#)
- [YouTube](#)

Drugs networks ('County lines')

The National Crime Agency, the UK body charged with fighting organised crime, is very concerned that crime gangs are taking over drug networks using telephone hotlines (called 'county lines') and recruiting vulnerable people, often children, to act as couriers and to sell drugs. Please see our [information sheet about 'county lines' and 'cuckooing'](#) the practice whereby professional drug dealers take over the property of a vulnerable person and use it as a place from which to run their drugs business. Below you will see some web links to various campaigns and research on county lines.

<https://www.fearless.org/en/campaigns/county-lines>

<https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-is-county-lines>

<https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/what-we-do/crime-threats/drug-trafficking/county-lines>

https://crimestoppers-uk.org/about-the-charity/who-we-work-with/trusts-and-foundations/county-lines?qclid=EAlalQobChMIq_v24_Wx4wIVRbDtCh2tlwY-EAAYAyAAEqL-ufD_BwE

Other useful resources

[List of helpful online resources](#) produced by Childnet

www.childnet.com – Visit the 'Know It All' Section for an interactive guide about online safety

www.getsafeonline.org – Free up-to-date security advice

www.cybermentors.org.uk – Online support for children

www.ceop.police.uk – Website of the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/professionals-online-safety-helpline> - resources for professionals working in the area of safeguarding with children and young people, but could be of interest to parents too.