

# SAFEGUARDING MATTERS

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

Volume 5- SummerTerm 2026

It certainly doesn't seem like it was **almost a year ago** that we published our **first edition of Safeguarding Matters** - as always it has been a busy and fast-paced academic year

Some of this edition will **revisit themes that we looked at towards the end of the last academic year** with a focus on **staying safe over the summer**, for the benefit of those families who have joined the College since then.

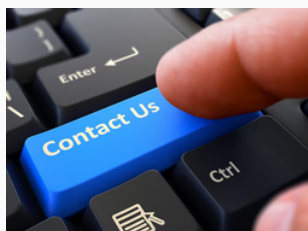
Some of it will be **new and more more general safeguarding news and information** that we hope you find useful.

Amongst the information that we will cover is **changes to our policies around the use of mobile phones in College**, following **consultation with students, parents and staff** - as well as the need to respond to the latest Government directives regarding this and consideration of relevant research.

As always, if you have **any feedback** on this newsletter or any ideas for **other issues that you would like us to highlight** then please do not hesitate to contact me.

**Mr Willis**

**Deputy Headteacher & Designated Safeguarding Lead**



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## VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & GIRLS

# Violence Against Women and Girls



St Anselm's College were proud to recently support **Merseyside Police's Violence Against Women and Girls Awareness Month** with all students having the opportunity in Form time to reflect on resources and engage in discussion.

Students explored some key concepts such as:

- **Misogynistic Language** – Words that aim to hurt, harm, or incite hate towards women and girls and that aims to keep men in positions of power.
- **Gender Stereotypes** – Generalisations about gender that can cause unequal and unfair treatment because of a person's gender.

It was made clear to students that **these things should never be accepted as 'banter' or 'boys being boys'** – they are forms of **sexism** that can **objectify or demean women**, leading to more serious issues in the future. For example, the sad fact remains that the vast majority of gender-based violence is **committed towards women, usually by a male who is known to them**.

Students also learned that **abuse in relationships** can come in many shapes and forms – **physical, sexual, emotional, financial and psychological**. They also learned that **sexual harassment** does not only involve **unwanted physical touching or contact** – **staring, sharing sexually explicit material or sending indecent messages** is also a form of harassment.

Additionally, our boys were reminded that **we can use our voices to call out sexism when we see it**. It doesn't need to be confrontational – it can be as simple as **challenging friends on the use of certain words** that degrade or demean women and girls.

**By remaining silent** about gender-based issues **we become part of the problem** and perpetrators of violence can continue to use violence without consequence or sanction. Instead of being passive bystanders, we can all **challenge in a non-aggressive way** or, if we don't feel comfortable or sense the situation is too dangerous, **ask for help or call the police** and report it.

Before we can challenge others however, we need to **check ourselves**. We need to be **conscious about our own beliefs and attitudes** and where and who we might have learned these from. Are they harmful? Or are they helpful?

The intention of this work is **not to pigeon hole** women as 'weak' or men as 'bad' – it is simply to recognise that **toxic masculinity is a very real thing** and that **it harms both men and women** in different ways.



# Smartphone Free Schools



The topic of **if and how Smartphones should be allowed within schools** has been hotly debated at a national level for some time now.

At St Anselm's College we have always recognised and utilised some of the **potential educational benefits** of using phones - as well as the importance of **encouraging and teaching responsible use** of such devices. It has been heartening that the vast majority of our students, the vast majority of the time, show **real maturity** in how and when they have used their phone in College.

However, it is also the case that **Smartphone use is not without risk or downside** - this is well-documented and as adults we all have a role to play in **re-engaging our young people with the 'real' world as opposed to the 'virtual' one**.

To this end, we are currently implementing a **'soft launch'** of a significant change in policy in College regarding phone use by students. **'Phone Free Friday'** is seeing us gradually introduce the approach that will soon be extended across the week - although students may bring phones onto site, they are **not to be seen, used or heard for any reason** (with the exception of Sixth Form students in designated areas of Outwood House).

At present, phone use will be met with a **gentle reminder** to turn the device off and put it away - in due course however, we will be introducing **sanctions** for this as well as reviewing and possibly further amending our policies.

As **adults in school**, we will seek to support this policy by also **limiting our use of mobile phones as far as is reasonably possible**. However whilst it is right and proper that schools should play their part in changing cultures and mindsets around Smartphone use by young people, it is also the case that **by far the most effective approach** is not one that ends at 'Smartphone Free Schools' but that extends into **'Smartphone Free Childhoods'**. We would urge all parents and carers to **think carefully before buying a Smartphone for their child** and, when they do, working actively to support and teach responsible use.



## NSPCC



### Is your child ready to have their own phone?

We know there's a lot to consider, which is why we've built a tool with Vodafone that helps you reach a decision that is best for you and your child.

[Try our decision tool now](#)





# Support with exam stress for 11-18 year olds

We first shared this information in our Spring Term edition of Safeguarding Matters but with **public examinations underway and internal assessments soon to begin in earnest** it seemed timely to revisit this topic. Whilst we obviously have the highest academic aspirations for all of our students, we are also conscious that preparing for and sitting examination can be an **anxious time** for students and sometimes for their families too. Alongside the **pastoral support already available in College**, we wanted to signpost you to some information compiled by the **mental health charity MIND**, which can be found in full [here](#)

## Some possible causes of exam stress

- Not feeling **ready or prepared** for exams
- Worrying about sitting exams in a **new place or timed conditions**
- **Pressuring yourself** (or pressure from others) to get **certain grades**
- Worrying about the **future**, like getting into university or getting a job.
- **Caring** for a family member or someone you live with.
- Living with **physical or mental health problems**

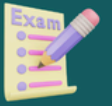
## How might exam stress affect me?

- **Emotional effects** - Anxious, overwhelmed, upset, frustrated or angry
- **Physical effects** - Shaking, nausea, headaches, changes in breathing, sweating a lot, feeling tired
- **Thoughts** - Fear of failure or of disappointing ourselves or others, comparing ourselves to others, feeling like we can't cope
- **Behaviours** - Avoiding things like revision, working too much without taking breaks, Not doing things we usually enjoy
- **Routines** - Not spending enough time with people we care about

## How to cope with exam stress

- Make time for **things you enjoy** - release stress and celebrate progress
- **Talk to others** about how you feel - especially people who are going through the same thing
- Find **balance** - a revision timetable might help with this.
- Work in a way that's **best for you** - you can find revision ideas on the [BBC Bitesize website](#)
- Revise in the **best place for you** - If you don't have a space to study where you live, you could revise at school, the library or outside
- Revise in **exam-like conditions** - this might help things feel more familiar on the day e.g. use headphones to block out background noise (but don't listen to music!)
- **Prepare yourself** - the night before an exam, get everything you need ready
- Be **kind to yourself** - practice self-compassion. These [tips for building confidence and self-esteem](#) have more ideas
- Take care of your **well-being** - Make sure you get enough food, water and exercise

## TOP TIPS TO REDUCE TEENAGE EXAM STRESS



TOP TIP TO BEAT EXAM ANXIETY AND STRESS

**1** CREATE A SUITABLE STUDY SPACE FOR YOUR TEENAGER

ENCOURAGE A BALANCED STUDY ROUTINE

**2**

**3** REDUCE EXTERNAL STRESSORS FOR YOUR TEENAGER

BOOST YOUR KIDS CONFIDENCE, SELF-ESTEEM, SELF-WORTH

**4**

**5** ENCOURAGE TIME OUT, TIME FOR PLAY

REDUCE TECHNOLOGY OVERLOAD, SWITCH OFF

**6**

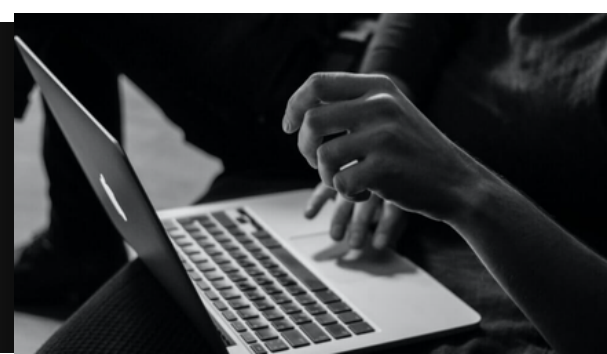
**7** TEACH THEM HOW TO MEDITATE AND RELAX

HELP THEM GET DEEP QUALITY SLEEP

**8**



# Sextortion



**Sextortion** is a type of blackmail when someone threatens to **share nudes, semi-nudes, sexual information or videos** of someone unless the victim **pays money or agrees to do something else**, such as share more images. This is a **crime** and sadly is on the increase.

Recent reports have shown that **boys are more likely to be targeted** with financial sextortion.

Sextortion takes place **online**. Criminals often target people through **social media, dating apps or video calls**. The criminal might get the photos and videos by:

- **Tricking** someone into believing they were sharing them with someone they could trust.
- Taking **screenshots from video calls or livestreaming** without the person realising or consenting.
- Stealing them through **hacking** an account.
- Using **digitally manipulated or AI-generated images**

Sometimes the criminal will **pretend that they have intimate images even if they don't**.

Sometimes, sextortion can occur through **catfishing**. Catfishing is where a person is using a fake identity and pretending to be someone they are not. Over time, that person will pretend to be a friend and might compliment and flatter someone to gain their trust.



**childline**

ONLINE,  
ON THE PHONE,  
ANYTIME

childline.org.uk  
0800 1111

## Possible warning signs:

- If an **online friendship moves very fast** and they quickly try to create a 'connection' or close relationship with you.
- **Sending you a sexual image**, supposedly of themselves
- **Asking for you to send them** a sexual or non-sexual image or video of yourself, including your face.
- Asking you to **go live, video call, Facetime or go on webcam**
- Pressuring you to do something you **don't feel comfortable with**.
- Asking you for **lots of details**, including personal information.
- Saying or doing things that make you feel **worried or anxious**
- Saying they've **hacked you** and **have access to your contact list**.

## Top tips for victims:

1. **Don't blame yourself** – it is not your fault.
2. **Save the evidence** – Take screenshots of any messages you have been sent and don't delete the chat. Do **NOT** take screenshots of any indecent images you have been sent
3. **Stop communication** – do not send any further messages or money
4. **Report it** – tell a trusted adult and report to the police or [CEOP](https://www.ceop.gov.uk).
5. **Speak to someone** – It can be difficult to talk about sextortion, but you could ask a friend to support you when talking to an adult.



# Water Safety



Spending time at the beach or near water is a great way to enjoy summer, whether it's a day at **West Kirby, New Brighton or The Albert Dock.**

However, it's important to remember that water can be **unpredictable**, so taking simple precautions helps keep everyone safe. Drowning can happen quickly and quietly, but by being careful and aware, we can all **enjoy the water safely**. Here are some easy water safety tips to keep in mind:

- Only swim in **designated safe areas** and where **lifeguards are present**
- **Never swim alone** -always have someone with you and stay close to family and friends
- **Avoid swimming** after drinking **alcohol** or if you're feeling **tired**
- Be cautious of **currents, tides** and **cold water temperatures** even if the day feels warm
- Follow any **local signs, warnings and / or instructions** from lifeguards and beach staff
- Keep an eye on **younger children** and animals at all times near water

It is worth **reminding your child of some water safety tips** by watching [this animation](#). The video is appropriate for young children and the information within it is **equally applicable to young adults**.

Enjoy the water and have a great day, but staying safe means a worry-free experience for everyone!



138

PEOPLE DIE BY ACCIDENT AT OUR COASTS PER YEAR



8,259

PEOPLE AIDED BY LIFEBOAT CREWS IN 2024



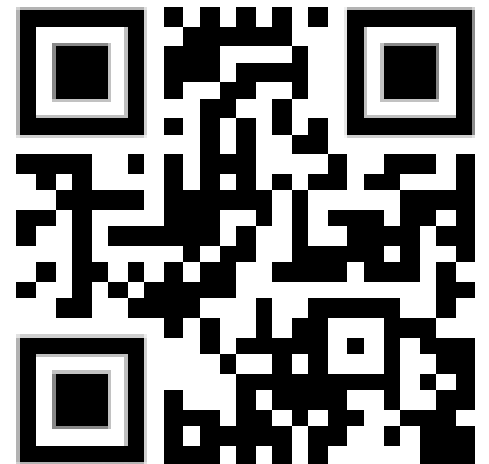
15+

MALES OVER THE AGE OF 15 (INCLUDING OVER 60) ARE MOST AT RISK



17,068

PEOPLE AIDED BY LIFEGUARDS IN 2024



# Sun Safety



## Seek shade

Take a break under trees or umbrellas, especially in the middle of the day when the sun is strongest.

**Ultraviolet (UV) radiation** is a type of energy that is **released naturally by the sun** and **artificially from sunbeds**. In the **UK**, up to **9 in 10 cases of melanoma skin cancer** could be prevented by staying safe in the sun and avoiding sunbeds. **Learning how the sun and UV cause cancer** and **how to enjoy the sun safely** can go a long way to preventing this from happening.

Too much UV radiation from the sun or sunbeds can **damage the DNA in our skin cells**. If enough DNA damage builds up over time, it can cause cells to grow out of control, which **can lead to skin cancer**.

Anyone can develop skin cancer. Some people may have a **higher risk**, including people who burn more easily. It's important to remember that **skin damage doesn't only happen on holiday or on hot, sunny days**.

You can't tell whether you are at risk of skin damage and sunburn from the temperature outside because **you can't feel UV rays**. The **UV index** can tell you how strong the sun's UV rays are each day. **If the UV index is 3 (moderate) or more**, you should **consider protecting your skin from the sun**.

Skin cancer can grow down through the layers of the skin and **spread to other parts of the body**. When skin cancer is found at an **early stage**, treatment is **more likely to be successful**. If you have noticed **any unusual changes** to your skin, **speak to your doctor**. It might be a mark or a mole that's new or has changed, or a sore that doesn't heal. It could also be changes like a dark area or line under a nail that's not been caused by an injury.

**Cancer Research UK** publish more detailed guidance [here](#) – but **see the panel to the left** for some simple **top tips for staying safe**



## Cover up

Wear a top that covers your shoulders, a wide-brimmed hat and UV-protection sunglasses.



## Apply sunscreen

Pick one with at least SPF 30 and 4 or 5 stars. Use it generously and regularly.

# Staying safe online in the summer holidays



# UK Safer Internet Centre

With the summer holidays fast approaching children and young people will have more free time to spend online.

## Sit down together

For parents, the summer holidays are **a great chance to sit down with your children, visit their favourite sites and play their favourite games** – this is a great way to **stay up to date with online lives**.

The holidays are also a good opportunity to have **positive conversations about the internet**. [These conversation starters](#) are a great tool to help encourage an **open dialogue** with your child.

## Social media and staying in touch

It's a good time to **check any age requirements** as many social media sites require users to be **at least 13 years old**.

Encourage your children to use the **privacy tools** on the services they use, so that the content they post is only available to **people they know and trust in real life**. To help your children set these up, use this [guide to the privacy settings on the different sites](#). You can also download the UK Safer Internet Centre's [safety checklists for popular sites](#) such as **Instagram, Snapchat and Facebook**.

## Sharing holiday pictures

Talk to your children about what types of photos are appropriate to share and who they are okay to share with. Photos can **hold clues that give away personal information**. For example, if you share a selfie of you and friends, are there any landmarks or street signs that give away your location?

This is true for photos you might share of your children too! It's always worth **asking children if they are happy with an image you want to share online**. [Safer Internet Day research](#) found that **2 in 5 (40%) of 8-17s** said that in the last year their parents or carers have posted a photo of them that **embarrassed** them, rising from 34% of 8-12s to 46% of 13-17s.

## Make a family agreement

[A family agreement](#) is a great way to start a conversation with your whole family about how you all use the internet. The agreement involves generating **positive statements** about how your family want to look after each other online and how you should treat others online.

## SMART SOCIAL MEDIA HABITS

Summer is a great opportunity for parents or guardians to advocate for raising young responsible digital citizens. Digital citizenship can be such a big word, but it just means using technology, in most cases social media, appropriately, safely, and respectfully.



### Be Cautious

Children should be wary of shady persons, sites and offers online. Some seemingly harmless pop-ups, links or websites can be dangerous.



### Be Respectful

Kids should be taught to respect others, stand up for someone cyberbullied, and to block persons that send them offensive or nasty messages or comments online.



### Protect Your Privacy

Teach kids not to share personal information, passwords and location online. Regularly check their privacy settings on social media sites.

### Think Before You Post

Encourage kids to THINK (True, Helpful, Inspiring, Necessary, and Kind) before posting online content and responding to online comments or messages.



### Be Mindful of Your Digital Footprint

Help your kids learn how to manage their online presence by making sound choices about the online content they post, share, and view. Discuss the importance of how it can affect people's perception of them in real life now and in the future.



# Road Safety



The topic of **road safety** is one that we first raised with you in [Volume 2 of Safeguarding Matters](#) back in the Autumn Term - but it is an issue that will **always be high on the agenda**.

It is also something of **particular relevance to the College** because of the **traffic issues that occur around the site** - especially at the end of the College day - and the **associated problems that they cause**.

Put simply, most of the roads that immediately surround the College - in particular **Egerton Road, Grosvenor Road and the top half of Manor Hill** - were never designed for a high volume of traffic.

The fact that **the bus stops for the 611, 612 and 91A** - all of which are public services - are situated immediately outside the main College gates means that **Egerton Road in particular** will already be congested **until 3.45pm** even without the presence of other vehicles.

Although we have **members of our College Leadership Team** on duty every day, the presence of **parked vehicles** that often then look to pull out whilst students are leaving the College makes **the road crossing situation potentially extremely dangerous**.

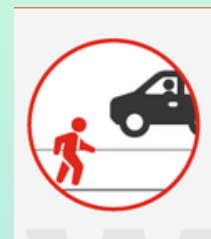
**Legal parking** is not always the same as **safe or considerate parking** - even when not parked on double yellow lines or zigzags, cars parked in Egerton Road at the end of the day provide an **additional hazard, obscure clear lines of vision and damage our relationships with our neighbours** who have at times reported difficulty accessing or exiting their driveways.

It is **not unreasonable** in normal circumstances to expect students to **walk a short distance to be collected** if they are receiving a lift home - even **the bottom half of Manor Hill or Palm Grove or the top part of Ashville Road** are much more suitable options and all within a very short walk from the College.

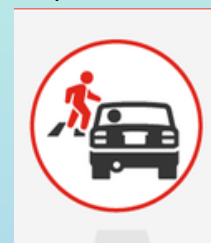
Whilst we respect the right of parents to park where they are legally allowed to do so, we are also asking parents to respect the right of students to be **kept safe when travelling to and from the College** - and one of the best ways you can support us in that is **giving careful consideration to where you park**.

Of course we also recognise that another key aspect of road safety is **the behaviours that young people show when crossing the road** - and to that end we would ask you to **revisit with your son the information to the right of this article**.

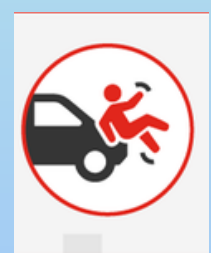
Whatever your means of transport, at some point you will need to cross a road! Remember the following top tips!



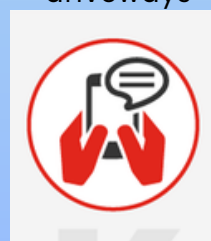
**W**alk facing traffic, as far from vehicles as possible



**A**void crossing at busy points - wait for the road to be quiet



**L**ook out for cars reversing out of driveways



**K**eep you phone away and your head up - stay alert

# Protecting our Communities



We are very fortunate on the Wirral to have **a great many beautiful outdoor spaces** – whether that be our **coastline, our fantastic parks or our small but lovely hills and dales.**



Whilst this is something to celebrate, it is also the case that these places can at times become **magnets for large gatherings of people** who don't always treat these spaces with the **care and respect** that they deserve.



This is **far from being solely a 'young person' problem** – groups of adults can often be the worst offenders for littering, noise and general nuisance behaviour.



However, in recent years there has been a trend for **certain dates and locations** to become gathering spots for **school-aged young people** – especially those celebrating the end of their examinations or just the end of the academic year.



Whilst Wirral has avoided the very worst of the anti-social behaviours that have affected some other areas, there have still been issues – for example **in June 2023 a teenager was stabbed during an 'End of examinations' gathering at Cubbins Green,** in between West Kirby and Caldy.

It is really important for young people and families to be aware that **this area** – and several other locations including **parts of Birkenhead, Seacombe, Wallasey, Woodchurch, Liscard and Bromborough** – are now subject to **Public Space Protection Orders**, meaning the following prohibitions apply:

- **Anti-Social Behaviour:** Gathering in groups of 4+ and refusing to leave when ordered by police.
- **Facial Coverings:** Wearing items to conceal identity is prohibited, with exemptions for health or religious reasons.
- **Nuisance:** Actions causing alarm, harassment, or distress to the public.

Police and authorised officers can issue a **£100 Fixed Penalty Notice** or **fines of up to £1,000 on conviction.**



The **council, police, schools and other agencies** work proactively together to **share information** and to **identify other areas** that may become a concern – so the simple message is that if you hear about a possible exciting but unregulated gathering of young people then **everyone else probably knows about it too** meaning that **the police will almost certainly be there** to disperse everyone. Save yourself the risk and the wasted journey and **just don't go!**

# NEEDOH / Jelly Cube Viral Trend



From time to time, we receive notification in College of **concerning viral trends** that are circulating among young people but which can put them **at risk of harm**. These are generally national trends and, although we have no reasons to believe that our students are at any heightened risk, we will often share information with parents and carer as a **precautionary measure**.

One such trend that has emerged recently is for children and young people to **microwave 'squishy' silicone toys** after seeing online videos claiming this makes the toys softer and more pliable. When the toy is squeezed afterwards, it **bursts and sprays boiling material** which reportedly has left children's hands and faces **seriously burned**.

- The toys are **widely available** in UK shops, and online stores
- Often, **the packaging for these toys provides a warning** not to heat, freeze or microwave. Children are **ignoring it** because the online videos they watch encourage them to do the opposite.
- The silicone casing insulates heat yet the outside stays cool to the touch, all while the inside reaches **boiling temperatures**.
- In most reported cases, the child was **unsupervised**. There was no adult present to intervene before the injury occurred.

## Additional risk factors

- The toy shows **no external sign of heat** before it bursts
- The content is designed to look like helpful advice and fun. Children who see it are **highly likely** to copy it.
- Popularity of the toys on social media means the **algorithm** is more likely to push this content to young people.
- The toy's increased popularity can lead to conversations where **one child recommends this to another**
- Due to the numerous varieties of these toys and squishies, children may seek to microwave these too and it is **unknown** how other versions of these toys could react.

## Advice for parents and carers

You **do not need to be an expert** in social media to have a helpful conversation about this.

Talking **calmly and honestly** about these real risks and dangers with children will give them the awareness they need.

If your child has a squishy toy, it can help to use it as a **starting point for conversation** rather than simply removing it.



# catch 22

Since 1788, with the formation of The Philanthropic Society, we have designed and delivered services that build resilience and aspiration in people and communities.

They envision a strong society where everyone has the same three things to thrive:

- a purpose
- a good place to live,
- good people around them.



## Knife Crime Awareness Webinar

To mark **Knife Crime Awareness Week** (commencing 18 May 2026) **Catch-22** are hosting a **Knife Crime Awareness Webinar** specifically for **parents and carers**.

Webinar details:

Date: Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2026

Time: 5pm-6pm

Location: (Online)

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/1989221539172?aff=oddtcreator>

This informative session is designed to support parents and carers in:

- **Understanding** what knife crime is
- Exploring the **significant impact** knife crime has on **children, young people and their families and communities**
- Identifying the **types of weapons** most commonly carried
- Exploring **accessibility** and how & where knives are being obtained from
- Emphasising the importance of **early intervention, education and multi-agency safeguarding** in preventing knife crime

The session will also provide an opportunity to ask questions and access further support.

If you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to get in touch with [Kai.Abbotts@catch-22.org.uk](mailto:Kai.Abbotts@catch-22.org.uk)