

SAFEGUARDING MATTERS

Safeguarding news and updates for students, parents and staff of St Anselm's College

Volume 2 - Autumn 2025

Welcome to the second edition of '**Safeguarding Matters**' - a regular newsletter that draws together important safeguarding information.

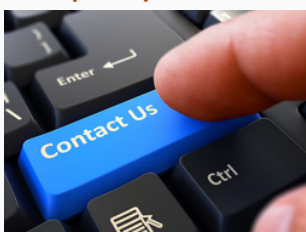
We had lots of positive feedback to our first edition and we hope that it proved useful in helping you and your children to stay active and safe over the Summer holiday.

As we return to College and the nights soon start to draw in, the focus of our news and advice will change accordingly.

We do encourage you to explore all of the information provided to keep yourself informed of the latest trends and advice.

We hope that you find the information useful and thank you for working with us to protect young people.

Mr C Willis
Deputy Headteacher - Pastoral



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Online Safety



The online world provides young people with a range of exciting opportunities but also brings with it a number of risks.

It is important for all of us to be mindful of the '**4 Cs**' of online safety

- **content**
- **contact**
- **conduct**
- **commerce**

When thinking about **harmful online 'content'**, possible risks include:

- **Misinformation**
- **Disinformation (including fake news)**
- **Conspiracy theories**

Such content is typically used to **mislead** or provide **false information** towards a particular topic. Stories can often be fabricated to cause **panic or concern**.

The **UK Safer Internet Foundation** has produced some useful '**Best Practice Guidance**' for Parents and Carers. Key advice is:

- **Talk together** – Talk regularly with your child about how they use technology and where they go for information online.
- **Think before you share** – It can be tempting to share surprising or attention-grabbing online content with your child or your family group chats, but make sure to fact-check these links before you do.
- **Check in with your child** – False and misleading content online can be upsetting and confusing, e.g. harmful claims that target specific groups, or unhealthy lifestyle tips. Regularly check-in with your child about their online life and ask them how what they see makes them feel. Reassure your child that you are there to talk about things that upset them and to support them with how they feel.
- **Seek help and support** – Just as we ask young people to talk about what they are unsure of, make sure you do too! Find out how to get more support by visiting [Childnet's 'Need Help?' page](#). You can take steps to support your child online by using features such as making a report on a range of apps, games and services, and using privacy settings on social media.

See here for the full guidance:

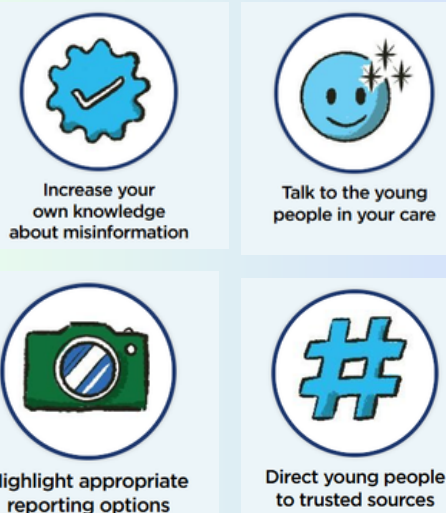
<https://saferinternet.org.uk/online-issue/misinformation>



The **South West Grid For Learning** have also produced useful guidance regarding **Misinformation on Social Media**

The term 'misinformation' is defined as '**false information that is spread, regardless of whether there is intent to mislead**'. Misinformation is a more technical term for 'fake news' and is something that can spread quickly across various platforms such as social media channels.

The **key recommendations** are summarised below:



Bonfire and Firework Safety

Bonfire Night is always an exciting time for young people and the Merseyside area is well known for embracing the celebrations with particular enthusiasm!

Over recent years, as **Council-funded events have gradually decreased**, there has been a rise in **community events** with residents working together in the weeks leading up to the 5th November to build bonfires in their area.

As recently reported in the [Birkenhead News](#), Wirral council have put in place **new rules to manage the size of community bonfires and the materials that can be burnt**, following a successful trial in some areas last year. They have done this in response to significant concerns around **public safety, anti-social behaviour, environmental impact and pressure on emergency services**.

The new policy now **covers the whole of the Wirral** and is aimed at allowing events to take place in a **safer manner** whilst also **improving relationships** in different communities with the council, police, and fire service.

Last year across Merseyside, the number of deliberate fires increased on Bonfire Night everywhere except Knowsley and Wirral, with Wirral seeing the largest drop. There were also **no reports of incidents involving violence towards firefighters** in Wirral.

Merseyside Police also reported a **23% reduction in anti-social behaviour**. Following the events, there were community clean-ups to clear the areas of any rubbish.

Superintendent Matthew Moscrop from Merseyside Police – an **old boy of St Anselm's** – said the reduction in anti-social behaviour was a tremendous success, adding “There were clear messages from the people managing the bonfires about what was tolerated and what wasn’t...we do not want to get into a competitive scenario where people are looking for the biggest bonfire”


FIREWORK SAFETY 101

01 DO NOT LET CHILDREN NEAR FIREWORKS 
Fireworks should only be handled by adults or by older children under adult supervision.

02 NEVER USE FIREWORKS WHILE IMPAIRED BY DRUGS OR ALCOHOL 
Fireworks are dangerous objects that must be handled while under a clear state of mind.

03 ONLY LIGHT ONE FIREWORK AT A TIME 
Lighting only one firework at a time allows you to manage emergencies should they happen. Never try to relight a malfunctioning firework.

04 POINT FIREWORKS AWAY FROM PEOPLE AND BUILDINGS 
This helps prevent accidental injuries and fires.

05 SOAK SPENT FIREWORKS IN WATER BEFORE DISCARDING 
Spent fireworks may still have the potential to relight.



Protect Young Drivers

At the start of each new academic year, it is always pleasing to see that some of our **Sixth Form students** will have had **success in their Driving Test** over the summer holiday.

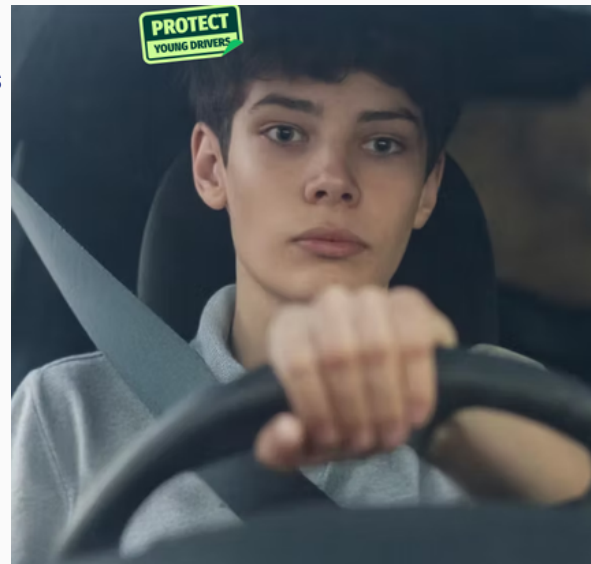
Whilst having access to a car can bring **exciting new opportunities**, it is also important to remember that **drivers who pass their test at age 17 are nearly 50% more likely to be involved in a crash than those who pass at 25** – and their risk is nearly twice as high as those who pass at 60. **24% of fatal or serious injury collisions** in Britain involve **17 to 24-year-olds**. The consequences are **far-reaching and devastating**.

With this in mind, a new **[national website](#)** has been launched to bring **clarity, consistency and collaboration** to efforts to **reduce young driver risk** in the UK.

Hosted by the **Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS)**, the new site has been developed as a **shared resource for all stakeholders** committed to protecting young drivers – including police forces, local authorities, safer roads partnerships, public health teams, charities and campaigners.

The site includes information about the **physiological, behavioural and environmental risk factors** that can affect young drivers as well as information about the **Graduated Driving Licensing (GDL)** – a step-by-step system that helps **young, inexperienced drivers build confidence and skills** gradually during the first few months after passing their test, the time when they're at the highest risk of being involved in a serious crash.

We would strongly encourage you to review these materials with your son if he is a newly or recently qualified driver.



The most common risk factors affecting young drivers are:

Carrying passengers

The presence of peer-aged passengers can lead to distraction and pressure to drive dangerously.

Driving at night

Crash risk is significantly higher at night due to reduced visibility and increased likelihood of fatigue or risk-taking behaviour.

Risky behaviour

Young drivers, particularly males, may engage in risky behaviours such as speeding or overtaking unsafely.



Road Safety

Whatever your means of transport, at some point you will need to cross a road! Remember the following top tips!



Walk facing traffic, as far from vehicles as possible



Avoid crossing at busy points – wait for the road to be quiet



Look out for cars reversing out of driveways



Keep your phone away and your head up – stay alert

However your child travels to school – on foot, by bike, via public transport or receiving a lift – it is well worth revisiting with them some **key advice and guidance** on staying safe.

Wirral Council have produced a handy guide called **How to get to Secondary School** that we would encourage you to look over and share with your child.

This may be **especially useful for Year 7 students** – making the transition to secondary school can already be a worrying time for children, parents and carers but with a little planning, the challenge can be managed to make the transition smooth and ensure that children are prepared and safe for their journey. Key advice includes:

Walking – don't listen to music and **walk with friends** where possible.

Cycling – make sure your bike is in good condition and always wear a **well-fitting helmet**. Bikes must have a rear red reflector and must be fitted with a white front light and a red backlight when dark. It is **illegal for under-14s to ride E-Bikes**.

Public transport – take care when getting off the bus; never cross the road in front of, behind or around a bus. Travel with friends where possible and make sure that **important telephone numbers are written down** in case their phone gets lost.

Getting a lift – Children should exit the car only when you've **parked safely and legally**, always getting out on the **kerb side** and making sure they look out for **other pedestrians**. Please **show consideration** by not parking on the yellow zig-zags outside College and **do not block neighbours driveways**. Everyone in the car must wear a seatbelt or use the correct restraint.

Support for Emotional Well-Being



What is Branch?

Branch is an **online mental wellbeing hub** for **children and young people in Wirral, from 0 all the way to 18** (and up to 25 with additional needs). It doesn't deliver services directly – it's more of a guide, helping people to find the best tools and local support.

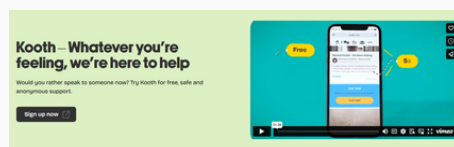
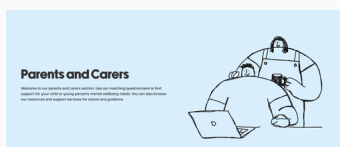
It can be used for **any child or young person**, no matter how big or small their worries feel. It's packed with tips to help them feel better and, when they need a bit of extra support, gives **simple routes into local services**. Branch doesn't offer crisis support but has information on where to get help in an emergency.

When a child or young person needs a bit more support, they or a trusted adult can use Branch to find services that could work well for them.


To be matched to services that are part of Branch, **simply answer a set of questions**. You can answer these questions to find support **for yourself if you are aged 13 and over**. If you are **under 13**, please ask a **trusted adult**, such as a parent, to go through it with you.

Branch can then **usually match to services straightaway**, but when needed, our team behind the scenes will introduce themselves and help find the right services.

The Branch website also contains **a range of guides specifically for parents and carers** – covering issues such as emotional barriers to school attendance, building resilience and what good emotional health and well-being in young people looks like.




[CLICK BELOW](#)



Feeling angry

Anger is a natural and often healthy emotion that everyone feels from time to time, especially when we're frustrated, scared, or think something is wrong.


[Read more >](#)



Feeling worried or anxious

Worry, also known as anxiety, is a common feeling that everyone experiences. Worry acts like an alarm system in the body during stressful situations. It can sometimes become overwhelming and stop you from enjoying daily activities. Anxiety is a normal part of life, but there are effective ways to manage it when it becomes too much.

[Read more >](#)



Feeling low

Feeling low or sad is something everyone goes through at different times. It happens when things don't go as planned or when we face tough situations.

[Read more >](#)



Safety in the Community

In this section we cover some issues which, whilst we have no reason to believe our students are at any heightened risk of exposure to, are nonetheless emerging or established concerns in the wider local community. As such, we can never be complacent or assume that such things could not impact on our students – they could and we all have a role to play in keeping our young people safe.

Ketamine

Over the last 12 months Health and Social care services have noted a rise in young people and adults using Ketamine in Wirral.

What is Ketamine?

Ketamine is used in medicine as an anaesthetic for humans and animals.

What are the Effects of Ketamine?

Ketamine is a general anaesthetic that reduces sensations in the body which can make users feel dream-like and detached, chilled, relaxed and happy, but also confused and nauseated. Ketamine can cause hallucinations.

Is it Legal?

Ketamine is a Class B drug. It is illegal to possess, use or supply someone with the drug. Possession of Ketamine can result in a prison sentence of up to 5 years, or an unlimited fine. A conviction for supplying Ketamine can result in a prison sentence of up to 14 years, or an unlimited fine.

What are the Risks of using Ketamine?

Ketamine use can lead to various physical health problems, including long-term damage to your kidneys, bladder and urinary tract, stomach and abdominal problems, and heart complications.

Ketamine's use often leads to depression and anxiety. It can contribute to hallucinations and psychosis, further worsening the risk of self-harm or harm to others.

Where can I get Help?

For support and advice speak to your GP or contact the Wirral Response Service (13-19yrs) 0151 6664123 response@wirral.gov.uk

Wirral Ways is a free and confidential drug and alcohol service for adults 0151 5561335 wirral.services@cgl.org.uk

IN THE ZONE

The **Clear, Hold, Build initiative**, which is supported by the Home Office and known locally as **EVOLVE Wirral** was launched following the murder of Elle Edwards on December 24, 2022 and is designed to build communities into **more prosperous and safer areas resilient to gang-related activity**.

Since then, police have made 486 arrests related to organised crime groups and have seen 111 offenders sentenced to 294 years in prison. They have also **safeguarded 23 adults and 12 children**.

One of the ways in which St Anselm's College supports this work is by running the **'In the Zone'** initiative with **all Year 9 students**.

This is a series of workshops focusing on themes that may affect them in the community, such as **knife crime, exploitation and drug use**. It aims to give children the tools and knowledge to **identify risks, keep themselves safe in the community** and provide **guidance** on what to do if they **need support**.

It is scheduled to take place in **Summer Term 2026** – we will provide more information nearer the time.