



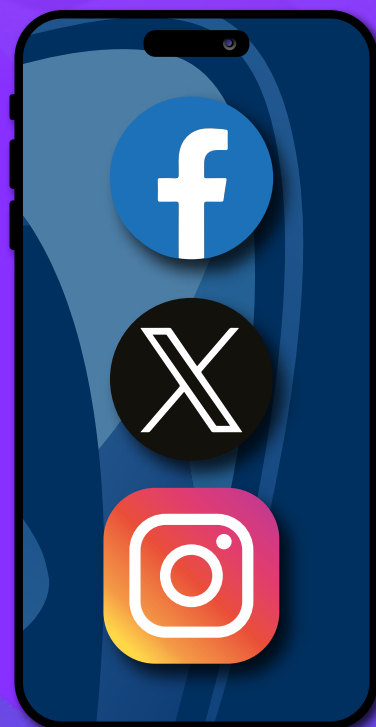
"Be The Best You Can Be"

Safeguarding Newsletter

2026/26

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Welcome to Our Term 6 Safeguarding Newsletter

As we move into the final week of the school year and look ahead to the summer holidays, we know this can be an exciting time for children and families alike. Longer days, greater independence, time with friends, and increased use of technology can all bring new opportunities, but also new challenges when it comes to keeping children safe.

At school, safeguarding remains at the heart of everything we do, and we believe that working together with parents and carers is the best way to support our young people as they grow and navigate the world around them.

In this edition, we have included information and guidance on several important topics, including:

- Understanding County Lines and how young people can be vulnerable to exploitation
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and recognising the warning signs
- Managing challenging conversations with teenagers and building open communication at home
- Recognising signs of self-injurious behaviour
- Keeping children safe over the summer holidays, both online and in the community
- “Do you know where your children are?” — encouraging awareness of whereabouts, friendships, and online activity
- Charlie's Promise - [Understanding the Work of Charlie's Promise](#).

We understand that some of these topics can feel difficult or worrying. Our aim is not to alarm, but to empower families with knowledge, practical advice, and reassurance that support is available whenever it is needed.

Contextual Safeguarding: Understanding County Lines

Keeping children safe is a shared responsibility between families, schools, and the wider community.

One area parent's may hear about is “county lines” activity. County lines is a form of criminal exploitation where organised groups use children and young people to transport drugs or money from one area to another. Young people can be targeted online, in public spaces, through friendships, or by older individuals who appear trustworthy.

Children may be exploited even if they do not realise it themselves. Grooming can involve gifts, money, phones, clothing, promises of friendship, or threats and intimidation.

Signs a young person may be at risk
While these signs do not always indicate exploitation, parents & carers may notice:

- Sudden changes in behaviour or friendships
- Unexplained money, gifts, or new possessions
- Going missing from home or school
- Increased secrecy around phones or social media
- Travelling to unfamiliar areas
- Declining school attendance or engagement
- Signs of anxiety, fear, or physical injury



How parents can help

- Keep open, non-judgemental conversations with your child
- know who their friends are and where they spend time
- Encourage safe online habits and monitor social media appropriately
- Report concerns early, seeking advice does not mean a child is in trouble

Remind children they can always ask for help without fear of punishment
Need support or advice?

If you are worried about a child's safety or exploitation, please contact the school safeguarding team. You can also seek advice from:

- NSPCC
- Childline
- Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership

By working together and staying informed, we can help keep children safe in our communities.



What is Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)?

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of abuse where a child or young person is manipulated, pressured, or forced into sexual activity in exchange for something they may want or need, such as attention, affection, money, gifts, alcohol, drugs, status, or a sense of belonging.

CSE can happen to any young person, regardless of gender, background, or circumstances. Exploitation often takes place through relationships where a child believes they are being cared for or understood. Increasingly, grooming and exploitation can also happen online through **social media, gaming platforms, messaging apps, and live streaming.**

How Grooming Can Happen -Those exploiting children may:

- Offer gifts, money, phones, or lifts
- Give excessive attention or affection
- Encourage secrecy from parents or carers
- Isolate young people from friends or family
- Use threats, intimidation, or emotional manipulation
- Contact young people online through fake profiles or group chats

Signs Parents/Carers May Notice - Every child is different, but some possible warning signs can include:

- Sudden changes in mood or behaviour
- Becoming secretive about where they are going or who they are with
- Spending more time online or hiding online activity
- Receiving unexplained gifts, money, or expensive items
- Having older friends or relationships
- Frequently staying out late or going missing from home
- Changes in school attendance, behaviour, or academic performance
- Increased anxiety, anger, or low mood
- Using sexual language or behaviour that seems inappropriate for their age
- Returning home upset, withdrawn, or under the influence of alcohol or drugs

How Parents Can Support Their Teenager

- Keep communication open and calm, even during difficult conversations
- Show interest in your child's online life, friendships, and activities
- Encourage your child to speak to a trusted adult if something worries them
- Avoid judgement — young people are more likely to seek help when they feel listened to
- Remind them that healthy relationships are based on respect, trust, and consent

- Monitor devices and privacy settings appropriately for your child's age

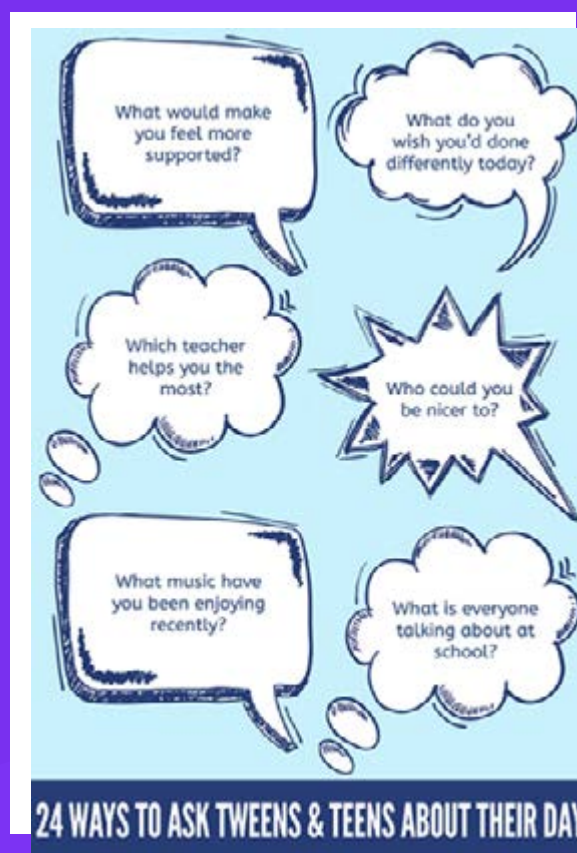
Where to Get Help

If you are worried that a child may be at risk of exploitation, speak to the school safeguarding team for advice and support. You can also contact:

- NSPCC
- Childline
- Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership

Seeking advice early can make a significant difference in keeping young people safe.

Managing Challenging Conversations with Teenagers



A Practical Guide for Parents and Carers

The teenage years can bring huge changes for young people and their families. As teenagers become more independent, conversations about friendships, relationships, online safety, boundaries, and risk-taking behaviours can sometimes feel difficult or uncomfortable.

While these discussions may not always be easy, open and supportive communication is one of the strongest protective factors for young people.



Recognising the Signs of Self-Injurious Behaviour

Every parent worries that they might not recognise when their child is struggling. It is important to remember that many behaviours seen during adolescence are a normal part of growing up and do not necessarily indicate that a young person is self-harming or experiencing significant emotional distress.

Teenagers often become more self-conscious as they develop. They may seek more privacy, spend more time alone, become more independent, or experience changes in mood. These behaviours can be entirely typical.

However, if you notice several of the signs opposite, or you are concerned that your child is not themselves, it is worth starting a gentle conversation and seeking advice if needed.



If you are unsure, please contact our pastoral team at pastoralhub@abbeyschoolfaversham.co.uk. We are here to help.

What is self-injurious behaviour?



Self-injurious behaviour is any behaviour that causes intentional harm to a person's body. This may include self-harm such as cutting, burning, or scratching the skin, as well as behaviours associated with emotional distress, including disordered eating, excessive exercise, skin picking, or repeatedly interfering with wound healing.



Young people may engage in these behaviours as a way of coping with overwhelming emotions, emotional pain, anxiety, stress, or feelings that they find difficult to express. **It is important to remember that self-injurious behaviour is often a sign that a young person is struggling.**



In an emergency

If you believe your child is in immediate risk of serious harm, call 999 or attend your nearest A&E department immediately.



You know your child best. Trust your instincts. Reaching out can make a real difference. We are here to listen. We are here to help.



What to look out for

The following signs do not necessarily mean that a young person is self-harming, but they may indicate that they are struggling emotionally:



Noticeable changes in mood, such as increased sadness, irritability, anxiety or anger.



Becoming withdrawn or isolated from family and friends.



Losing interest in activities they previously enjoyed.



Becoming unusually secretive or protective of their privacy.



Avoiding mealtimes or showing changes in eating habits.



Sudden or unexplained weight loss or weight gain.



Hiding food, wrappers or evidence of binge eating.



Wearing long sleeves, trousers or hoodies in hot weather, or covering arms and legs more than usual.



Unexplained cuts, burns, bruises or scratches, or frequent explanations for injuries.



Keeping sharp objects or other items that could be used to cause injury without an obvious reason.



Spending unusually long periods alone, particularly in bedrooms or bathrooms.



If you are concerned

If you are worried about your child, you are not alone and support is available.

Our pastoral team can provide advice and support. Please contact us at pastoralhub@abbeyschoolfaversham.co.uk.

Additional support is available through:



Kooth – www.kooth.com



Your GP



NHS 111 for urgent medical advice



Tips for Positive Conversations

Choose the right moment- difficult conversations are often more successful when they happen naturally and calmly rather than during conflict or confrontation. Car journeys, walks, or everyday activities can provide opportunities for relaxed discussion.

Listen more than you speak-Teenagers are more likely to engage when they feel heard.

Try to:

- Stay calm and avoid interrupting
- Ask open questions such as "What do you think about that?"
- Show interest without immediately judging or criticising

Stay calm, even if you feel worried- young people may avoid talking if they fear anger or punishment. Remaining calm helps create trust and encourages honesty, even when conversations are challenging.

Avoid lectures-short, honest conversations are often more effective than long discussions. Teenagers are more likely to switch off if they feel they are being lectured.

Talk regularly about online life-For many teenagers, online relationships and experiences are a major part of daily life.

Ask about:

- Social media and messaging apps
- Online friendships and gaming
- Privacy settings and location sharing
- What to do if something online makes them uncomfortable

Creating regular conversations about online safety helps normalise seeking support.

Set clear but reasonable boundaries-Teenagers still need boundaries, even when they seek independence. Clear expectations around curfews, device use, communication, and safety can help young people make safer choices.

Focus on safety, not punishment-If a teenager makes a mistake or takes a risk, try to focus first on their wellbeing and safety. Young people are more likely to ask for help when they know they will be supported.

Helpful Conversation Starters-Sometimes starting the conversation is the hardest part. You could try:

- "What do young people your age worry about most?"
- "Have you ever seen anything online that made you uncomfortable?"
- "What would you do if a friend was in trouble?"
- "Do you feel safe when you're out with friends?"

Remember...

Teenagers may not always show it but knowing there is a trusted adult who will listen, support, and guide them can make a huge difference.

If you are concerned about your child's wellbeing, online activity, friendships, or safety, please contact the school safeguarding team for advice and support.

Additional support and advice can also be found through

- NSPCC – Talking to Your Teenager
- YoungMinds
- Internet Matters

Keeping Children Safe over the Summer Holidays



The summer holidays are an exciting time for young people, with more independence, time outdoors, and opportunities to socialise with friends. However, with less structure and supervision, it is important that children and teenagers understand how to stay safe both online and within the community. Open conversations, clear boundaries, and knowing where your child is spending their time can help reduce risks and keep young people safe over the summer break.

Water Safety: Lakes, Rivers, Creeks and Open Water

Warmer weather can lead young people to gather around lakes, rivers, creeks, reservoirs, and coastal areas. While this may seem harmless, open water can be extremely dangerous.

Children and teenagers should be reminded:

- Never to swim in unsupervised open water
- Water can be much colder and deeper than expected
- Strong currents, mud, hidden debris, and sudden drops can cause serious accidents
- Avoid jumping or diving into unknown water
- Never enter water under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Always stay with friends and seek help immediately in an emergency

Railway and Track Safety

Railway lines and tracks may appear tempting as shortcuts or meeting places, but they are extremely dangerous.

- Please remind young people:
- Never to walk on or near railway tracks
- Trains can approach quietly and travel at very high speeds
- Overhead power lines can cause serious injury or death
- Trespassing on railway property is illegal and highly dangerous

Unsupervised Gatherings and Parties

During the holidays, young people may attend gatherings without adult supervision. While many social events are harmless, unsupervised situations can increase risks around:

- Alcohol and drug use
- Peer pressure and unsafe decision-making
- Exploitation or anti-social behaviour
- Personal safety when travelling home

Parents and carers can help by:

- Knowing where their child is, who they are with, and how they will get home
- Agreeing check-in times and expectations
- Encouraging young people to contact home if they feel unsafe or uncomfortable
- Making sure teenagers know they can ask for help without fear of immediate judgement

Drugs and Alcohol

Teenagers can be exposed to drugs or alcohol through peers, social gatherings, or online influence. Alcohol and substances can affect judgement, increase vulnerability, and place young people at greater risk of accidents, exploitation, or harm.

Regular, calm conversations about the risks of drugs and alcohol can help young people make safer choices and feel more confident saying no.

Derelict Buildings and Building Sites

Empty buildings, abandoned sites, and construction areas can attract young people looking for places to gather or explore. These environments can contain:

- Unsafe structures
- Broken glass and sharp objects
- Hazardous materials
- Uncovered drops or unstable flooring
- Fire risks

Young people should be reminded never to enter derelict buildings or building sites, even with friends.

Fire Safety

Warmer evenings and unsupervised gatherings can increase the risk of accidental fires.

Please remind children and teenagers:

- Never to light fires in parks, fields, woodland, or open spaces
- BBQs and disposable grills can quickly spread fires, especially in dry weather
- Aerosols, lighters, and fireworks can be extremely dangerous
- Deliberate fire setting is illegal and can have devastating consequences

Using Technology to Help Keep Young People Safe- “Do You Know Where Your Children Are?”



During the holidays, young people may attend gatherings without adult supervision. While many social events are harmless, unsupervised situations can increase risks around:

As teenagers become more independent, many parents and carers understandably worry about where their children are, who they are with, and whether they have arrived safely at their destination. Location-sharing apps and family safety tools can help families stay connected and provide reassurance — particularly during the summer holidays when young people may spend more time out with friends or travelling independently.

These apps are not about spying or over-parenting. Used openly and positively, they can simply help families:

- Know children have arrived safely
- Support teenagers travelling independently
- Help in emergencies or if plans change
- Encourage trust, communication, and safety

It is important that any location-sharing is discussed openly with young people so they understand it is being used for safety and support, not control.

Popular Family Safety and Location Apps Used in the UK

- [Life360](#) - A family location-sharing app that allows users to see when family members arrive at or leave locations, share journeys, and contact each other easily.
- [Find My \(Apple\)](#) - Built into Apple devices, allowing family members to share their live location with trusted contacts.
- [Google Family Link](#) - Helps parents manage devices, monitor screen time, and locate children's Android devices.

- [Microsoft Family Safety](#) - Offers location sharing, screen time monitoring, and driving safety features for families.
- [WhatsApp Live Location](#) - Allows users to temporarily share live location with trusted contacts directly through chats.

Tips for Using Location Apps Positively

- Be honest and transparent about why you are using them
- Agree boundaries and expectations together
- Focus on safety rather than constant monitoring
- Respect teenagers' growing independence and privacy
- Encourage young people to communicate if plans change

Technology should never replace conversations and trust, but when used appropriately, it can provide reassurance and help families feel more connected and safe.

Online safety advice

With the summer holidays approaching, many children will be looking forward to spending more of their free time online and for lots of children that means playing online games.

Online games can be a brilliant way for children to have fun, connect with friends and build confidence, but it's important they know how to play safely and understand the rules of the spaces they're in.

Internet Matters offer free guidance to help you support your child with online gaming, including how to understand community rules, avoid warnings or bans, and start positive conversations about the games, apps and videos they enjoy.



"What game are you playing at the moment?" Sometimes, the simplest questions start the most important conversations.

Internet Matters have partnered with Ukie to create a free Conversation Guide to help parents and carers turn everyday chats about games, videos, and apps into opportunities to talk about online safety with your child.

Ask about Games also offers guides to hundreds of online games, to help you find the games that are the perfect match to the age and interests of your family.

How to help your child avoid warnings and bans in games

Neurodivergent children can really benefit from playing online games, whether it's through connection with others, improving their communication skills, self-regulating, or simply having fun.

However, just like any other online space, there are community guidelines to follow. Sometimes, neurodivergent children find these rules challenging to understand.

Check out Internet Matters' useful tips to help neurodivergent young people avoid being reported or banned when they're playing games online.

Understanding the Work of Charlie's Promise Assemblies Delivered by Martin Cosser

Following the recent assemblies delivered by Martin Cosser, Father of Charlie Cosser to our Year 8 and Year 9 students, we would like to share some important information with parents and carers around knife crime and the impact it can have on young people, families, and communities.

The assemblies were delivered in a sensitive and age-appropriate manner and focused on raising awareness, encouraging positive choices, and helping students understand the real-life consequences of carrying knives or becoming involved in violence. The aim was not to alarm young people, but to promote open conversations, informed decision-making, and safer communities.

Charlie's Promise is a UK charity established following the tragic death of 17-year-old Charlie Cosser, who was fatally stabbed at a party in West Sussex in July 2023. The charity was created by Charlie's parents, Martin and Tara Cosser, who pledged to use Charlie's story to educate young people about the devastating impact of knife crime on families, friends, schools, and communities. (Charlie's Promise)



The charity works with schools, police services, and community organisations to raise awareness of the realities and consequences of carrying knives. Through education and open discussion, Charlie's Promise encourages young people to make safer choices, seek support when they feel unsafe, and understand that carrying a knife does not increase protection — it increases risk. (crimestoppers-uk.org)

Why Is Knife Crime a Concern?

Knife crime remains a significant concern nationally and locally, particularly amongst young people. Many teenagers report carrying knives because of fear, peer pressure, social influence, exploitation, or a belief that it offers protection.

However, carrying a weapon greatly increases the likelihood of serious injury, criminal consequences, or loss of life. (Kent Police)

Schools and safeguarding professionals are increasingly aware that some young people may become vulnerable through:

- Peer pressure and social status
- Fear of violence or intimidation
- County lines and criminal exploitation
- Social media influence and online conflicts
- Exposure to violence within communities

Education plays a vital role in prevention. Charities such as Charlie's Promise help young people understand the lifelong impact knife crime has on victims, families, and communities, while also encouraging positive choices, emotional resilience, and safer ways to seek support. (Charity Register)

Parents and carers are encouraged to keep open conversations going with young people about friendships, safety, peer pressure, and who they can speak to if they ever feel worried or unsafe.

Wishing You a Safe and Happy Summer

As we reach the end of another busy school year, we would like to thank all parents and carers for your continued support throughout the year. We hope you and your families enjoy a restful, happy, and safe summer break, with plenty of opportunities to relax, spend time together, and make lasting memories.

While we encourage our young people to enjoy their independence and social time over the holidays, a little extra awareness, communication, and support can go a long way in helping to keep everyone safe.

We look forward to welcoming students back refreshed and ready for the new academic year in September. Have a wonderful summer from all of us at school.

Mental Health Support

For immediate assistance regarding mental health support and resources, please refer to the following organisations:

- [Home - Kooth](#)
- [YoungMinds](#)
- [Shout](#) - Text "SHOUT" to 85258 for 24/7 support
- [Qwell](#): If you are an adult requiring mental health
- [Kent Resilience Hub](#)

If you have any urgent concerns for a young person (self harming/attempted suicide) please take directly to A&E and request Crisis Team or 999

For financial/ cost of living difficulties

- [Citizens Advice](#)
- [Faversham Foodbank](#)

For support around domestic abuse

- [SATEDA](#)
- [Refuge](#)
- [Oasis Domestic Abuse Service](#)

For support with homelessness or housing issues

- [Porchlight](#)
- [Shelter England](#)

If you have urgent child protection concern please contact:

[Kent Children's Portal](#) or call 03000 411111

Or call 999 and report to Kent Police.

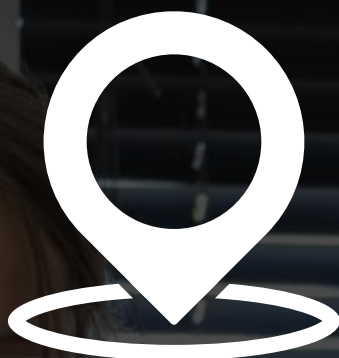


NO EXCUSE FOR ABUSE

At The Abbey School, we strive to create a **safe and secure** environment for the school community. Our school is a **welcoming and inclusive place** where we all show one another respect and look out for each other.

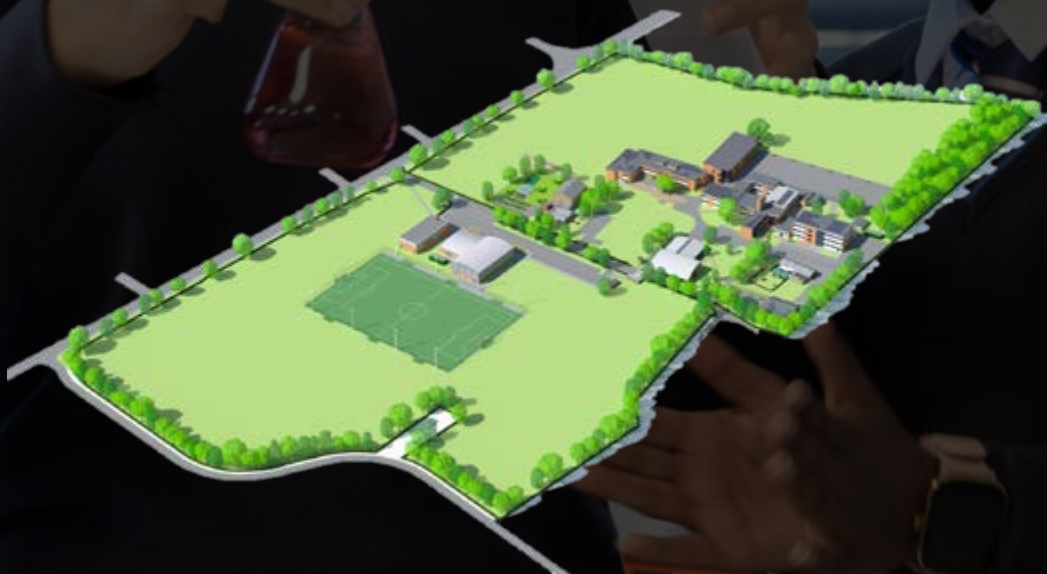
We will not tolerate any **threatening, abusive or violent** behaviour and action will be taken when necessary.





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