

THE APPLETON SCHOOL

Safeguarding Newsletter - Autumn term



Welcome to the Spring term edition of our Safeguarding Newsletter. At The Appleton School, safeguarding is at the heart of everything we do. Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our students is not just a responsibility - it is a commitment we all share. By working together - staff, parents, students and the wider community - we can create an environment where every young person feels secure, supported, and empowered to thrive. This was once again recognised by the Local Authority in our biannual safeguarding audit that the school commissions and by Ofsted in November 2024 –

“There is a welcoming culture in this school. Staff develop positive relationships with pupils. They know the pupils very well. This ensures pupils are happy and feel safe here.”

“Pupils are taught to stay safe and healthy through a well-considered personal development provision.”

“The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.”

These findings are backed up by the overall feeling amongst students that they ‘feel safe’ at our school when asked to complete student surveys.

Our goal is to provide a safe and nurturing space where every student can fully embody our core values of Resilience, Community, Respect and Aspiration.



In this addition, we will share key updates, guidance, and resources to help safeguard our students both in and outside of school. I have intentionally included the same information from the last newsletter around knife crime as it remains a major concern in society today. Together, we can continue to build a school community where every child feels safe, heard, and ready to succeed.

Thank you for your continued support.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

We know the last few years have been challenging for our young people. We thought it would be useful to signpost additional support that is available for those who need it.

Useful Websites:

NSPCC: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

Childline: <https://www.childline.org.uk/>

Self harm: <https://www.selfharm.co.uk/>

Youngminds: <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-a-z-mental-health-guide/self-harm/>

CAMHS: <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/>

Kooth: <https://www.kooth.com/>

Families can listen to these podcasts produced to help parents and carers understand mental health problems in young people

<https://www.annafreud.org/parents-and-carers/child-in-mind/>

NHS: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/getting-help-for-domestic-violence/>

MindCare@Appleton

This page has been thoughtfully crafted with your needs in mind, offering practical strategies and valuable resources to support your physical, emotional, and psychological well-being.

Here, you'll discover strategies, tips, and insights to cultivate a healthy and balanced lifestyle. Whether it's dealing with stress, managing emotions, or finding ways to stay active and positive, we've got you covered.

It's also a place to access essential resources and information shared for significant wellbeing events that matter to our Appleton community. Whether it's exam preparation, or wellness campaigns, you'll find timely updates and helpful resources right here.

Remember, your well-being is of utmost importance, and we are committed to providing you with the tools and knowledge you need to flourish. Together, let's make Appleton a place where every student shines brightly!



E-safety

The online world is a wonderful place for young people to explore, with unprecedented opportunities for learning and creativity. But just like the real world there are risks and dangers they should be aware of, and which we can act to protect them from. Although the academy teaches students e-safety as part of the curriculum, it is vital that parents are aware of the risks too, and what they can do to develop a culture of e-safety in the home.

This page has some helpful resources for parents that will enable you to help your child stay safe online. If you have any concerns about your child's e-safety, there is always someone at the academy who is available to talk to you. Simply call the school and ask for our Safeguarding Officer, Steven Stockdale, or speak to any member of staff. Our e-safety policies can be found at:

https://www.theappletonschool.org/user/pages/08.legal-information/07.policies/ICT_and_Internet_Acceptable_Use_Policy.pdf

https://www.theappletonschool.org/user/pages/08.legal-information/07.policies/Online_Safety_Policy.pdf

Monitoring online activity

We monitor students' use of the internet by using filters and monitoring systems (SENSO/SMOOTHWALL). SENSO is monitoring software that can monitor a wide range of devices. It monitors against an inbuilt library of keywords and phrases organised into categories with each one given a default severity rating. SMOOTHWALL filters any inappropriate searches/content.

The library is developed in partnership with a number of charities and specialist organisations within law enforcement and child protection. The programme monitors both online and offline material and recognises inappropriate or harmful content, words and phrases.

A screen shot (known as a 'capture') plus other details is taken of every incident triggered, showing what was displayed at the time, who was involved and when the incident took place. This information is shared with the DSL and Headteacher, allowing staff to implement further actions or interventions as required.

Think You Know

The [Think You Know website](#) is created by the police for parents of children at secondary school. It contains useful information about:

- what children are doing online
- how to talk to children about what they are doing online
- what risks your child might face
- what tools are there to help them stay safe.

Think You Know have also produced a [Parents Guide to E-Safety](#) and also the following booklets to provide parents/carers with helpful information on how to explore and monitor their children's apps.

- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [Kik messenger](#)
- [Snapchat](#)
- [WhatsApp](#)
- [YouTube](#)

Sexting/trading nudes

The term 'sexting' describes the use of technology to share intimate images of yourself. It's a word-mix of sex and texting. The content can vary, from text messages to images of partial nudity to sexual images or videos. For more information and guidance for parents and children [visit the Childnet website](#).

What is a 'money mule'?

More young people across the UK are being approached by criminals who want to use their bank accounts or pin numbers for criminal purposes. This is called being a 'money mule'. A 'mule account' is used to hide money that comes from illegal activities. The young person may be asked to transfer money, allow access to their account or open up a new one. Sometimes criminals will try and force young people to become mules or they might offer financial incentives such as cash or mobile phone credit.

We need your support to help educate young people around this issue. Has your child been approached or asked for their bank account to be used? Check any bank statements. Is there money going in and out that cannot be accounted for? Ask questions if you are unsure about anything.

Bank accounts are private and must only be used by the account holder. Any misuse could not only be criminal but could cause serious credit issues for the account holder. Police are working in partnership with many schools across London to combat this issue. If you have any concerns, speak to your Safer Schools Police Officer (see below) and/or Action Fraud (www.actionfraud.police.uk) on 0300 123 2040.

Drugs networks ('County lines')

The National Crime Agency, the UK body charged with fighting organised crime, is very concerned that crime gangs are taking over drug networks using telephone hotlines (called 'county lines') and recruiting vulnerable people, often children, to act as couriers and to sell drugs. Please see our [information sheet about 'county lines' and 'cuckooing'](#) the practice whereby professional drug dealers take over the property of a vulnerable person and use it as a place from which to run their drugs business. Below you will see some web links to various campaigns and research on county lines.

<https://www.fearless.org/en/campaigns/county-lines>

<https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-is-county-lines>

<https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/what-we-do/crime-threats/drug-trafficking/county-lines>

https://crimestoppers-uk.org/about-the-charity/who-we-work-with/trusts-and-foundations/county-lines?gclid=EAlaIQobChMIq_v24_Wx4wIVRbDtCh2tlwY-EAAYAyAAEgL-ufD_BwE

'Blue v Red' – recent social media trend

We wanted to take this opportunity to follow up on the letter that you were sent on 02.03.2026. As many of you may know, these social media posts have been encouraging young people to meet with other at rival schools with the intention to engage in physical altercations. Thank you to those who have already contacted the school with any information you have seen on this. We encourage parents to keep give us any such information as we have been and will continue to pass on this information to the Police. We understand that only yesterday the police in London confirmed that had arrested a child and adult in connection with the social media posts.

Other useful resources

[List of helpful online resources](#) produced by Childnet

www.childnet.com – Visit the 'Know It All' Section for an interactive guide about online safety

www.getsafeonline.org – Free up-to-date security advice

www.cybermentors.org.uk – Online support for children

www.ceop.police.uk – Website of the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/professionals-online-safety-helpline> - resources for professionals working in the area of safeguarding with children and young people, but could be of interest to parents too.

Operation Encompass

The Appleton School is part of Operation Encompass.

Operation Encompass is a police and school partnership sharing information about domestic abuse incidents to provide support to children before the start of the next school day. If your child is involved in such an incident, a police officer will notify your school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (Mr Stockdale). This allows school staff to offer timely, confidential support and understand the child's circumstances, helping to mitigate the negative impacts of domestic abuse.

What is it?

- **A police and school partnership:**

The police share information with schools about incidents of domestic abuse.

- **Early intervention:**

The goal is to get information to the school quickly, before the next school day, to enable timely support.

- **Supports children:**

This helps children who have been exposed to domestic abuse, which can impact their emotional, social, and academic wellbeing.

How it helps your child:

- **Timely support:**

Schools can offer immediate support to the child if they've witnessed or been involved in a domestic incident.

- **Confidentiality:**

The information is shared confidentially with a designated person (Mr Stockdale) at the school.

- **Tailored support:**

School staff can then provide support based on the child's specific needs and wishes.

What to do if you have questions:

- **Contact your school's safeguarding lead:** You can reach out to your school's Designated Safeguarding Lead for more information and support.
- **Visit the national website:** For general information, visit the [Operation Encompass website](#).