

Latest Advice and Information for Parents, Students and Staff 2023 Autumn Term Edition

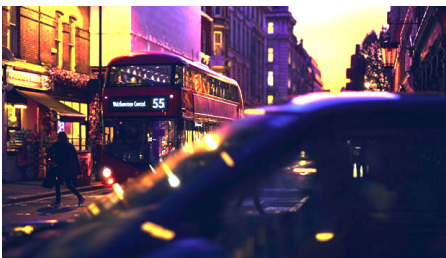
Welcome to the first edition of Safeguarding News of the new academic year. The aim of this newsletter is to highlight some of the current themes, provide the latest advice and guidance and to link to resources that we can all use in keeping students safe.

I'm Mr Hart, the Designated Safeguarding Lead for our school. Working with me I have a highly trained team of Designated Safeguarding Officers that students can raise any concerns with.

Click [HERE](#) to go to the page on our website where you can find our Safeguarding Team poster and past editions of the newsletter.



Nights are getting dark ...



Since the clocks have gone back recently, the days are getting shorter. **All students must go straight home after school.** We would like to ask parents and carers to ensure that all students get home as safely and quickly as possible. Students are not allowed to go to the shops after school, and make their way home either by walking, on a bus or by cycle at the end of the day.

Safeguarding in Focus #1 : Mental Health

We all need to look after our mental health. Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.

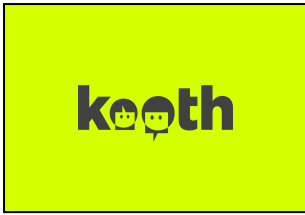
Many of the issues we see in school revolve around stress and anxiety. This could be due to friendships or related to school, for example, examinations. Some of our students have also experienced trauma - whether that is as a result of conflict in another part of the world or much closer to home.



The advice we give to all our students is to **talk** about how they are feeling. Maybe to a parent or carer, someone they trust - for example, their form tutor, a teacher or other member of staff.

The video "We all have mental health" is an excellent starting point. Click [HERE](#).

Safeguarding in Focus : Mental Health - Finding Advice and Guidance



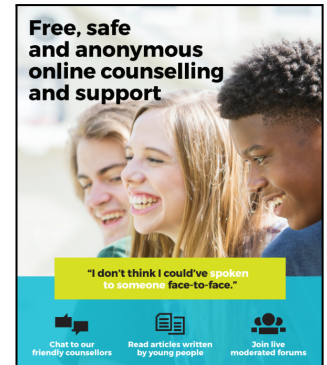
All young people in Brent have **free access** to an excellent mental health resource called **Kooth**. Kooth is an app that can be found on your app store. It enables young people to talk, get advice and explore other resources about their mental health in a way that is familiar. To help you, Kooth has put together some useful guides:

Students FAQ can be accessed [HERE](#).

Parents can read the guide [HERE](#).

Their video explains how Kooth works [HERE](#).

If you want to know more about Kooth then visit their website [HERE](#).



Young Minds is an organisation dedicated to the wellbeing of young people. Please click [HERE](#) for their information, advice and guidance on anxiety and stress.

Are all your contact details up to date?

If you change your home phone / email / mobile number please let the school know so that we have the most up to date contact details. Please let the school know by calling in or emailing at office@alperton.brent.sch.uk



COVID-19: Keep up to date by visiting the NHS website

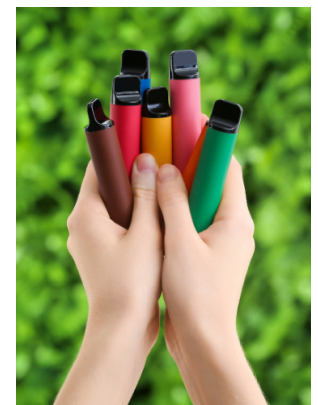


All the latest information about COVID-19 and keeping staff and students safe and all other updates are on our website. Visit the NHS website [HERE](#).

Safeguarding in Focus #2 : Vaping

It's common for parents/carers to worry about their children trying smoking, alcohol or drugs as they get older. However, in recent years, more young people have been using e-cigarettes, known as vaping. Children are trying vaping younger than ever and the risks are less well known than with other substances.

If you think your child might be vaping or you are worried they might start, it is important to understand what it is and what the risks are so you can talk to them about it. Most children and young people do not vape or smoke on a regular basis over a long period of time but they might try it. Keeping them informed about the risks, will help them to make healthy choices for themselves.



Why would my child vape? There are 2 main reasons for a child to begin vaping:

To fit in - young people feel pressured to do what their friends are doing.

Curiosity - young people have seen someone else vaping and want to know what it is like.



Many vapes are appealing to young people because of the flavours and colours. Young people see them as less harmful than smoking because people use them in place of cigarettes.

What are the risks of vaping?

The short-term side effects of vaping include throat and mouth irritation, headache, cough and feeling sick.

The long-term effects of vaping are still unknown, they are still too new for there to have been proper research.

Nicotine is highly addictive. There is also a risk when non-smokers try vaping, they might move on to try more harmful cigarettes and drugs.

There are also illegal vapes being sold that contain dangerous levels of lead, nickel and chromium.



How do I talk about vaping?



Find a good time to start the conversation. It might be as you walk past a vape shop or see someone using an e-cigarette.

Ask your child what they know about vaping. You can ask them if they know of people who use them and why they use them. You might ask them if they have ever tried it.

Listen to your child, their experience and their point of view. Show you are interested in what they have to say. Then you can gently and calmly give them some facts about vaping. Ask them what they think about the facts.

If your child is already using a vape, then have the same conversation with them and ask them what they like about it. You are not saying it is okay for them to do it, by being interested. You can still be clear about how you feel.

If they feel pressured into vaping by friends, you can teach them helpful skills of being confident in saying 'no thanks, it's not for me'.

Need help & advice?

I need help! There is help available - lots of advice and guidance is available online that you can use - including family digital agreements. If you are worried then please contact your Pastoral Manager who is a Safeguarding Officer.

If you are worried about a child or you have a concern then the NSPCC can help. You can contact them either via their website [HERE](#) or by calling them on 0800 1111 or 0808 800 5000.



If you have an **immediate concern** about a child then please call **999**

Cost of Living Support & Advice

As a school we want to help our families with the cost of living crisis that we all now face. If you or a family that you know is struggling to meet the cost of living there is help available from school and Brent.

Brent Council has put together a comprehensive package for residents.

Supporting you with the cost of living
Tackling tough times together

Icons: lightbulb, house, family, bar chart, house with dollar sign, piggy bank

SUPPORTING YOU WITH THE COST OF LIVING

Brent
Get help and advice at brent.gov.uk/costofliving

- **Money and debt** - Can you get financial assistance from Brent?
- **Facing Homelessness?** - Get help and advice from Brent Housing
- **Energy & water bills** - Both financial and energy saving advice
- **Food and essentials** - information about saving money and using a food bank
- **Childcare & school** - get help with school meals, travel and childcare costs
- **Jobs and training** - training & employment services to find a local job

Use your phone camera to scan in the QR Code that will take you to the **Brent Cost of Living Help & Advice** page where you can find further help.

You can also call in to one of the **7 Brent Hubs** set up to get help. Our nearest ones are in : **Ealing Road Library** and **Brent Civic Centre**



SCAN ME



Live in Ealing?

Ealing has a similar offer to Brent. You can access the **Ealing Cost of Living Help & Advice** page [HERE](#). Ealing also has a link to the Community Support Directory for residents to find local support [HERE](#).

Alperton Community School

We have a number of ways that we can help families and students who come to Alperton. One problem we have is **KNOWING** about families that need help. **Please let us know if you are struggling (or you know if a family is struggling) and we will help.** Please contact your Pastoral Manager or email us confidentially on:



familysupport@alperton.brent.sch.uk