



# Safeguarding

Everyone's responsibility, every day

November 2025

This newsletter is designed to support parents/carers in deepening their understanding of topical safeguarding issues that may affect their child, themselves or members of their local community.

Safeguarding children is the action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm - it is everyone's responsibility. Every single person who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play. If you have any concerns about a child's safety or welfare, please contact one of the designated safeguarding leads at the school.

## Spotlight on: Child on Child harm or abuse



Child on Child abuse or harm is any form of physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse, and coercive control, exercised between children, and within children's relationships. This can include:

- Bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse
- Harmful sexual behaviours or sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi nude images and or videos .

Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys"; or not recognising that emotional bullying can sometimes be more damaging than physical harm and should be taken equally seriously, as it can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children, therefore any form of child on child abuse is taken very seriously at Merrylands Primary and Nursery School.

If you have any concerns about child on child harm or abuse, please speak to a member of the safeguarding team.

## Merrylands Safeguarding Team

Mr Andrews - Designated Safeguarding Lead

Mrs Pryer - Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

Mrs Tolley - Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

## Reporting a concern:

If you have any concerns about a child's welfare or safety, please speak to a member of the school's safeguarding team in person or calling 01268 417893 or emailing

**[safeguarding@merrylands-pri.essex.sch.uk](mailto:safeguarding@merrylands-pri.essex.sch.uk)**

Alternatively, call the Essex Children & Families Hub on

0345 603 7627

## Useful Contacts

Basildon Food bank: <https://basildon.foodbank.org.uk/> 0300 3302101

Young Minds: <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/> (Supporting children and young people's mental health)

Mind Basildon: <https://www.basmind.org/> (Local adult mental health support and information)

Homeless England (Basildon) <https://homeless.org.uk/homeless-england/service/basildon-community-resource-centre> (Support for people who are homeless, at risk of homelessness or suffering hardship)

# SOCIAL MEDIA & Mental Health

## What trusted adults need to know

Social Media is often scrutinised as having a negative impact on children's mental health. Whilst currently there is not enough evidence or research to say whether this is true or not, there are certain 'modern pressures' connected with social media which trusted adults need to be aware of. Children and young people are constantly connected and whilst this comes with some benefits, it also comes with a feeling that you are constantly visible. This guide is designed to encourage trusted adults to think about their children's mental health and their social media activities, providing them with some useful tips on improving and supporting mental health among young people.

## Five potential signs & symptoms of mental health difficulties

1. Have you noticed a change in your child's personality? They may not be acting or feeling like themselves.
2. Any recent uncharacteristic anxiety, anger, or moodiness?
3. Is your child experiencing social withdrawal and isolation?
4. Is there a sudden lack of self-care or risky behaviours?
5. Does your child have a sense of hopelessness or feel overwhelmed?

**NOS** National Online Safety®  
#WakeUpWednesday

## Meet our expert

This guide has been written by Anna Bateman. Anna is passionate about placing prevention at the heart of every school, integrating mental wellbeing within the curriculum, school culture and systems. She is also a member of the advisory group for the Department of Education, advising them on their mental health green paper.



## 1. EDUCATE YOURSELF

Educate yourself about social media sites your child is using so you can really understand what they are experiencing and how this may be making them feel.

## 2. DISCUSS REAL-LIFE CONNECTIONS

Talk about the importance of face-to-face time with friends and family, and what enjoyment this can bring. Encourage your child to focus on their relationships with people who make them feel good about themselves.

## 3. SUGGEST REGULAR BREAKS FROM SOCIAL MEDIA

Encourage your child to take regular breaks from checking their social media platforms. You could suggest that they turn off their app notifications during certain times of the day so they can focus on other things.

## 4. ENCOURAGE OTHER HOBBIES OR INTERESTS

Spending time away from their phone and devices will offer them an opportunity to discover other interests and activities they may enjoy. This could be sports, playing a musical instrument or creative interests such as arts and crafts.

## 5. OFFER YOUR SUPPORT

Inappropriate and harmful content can be accessed on the internet which may impact your child's mental health. Explain to your child that not everything online is real and ensure they know that you are there to support and advise them about any worries or anxieties they may have.

### HELPFUL APPS:

- Hub of Hope
- Mindshift
- Smiling Mind

### OTHER SERVICES:

- Childline (0800 1111)
- Bullying UK (0808 8002222)
- Young Minds (0808 802 5544)

Sources: <https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/publications/social-media-young-people-and-mental-health>, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/articles/measuringnationalwellbeing/2015-10-20>, <https://www.rph.org.uk/uploads/assets/uploaded/62be370a-a55f-4719-ad668c2ec7a74c2a.pdf>, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/cutting-edge-leadership/201505/5-warning-signs-mental-health-risk>