

SAFEGUARDING MATTERS

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

Volume 3 - Autumn 2025

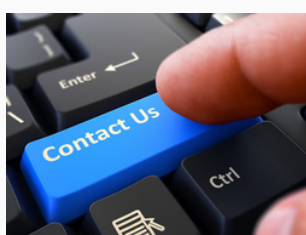
As we hurtle towards the Christmas break, it is time for the third edition of '**Safeguarding Matters**' - a regular newsletter that draws together important safeguarding information.

Whilst Christmas is **a time of great joy** it can also be **a time of heightened risk** for some young people due to things like the long dark nights, but also parties that may mean exposure to various dangers or temptations.

We've included some information to help parents keep their children safe from some of the more specific risks at this time of year - but we've also included some articles that showcase some of the **additional work being done in College** to highlight and address a range of safeguarding issues.

As always, we encourage you to **explore all of the information provided** to keep yourself informed of the latest trends and advice.

Mr C Willis - Deputy Headteacher Pastoral



**Key contact for any
safeguarding concerns outside
of College hours:**
cwillis@st-anselms.com

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Cannabis edibles

We are pleased to support **the Merseyside Safer Schools Police initiative** to raise awareness about the dangers of **cannabis edibles**. Whilst we have no reason to believe that our students are at disproportionate risk of exposure to these harmful items, it is important that all those involved in the care of our young people are **alert and vigilant to possible risks**.

We recently shared guidance with all parents and carers via our College website – accessible via [this link](#). However, some key points to be mindful of are:

- Cannabis edibles are an **illegal and really strong ‘sweet’** aimed at young people/teenagers.
- They come in the form of **sweets, chocolate and drinks**.
- They are laced with a **mood altering ingredient** derived from cannabis
- They do not have the smell or appearance of cannabis. Instead, they **look and smell like a shop bought item** but are **much stronger than other cannabis products**.
- Unlike smoked cannabis, swallowed cannabis is **much easier to be consumed but takes longer to take effect**. Young people are likely to **eat too many due to the delayed effect**. Eating one sweet is equivalent to smoking one cannabis joint.
- Due to being illegal in the UK, cannabis edibles are generally purchased through networks such as **social media outlets including TikTok, Snapchat, and Instagram** meaning that young people are able to access cannabis edibles at the click of a button.
- **Short term effects** of consuming cannabis edibles may include **paranoia; anxiety, dry, red eyes; increased appetite and thirst**
- **Longer term effects** may include **poor sleep; loss of short term memory; heightened risk of developing a mental health illness; poor educational outcomes**.



My child has taken cannabis edibles. WHAT DO I DO?

Stay calm and try not to panic.
Assess the situation and gather the facts.

What information would be good to know?

It may not always be possible but there are pieces of information which would be beneficial to know if medical professionals are required. This information includes:

- 1 Details of the child (age, name, medical history etc.)
- 2 What actually happened? Did the child digest cannabis edibles or is it believed to have happened?
- 3 What type of edible were they?
- 4 Retain any packaging
- 5 When were the edibles consumed?
- 6 Has your child consumed any other substances/alcohol?

Is the child conscious and responsive but not themselves?

If the child is conscious and responsive but not themselves as a result of cannabis edibles, gather the facts and **telephone 111 for advice and additional information**.

Is the child coherent, conscious and responsive?

If the child is stable, speak to your child at an appropriate time.



If the family pet accidentally eats cannabis edibles seek veterinary treatment.

Vaping

Adapted from advice and guidance published by Catch 22



What is vaping?

'Vaping' refers to the use of **electronic cigarettes or 'e-cigs'** – battery-powered devices designed to deliver **nicotine** (a substance found in tobacco) in vapour form. These devices heat a liquid containing nicotine, flavourings and other chemicals. This turns the liquid into a vapour which is then inhaled. The liquids used in vaping devices come in a wide range of flavours.

The Law

- Vapes are **legal but restricted**. This means they **cannot be sold to anyone under the age of 18**.
- **Disposable vapes** have now been **banned** in the UK
- Vapes with **nicotine levels above the 20mg limit** are **illegal** and can cause **serious health issues**.
- **Vapes, vape liquids and any other associated paraphernalia** are **prohibited items in College** and their **use or possession will lead to serious sanction**. We have **vape alarms** fitted around College and have the right to **conduct searches** in line with DfE guidance where we suspect a student to be in possession of any prohibited item.

Facts and risks

1. If you are **underage**, or you are buying vapes with a nicotine level of **more than 20mg** or with more than 600 puffs, these vapes are **illegal and unregulated**. They may be contaminated with other ingredients
2. Nicotine is **addictive**. People can become **physically or psychologically dependent** on it. This means your body or your mind keep telling you that you need to vape.
3. Nicotine can make **anxiety and depression** worse. It also affects **memory, concentration, self-control, and attention**, especially in developing brains.
4. Vaping is less harmful than smoking, but it's still not safe. It can cause side effects like **throat and mouth irritation, headache, cough, feeling sick or dental problems**. We don't know yet what **long-term effects** it has.



Glycerol

A colorless, odorless chemical with a sweet taste. When in contact with skin, it has the potential to worsen acne and other skin conditions.

Nicotine

A very addictive chemical that keeps you coming back for more. Each e-cigarette "cart" or "pod" contains the same amount of nicotine as an entire pack of cigarettes.

Propylene Glycol

The primary component in the condition known as "popcorn lung," this chemical can also be found in toxic waste sites around the world.

Benzoic Acid

This chemical has not been approved by the FDA for human consumption and can cause irritation in your nose, throat and lungs when inhaled.

If you feel your vaping is having a negative impact on any area of your life, there is support available.

Catch22 Young People's Substance Misuse services offer free and confidential advice and support. They are here to listen and work with you.



Daylight Saving

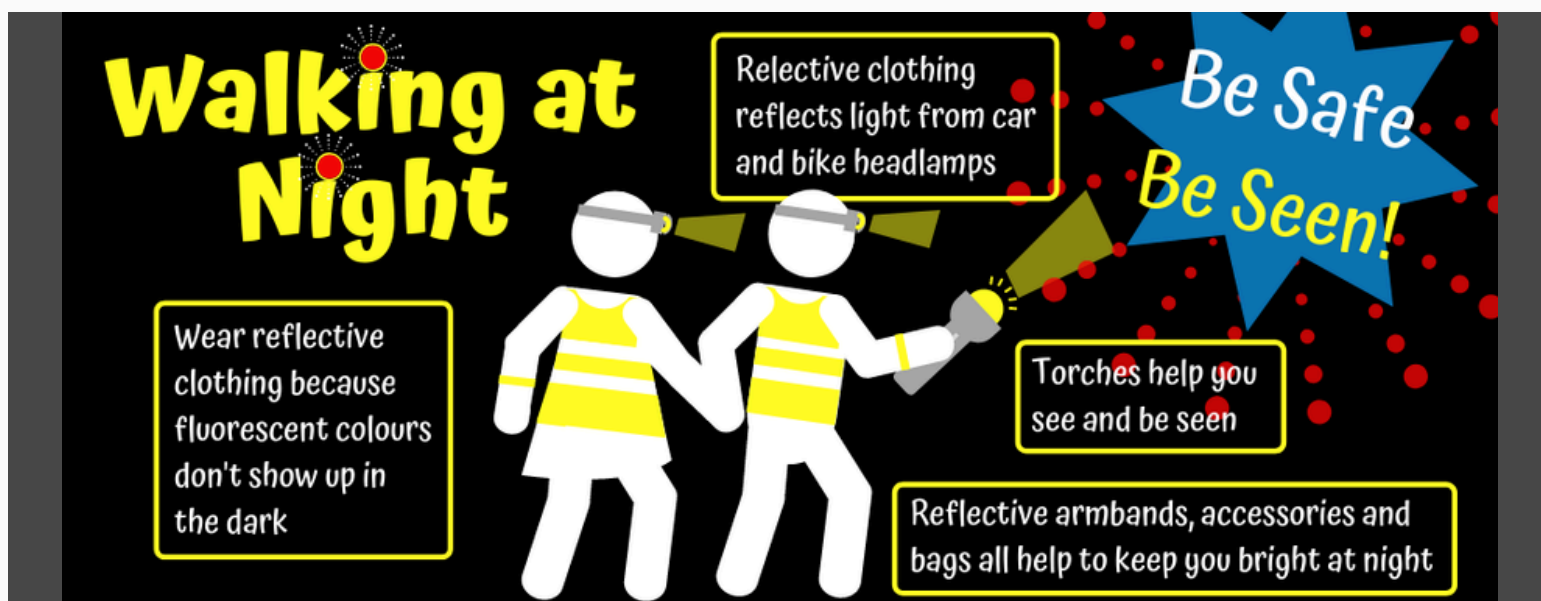
Resetting the Clock: Understanding DST's Impact on Education and Learning

Daylight Saving Time (DST) involves adjusting our clocks forward by one hour in the spring and back by one hour in the autumn. This seemingly small change can potentially have considerable implications for education and learning, particularly due to its effects on sleep and daily routines.

Sleep Disruption and Academic Performance: The transition into and out of DST can disrupt sleep patterns. For students, this disruption can impact alertness and cognitive function, potentially affecting academic performance. Research suggests that students might experience temporary drops in performance immediately following DST transitions, particularly after the spring transition when an hour of sleep is "lost."

Increased Daylight and After-School Activities: DST could also impact education indirectly through its effect on after-school activities. The shift of daylight to later in the day provides more opportunities for outdoor sports and activities after school hours. While this encourages physical activity, it may also pose challenges for homework schedules and other academic responsibilities.

Safety Considerations: There are also safety considerations related to DST and school hours. For instance, during the non-DST period, students might have to travel to school in darker morning hours and so younger students in particular may need to consider additional steps to stay safe

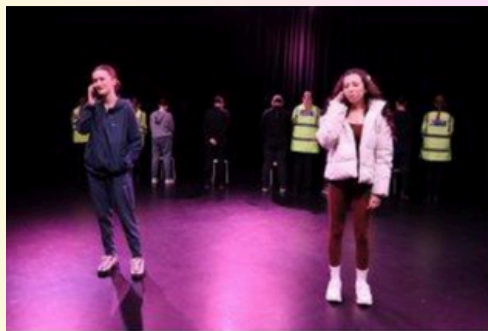


Criminal Exploitation



Following their successful visit to College last year to deliver their award-winning, self-penned drama piece – ‘Flowers’ – focusing on domestic abuse – we were delighted recently to welcome back into College **students and staff from St Julie’s Catholic High School in Liverpool.**

Students in **Years 9, 10, 12 and 13** were able to hear the powerful messages in another award-winning drama piece written and performed by the students of St Julie’s.



It explores themes of **weapons culture and codes of silence within criminal activities**, through the story of a gang conflict that leads to the death of an innocent young girl.

The title of the piece – **‘Wrong Place, Wrong Time’** – is an ironic reminder that in actual fact these innocent bystanders were often in exactly the right place doing things that they were fully entitled to and bear no blame for what befell them. The tragic murder of Elle Edwards on Christmas Eve in 2021 is just such a case – a young person socialising with friends at a time of great joy.



The piece encourages young people to **use their most powerful weapon – their voice.** What we condone, we promote – making light of the issue of gang violence or failing to speak out against it only serves to embolden those who participate directly in it. **Speaking out, making a stand and telling the truth are always the right things to do**



Thank you to our visitors from St Julie’s for another exceptional performance also to our own students for their attentive and respectful response to this thought-provoking piece.



Well-Being Ambassadors

Promoting Wellbeing at St Anselm's College on World Mental Health Day

At St Anselm's College, our Wellbeing Ambassadors led the community in marking **World Mental Health Day (10 October)** by inviting everyone to **wear yellow** in solidarity with those experiencing mental health challenges. This simple act **showed compassion, reduced stigma and reminded us that no one struggles alone.**

Mental health concerns among young people are common — **NHS England data** show that **around one in five 8–25 year olds had a probable mental disorder in 2023.** These figures highlight the importance of awareness, early help and open conversation.

Adolescence and young adulthood bring **rapid change and pressure**, making good mental health essential for learning, relationships and personal growth. When neglected, the effects are seen in attendance, focus and wellbeing.

Guided by **our Catholic values of dignity, compassion and solidarity**, we are proud that so many students and staff wore yellow and took time to ask others, "How are you really doing?" Small, caring actions can make a big difference. **We'll continue the conversation—encouraging everyone** to talk about mental health in class, tutor groups and at home.

Normalising these discussions builds strength, empathy and community.



WAYS TO LOOK AFTER YOUR MENTAL HEALTH





Cyber Security

Enhancing Cybersecurity: Two-Step Verification – Stop! Think Fraud

Cybersecurity like many security functions is locked in a constant competition between offence and defence. Security firms construct a new verification method and soon after hackers discover a new way to overcome it. Of the many ways that hackers attempt to perform their craft, two stick out – **extortion** and **fraud**. The latter involves the deployment of confidence tricks to fool the computer user into wilfully opening a security window.

Despite this there are **many things that the average computer user can do to protect themselves**.

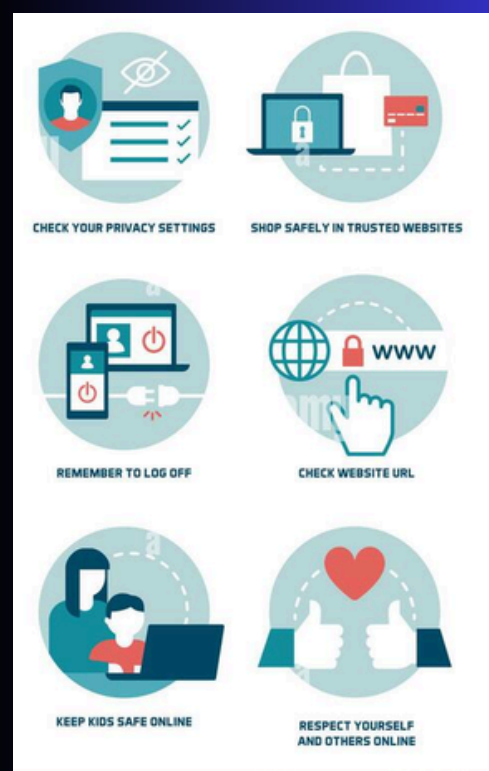
One of those is configuring **Two-Step Verification**. The British government's Stop! Think Fraud internet safety campaign, has produced a guide on how to best utilise this method for enhanced IT security which you can find here:

<https://stopthinkfraud.campaign.gov.uk/protect-yourself-from-fraud/protecting-against-online-fraud/turn-on-2-step-verification-2sv/>

Other useful tips include:

- **Change your passwords** for any accounts where you use the same password – especially if the password is the same as the one used to access College IT systems.
- Ensure you choose **strong, unique passwords** which are not easy to guess.
- Be alert for **phishing emails and text messages** – messages where the sender is prompting you to click links or enter your details.
- Monitor your **financial accounts and credit reports** for any suspicious activity. You can check your credit report for free from a number of credit reference agencies.
- **Report any suspicious banking activity** to your bank immediately.

Further advice on using passwords to protect your data and spotting and reporting suspicious correspondence is available from the **National Cyber Security Centre**





In the last 10 months, the College have participated in the **Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership** – a primary prevention initiative that aims to prevent violence from occurring in the first place.

It involves **training children and young people as mentors** and equipping them with the **confidence, knowledge, and skills** to identify and **speak out against bullying, abusive behaviour, and violence**.

The programme **promotes healthy social norms and culture**, which is known to **prevent violence**. It is based in education settings, including primary and secondary schools, and involves **training staff and older pupils/students to act as active bystanders**.

The programme also provides resources for **mentors to deliver sessions to younger pupils** on issues that matter to them, such as bullying and healthy relationships.

The **Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership 2024/25 Annual Report** showcases the scale and success of MVRP's public health approach, which has reached **more than 114,000 young people** through targeted interventions, education programmes, and community-led projects.



In March we celebrated the efforts of our previous Year 10 MVP group during their **graduation ceremony** at a prestigious concert in St George's Hall. The group had an opportunity to meet and celebrate with other schools around Merseyside who have taken part in the initiative, funded by the Violence Reduction Partnership and Merseyside Youth Association. Students worked as a group to discuss and tackle some of the issues delivered throughout the course with their peers, enjoyed a mock trial in the courtroom and received their graduation certificates.

The pilot scheme has been a fantastic opportunity both Year 10 and Year 8 students tackling difficult subjects that young people are exposed to.

We are running the programme again in academic year 2025–26 with **a new cohort of Year 10 mentors** recruited and trained and already delivering to Year 8 students. We look forward to another successful graduation event later in the year!





Outreach and Community Cohesion

Harvest Collection – Junior SVP

This half term, our **Junior SVP group** has led our school's **Harvest Collection**, encouraging students and staff to donate **almost 200kg food and household items** to support the **Wirral Foodbank**, part of the Trussell Trust network. The Wirral Foodbank is part of the **Trussell Trust** and provides emergency food parcels and practical help to people experiencing crisis across the area.

By supporting their work, we are helping to ensure that **no one in our community goes hungry**. We do this because **caring for others is at the heart of our faith**. Our Harvest appeal reflects our commitment to **Catholic Social Teaching**, in particular, the call to support the poor and vulnerable and uphold the dignity of every person. It also embodies several of our **Edmund Rice 8 Essentials – compassion, concern for the poor, and acting justly**.

As Christmas approaches, it is worth remembering that from the very outset of his life, **Jesus identified with the poor and marginalised**. He was born in a stable, the most humble of surroundings and in Luke's Gospel the first people to see him were shepherds – who at the time were considered unclean and outcasts, on the edges of society.

Together, we continue to **put our faith into action** and live out our shared values as a **caring, inclusive community**, supporting those who are most in need. A huge thank you to every one of you who supported this important local cause.



Welcoming the stranger

Another, often overlooked, element of the Christmas story is that **the Holy Family were forced to flee their homeland and seek refuge and asylum in Egypt** as a means of escaping persecution by King Herod.

In our world today, people **continue to suffer from persecution and injustice** and to **seek refuge and asylum for themselves and their families** – often travelling great distances at huge personal risk in the hope of securing a better life.

At St Anselm's College we currently work with **A Heart for Refugees** in Birkenhead and **Asylum Link** in Liverpool. This term we have donated winter clothes from staff. Last term we donated a tailor's dummy for the dressmaking classes.

In doing this, we are mindful of our duty to embody and live out the Essentials of an Edmund Rice Education – especially by **showing compassion to those in need, building a Christian community and education for justice**. We are mindful that **all people are children of God**, created in **His image and likeness** and all possess an inherent dignity that goes beyond the labels that are sometimes placed on people.



And finally.

The last thing that we want to be doing is to be spoiling anybody's fun during the festive period....but we are also aware that this can be **a time of heightened risk** in a variety of ways so will leave you with **a few safety considerations** that might be especially applicable at this time of year:

1. It is good to get out and enjoy our **beautiful coastline** at any time of the year. However, please be aware that after a recent training exercise, crew members from RNLI West Kirby Lifeboat Station shared concerns with the Wirral Coastguard Rescue Team about the usual route taken by walkers to **Hilbre Island**. The mud to the east of the rock causeway between Little and Middle Eye is very deep in parts and in other places much of the sand has been scoured out by the storm, meaning that the tides will cut off the high ground quicker than before. **Incoming tides and the risk of mud entrapment are not a good mix!**
2. **E Bikes and Scooters** may look like great fun and may be near the top of many young people's Christmas lists but there are **important safety considerations** to bear in mind. Firstly, E-bikes and e-scooters use **large lithium-ion batteries** which can present **a risk of serious fire or explosion** in certain circumstances. Secondly, both are **age restricted** – you have to be **14 years or older to ride an E-Bike in public** and **16 or over to ride a rental E-Scooter**. Depending on your age, you may have to wait a bit longer for your desired present!
3. Many of you will be **attending parties** over the holiday period and it is worth all of us, whatever our age, being mindful of the following guidance:
 - Never accept food or drink from a stranger
 - If you leave a party early, try and convince a friend to come with you – don't be tempted to walk home or wander about alone
 - Message people to tell them where you are going. Even better if you can send the address