
Latest Advice and Information for Parents, Students and Staff 2025 Autumn Term & Christmas Edition



The magic of Christmas - the anticipation of the big day ... gifts, presents and everything that goes with the celebration of Christmas - lots of sweets and chocolates, Christmas dinner with all the trimmings ...it is also the time when safeguarding incidents increase. This can range from domestic violence, online exploitation, scams, poverty related issues and mental health concerns.



Nights are dark early ...



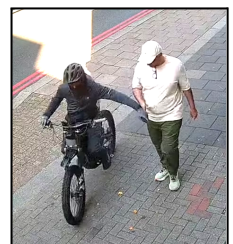
Since the clocks have gone back, the days are getting shorter. **All students must go straight home after school.** We would like to ask parents and carers to ensure that all students get home as safely and quickly as possible. Students are not allowed to go to the shops after school, and make their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

Being Safe on the Street : Personal Safety

Alperton is not a “hot spot” for gang activity ... it is a safe place to be out and about. But we all need to be vigilant and keep each other safe when out and about.



However, the **no.1 item for theft on the street is your mobile phone.** You will have seen in the news that thieves using mopeds or e-bikes are taking mobile phones from people.



But whatever the threat, what would you do if you didn't feel safe when on Ealing Road, Atlip Road, Canal area, Mount Pleasant or Wembley High Road? (... or anywhere else)

- **Situational awareness** – Being actively aware of your surroundings (familiarity is not being aware)
 - **Put your phone away** – If you're staring at your screen, on a call, listening to music, you can't be situationally aware
 - **Strength in numbers** – If possible, go out with a friend, or in a group for safety
 - **Trust your gut instinct** – If a situation feels wrong, act to change it immediately
 - **Go to a safe space** - either back to school go to a shop / restaurant where other people are
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Technology at Christmas

Young people and technology seem to be inseparable. Many young people receive technology as a gift - a new phone, games console or laptop. There is lots of advice for parents or carers on giving young people technology - not just for Christmas but at any time as the benefits and dangers remain the same all year round.



Top tips for giving technology to young people at Christmas (and any other time):

1. Set up the device before wrapping it up.

The easiest way to explore the safety settings, reporting tools, and other features on the device you've just bought is by testing it yourself. If you can, charge it up and have a go navigating the safety tools, parental controls and resources provided.

2. Discuss your expectations

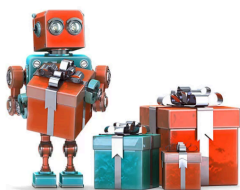
Points could include daily screen time allowances, where the device is kept at night, approving friend requests, and permission to download or purchase apps.

3. Give practical safety tips

One of the most important things you can do before giving technology to a young person is talk to them about it. Having a conversation demonstrates that you are engaged and interested in their online lives and shows you are always available to help them should they need it.

4. Keep the conversations going!

Finding natural, regular opportunities to start conversations around life online will show you are engaged and interested in your child's activities, and will help your child feel confident that you can help them. Conversation starters to facilitate these discussions could include:



- What do you like best about this app or game?
- Can you teach me how to play this game?
- What tips can you give me about spending time online?
- What is okay or not okay to share online?
- How would you help a friend if they were worried about something online?

You can get lots of advice from Childnet [HERE](#). UK Safer Internet Centre [HERE](#)

Parental Controls

Both Apple and Android have built-in parental controls to allow you to control what your child can access and also what times they can use their phone or device.



Apple have **Screen Time** and you can find out more [HERE](#)

Android have **Family Link** and you can find out more [HERE](#)



Smartphones / Smart devices in school ...



As a school we took the step of saying to parents that we would only allow feature phones (basic) phones at school. Any phone brought into school is switched off and in the bag / zipped blazer pocket. Any phones that are confiscated are then returned only to the parent / carer. This change has dramatically reduced the number of times phones have been confiscated in school. We thank parents/carers for their continued support. If you would like any further help or advice on phones then please do not hesitate to let your Pastoral Manager know.



Safeguarding in Focus : AI Chatbots and Companions



A simple search of “**AI Chat**” within the App store highlights the number of AI apps already available, many are rated as 18+ so it is important to speak to our children about them and the risks associated with them. Examples of AI chatbots that your child may have heard of are:

Character.AI (18+) and My AI from Snapchat (13+)

What are the risks?

- Over reliance on AI companions, for example they may replace ‘real life’ friendships or over reliance on using them for homework or problem solving.
- Exposure to inappropriate content.
- Privacy/data risks.
- Misinformation as not all information shared is correct and can be biased.



How can I protect my child?

- **Check age ratings** of any apps or websites that your child accesses.
- **Discuss the risks** of AI chatbots with them and have open conversations about why they may be using them.
- **Set up appropriate parental controls** on their devices / broadband.
- **Chat to your child regularly** and ensure your child knows that they should talk to you or another trusted adult if anything concerns them.



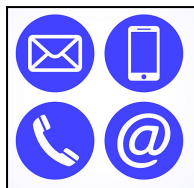
Alpertons Safeguarding Team



I'm Mr Hart, the Designated Safeguarding Lead for our school. Working with me I have a team of Designated Safeguarding Officers that students can raise any concerns with. These are colleagues who work with our students everyday and really get to know them.

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

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, emailing office@alperton.brent.sch.uk or by using the **MCAS (My Child at School)** app.










Coping at Christmas ... help and advice from Childline

Christmas can be an exciting time when people get together to celebrate. But it can also be difficult. If you're feeling lonely, worried or stressed, we're here for you. You can find out more by clicking [HERE](#).

childline

ONLINE, ON THE PHONE, ANYTIME

School is closed but there is lots of help available ...

 Brent	Brent Family Front Door 020 8937 4300	 Supporting you with the cost of living Tackling tough times together 	 SCAN ME
 Ealing www.ealing.gov.uk	Ealing Children's Services 020 8825 8000		
 childline ONLINE, ON THE PHONE, ANYTIME	Childline 0800 1111	Live in Ealing?  www.ealing.gov.uk 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 .	
 kooth	Kooth www.kooth.com		
 METROPOLITAN POLICE	Metropolitan police 999		

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 part of our Safeguarding Team.

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**