

SAFEGUARDING



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Welcome to our Autumn 2024 Edition

Staff change

We would like to welcome Louise Denton to our team. She has taken on the role of Safeguarding and Outreach Worker and is really keen to get to know our families and support where she can. If you feel you would like support from Louise please reach out through the school reception on MERreception@maidenerleghtrust.org. She has also created a list of local outreach support services in Reading. This can be found on the school website [here](#), and includes a variety of local offerings such as Cowshed, New Beginnings, Alana House. The document provides contact information and a description of their offerings.

Exploitation

Exploitation is when someone takes advantage of a child for their own profit or gain. It can be difficult for a child to recognise and they may not realise they are being coerced. It can take different forms which include:

- Child Criminal Exploitation—when a child is manipulated or pressured to take part in criminal activity, including selling drugs
- Child Sexual Exploitation—a type of sexual abuse when someone is coerced, manipulated or pressured into sexual activity. This may be in exchange for gifts, affection, money or social status,

Some common signs of exploitation are shown in the image below.

There is further information, including support and guidance for parents at the links below:

[Live Safe](#)

[Barnados](#)

[Ivison Trust](#)

Young People & Self Harm

Self harm is when someone intentionally harms themselves to manage their emotions. They may be experiencing a lot of intense and emotional thoughts and can feel that hurting themselves is the only way to cope.

It can be hard to recognise the signs of self harm within young people. Some things to look out for are:

- Unexplained cuts, bruises, burns or bald patches
- Covering their body
- Seeming low or depressed
- Blaming themselves

Finding out your child has self-harmed can be hard to accept, and it is natural to feel anxious or upset, however it is important to try to support your child through this time.

NSPCC and Young Mind have some advice and guidance for parents around supporting your children through this time:

[NSPCC](#)

[Young Minds](#)

In school we are also able to provide support. Please contact us to discuss if this is something you are worried about.



Edibles

With the half term approaching, we wanted to highlight the dangers of “edibles”. This is a term used to refer to any food product that contains cannabis (THC). They are illegal but available in many forms, including cakes, sweets, chocolate and drinks.

Because of how these are packaged they can be very appealing to young people and teenagers, who may call them ‘gummies’ or ‘bites’. Sometimes it can even be difficult to tell them apart from “normal” items.

Unlike smoking cannabis, swallowing cannabis is much easier to consume, however it takes longer to take effect. As a result, those taking them are likely to eat too many due to the delayed effect.

Side effects can include; psychotic episodes, disorientation and confusion, changes in perception, depression, paranoia, heart problems, panic attacks, nausea or vomiting, hallucinations, memory loss, feeling lethargic, loss of consciousness, breathing difficulties, insomnia and anxiety. If you are worried about your child having consuming edibles we would recommend you seek medical advice.

For further advice, or guidance around how to support those you may be worried about please visit the Talk to Frank website: <https://www.talktofrank.com/get-help/concerned-about-a-child>



PARENT AND STUDENT GUIDES



At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents and carers with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with their children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. For further guides, hints and tips please visit nationalcollege.com.

10 Top Tips on Supporting Children with SELF-REGULATION

Children need to learn to understand and recognise their emotions, while finding healthy ways to process them. Emotional self-regulation, however, depends heavily on age and development. While very young ones or children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) may find it particularly challenging to self-regulate, nurturing these important skills can be hugely beneficial. Here are ten top tips for supporting children with their self-regulation.

1. DESIGNATE A TRUSTED ADULT



It's vital that children feel safe and know that there's someone they can always go to for help if they need it. Schedule consistent times for the child to develop a relationship with this person – ideally through play and games – allowing trust to grow and ensuring that the child is more likely to come forward if anything is wrong, rather than hiding their emotions.

2. MEET CHILDREN HALFWAY

Unless you know where a child is developmentally and tailor your approach to their needs, you're less likely to have an impact. In particular, younger ones and children with SEND can struggle to self-regulate and instead rely on others to help them. We call this 'co-regulation'. Rather than offering strategies for self-regulation, it could be better to start co-regulating with a trusted adult first.

3. FACTOR IN THEIR BASIC NEEDS

Remember that for a child to develop emotional regulation skills, their basic needs must be met first. Children who are hungry, tired, cold and so on – as well as those who have experienced adverse childhood experiences – may struggle to self-regulate. Before you develop strategies with any child, make sure they feel safe, secure and comfortable in themselves.

4. REMAIN PATIENT



If a child is struggling with their emotions, it can often become difficult to stay calm. Remember that dysregulation is beyond their control, so a display of frustration or anger could negatively impact the situation. Instead, children need to be met with comfort and understanding to help them manage these problematic feelings.

5. BE 'A DYSREGULATION DETECTIVE'



While some children can tell you why they become dysregulated, many others can't. You could investigate potential triggers by observing the child and talking to their family. When the child becomes dysregulated, note down details like the time, what they're doing and who they're with – the trigger may be someone they sit near, an unmet sensory need or something else entirely. Once we identify some triggers, we can help to avoid or overcome them.

6. USE SUITABLE LITERATURE



There are some wonderful books that can help you teach self-regulation to children. Reading these with a child can be especially powerful. Take time to discuss the content: ask questions about what feelings the characters had, why they felt that way and what strategies helped them. It can also be useful to refer back to snippets of these books at appropriate moments.

7. TRY SENSORY RESOURCES



An overlap between sensory needs and emotional regulation is possible. Children may struggle to self-regulate if they're experiencing sensory overload (a noisy classroom, for example). Positive sensory input can help calm them down. Use resources such as weighted blankets and fibre-optic lights. Of course, what works for one child might not work for another – so it's important to offer a choice of resources to discover which they prefer.

8. NURTURE INDEPENDENCE



If you feel it's appropriate, let children try out these strategies alone. Always offer them a choice: they could listen to music when they're feeling stressed, for example, or they could write down their worries or draw something to represent how they feel. This may take time for the child to get used to, so be patient. Encourage them to share any helpful strategies with a trusted adult.

9. MODEL GENUINE FEELINGS



Children learn a lot just from watching grown-ups. Don't be afraid to show your own emotions and self-regulation strategies. While you'll obviously want to avoid sharing anything too personal with children, they should still see us experiencing and handling our own feelings. Tell them how you are feeling, then show them how to respond in a healthy manner.

10. FORMULATE A PLAN



As much as we try to prevent children from experiencing dysregulation, it's always wise to have an appropriate plan for when it does happen. Discuss this strategy with the child (if appropriate) and their family. The best approach for an individual child is often a bespoke one; it's hugely important to know in advance what might help and what could worsen the situation.

Meet Our Expert

Georgina Durant is an author, former teacher, Special Educational Needs Coordinator and the founder of the award-winning SEN Resources Blog, where she shares activities, advice and recommendations for parents and teachers of children with SEND.



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BACK TO SCHOOL

Online Safety Tips for Children

Wow, it's September already! The month when autumn officially starts and ... oh yeah, the beginning of a new school year. Every cloud has a silver lining though! Another term means new friends to make, different stuff to learn, fresh online trends to jump on and exciting new games to play on your phone, computer or console. We've compiled a list of our top tips to ensure that - whether you're going online to chat, research things or just have fun - you can do it safely.

Be cautious with your profile

Be careful not to give out too much info on your social media or gaming profiles. Details like your full name, address or school's name could all help strangers to actually find you offline. A trusted adult can help you make your profiles private - so only your family and actual friends can contact you.

Lock your devices

Taking your phone or tablet to school? Turn password protection on. It keeps your private info safe and stops anyone accessing your device without permission. Passwords should be memorable to you - but difficult for anyone else to guess. Get a trusted adult to write it down in case you forget it!

Be smart with screen time

Too much screen time, especially just before bed, can affect your quality of sleep. Losing sleep, or not sleeping well enough, messes with your concentration and energy levels. Try muting notifications so you don't get pinged late at night: you'll feel fresher and more focused the next day.

Know how to deal with bullies

Sadly there are people online who enjoy picking on other users. If you ever feel like you're being bullied online - by anyone, not just someone from school - talk to a trusted adult about it. Together, you can discuss possible steps, such as blocking or reporting the person who's targeting you.

Manage online relationships wisely

Most people in a relationship chat to their partner online. Just be mindful that once you send a pic or message (even if it's private), you no longer control who else might see it. Messaging someone you've never actually met - and who might not be who they say - is definitely best avoided.

React well to inappropriate content

When you're researching something online, there's always a chance of finding content that makes you feel uncomfortable or upset. If this happens, you can report it as inappropriate and (hopefully) get it taken down. Tell a trusted adult what happened: they'll help you decide what to do next.

Report offensive in-game chat

If you game online with your mates, you'll know things can get competitive and heated on the in-game chat. Playing against people you don't know (especially if they're older) raises the risk of offensive comments and even threats. Our advice? Find out how to block or mute those bad losers.

Learn to spot fake news

If you're looking into a topic for homework or a project, be careful not to get taken in by fake news: content that's deliberately created to mislead people. Check the story with credible sources, like the BBC or Sky News. Trust your instincts, too - if it seems too unbelievable to be true, it's probably fake.

Keep it 'real' with online friends

Everyone enjoys adding friends and followers on social media. It's important, though, that the people you interact with online really are your friends. If they're just random people you've connected with to increase your contacts, you don't know if they could be trolls or bullies (or worse).

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