



# Keeping children safe: important information for parents

We want to help you keep your child safe, secure and happy. Please take a look at this information about:

- Who you can contact if you have any concerns
- Signs of drug or alcohol abuse
- How to be alert for signs of sexual exploitation
- How to help your child to stay safe online.

## Introduction

Helping children to stay safe, secure and happy is at the heart of everything we do at Trinity Academy. As an academy, we want to support you as parents with the latest information and guidance available about some of the potential risks our young people face today.

We appreciate that as a parent you may be very aware of the signs that may indicate that there is an issue. However, we do encourage you to openly discuss these often challenging subjects with your child. If you have any concerns about your child, or that a child at the academy is experiencing any welfare or safety issues, please contact us. All students have also been given appropriate information about being self-aware about these risks, and how they can stay safe. As part of this, we have reminded them about who they can speak to at the academy.

### Who you can contact

**Mr R McGinty** - Designated Safeguarding Lead

**Miss G Bailey** - Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

### Any Student Wellbeing Manager or any House Manager

These individuals are Child Protection specialists and will ensure that your concerns are handled appropriately and with the best interests and safety of the young person at the heart.

### How to contact any of our Child Protection leads:

- Via telephone on 01422 831011
- By e-mailing us at [admin@sbhs.co.uk](mailto:admin@sbhs.co.uk)

*“We want to ensure that every child is safe and happy. As part of this, we want to ensure that every parent is equipped with guidance and information about the risks young people may face today. As an academy, we are here to support you as a parent and of course the young people in our care to ensure that they can succeed and achieve.”*

## Be aware...drug and alcohol abuse

Drug and alcohol abuse is a rapidly growing concern amongst children and teenagers within the UK. As a parent and adult, you will be aware of the many dangers of substance abuse. Children who consume one alcoholic drink per week, or abuse drugs, face a range of serious increased risks ranging from alcohol poisoning, mental health issues, vulnerability and a decreased rate of brain development.

Statistics show that on average, children in the UK have their first alcoholic drink aged 13, and 60% of 15-16 year olds regard drinking as part of growing up.

It is also estimated that 36% of school aged children have admitted to taking an illegal drug.

The information below highlights some of the signs that your child may be abusing drugs or alcohol. Please seek any advice or support you may need.

### Be aware...of the signs of being under the influence of drugs or alcohol

**Physical:** fatigue, repeated health complaints, red and glazed eyes, and a lasting cough.

**Emotional:** personality change, sudden mood changes, irresponsible behaviour, low self-esteem, poor judgment, depression and a general lack of interest.

**Family:** starting arguments, breaking rules, or withdrawing from the family.

**School:** decreased intent, a negative attitude, high absence, truancy, and behaviour problems.

**Social:** new friends who are less interested in home and school activities, problems with the police, and changes to appearance and dress style.

Of course, some of these signs can be due to something as simple as exam pressure. However, as a parent being armed with the facts can enable you to have a discussion about this important topic and avoid it becoming an issue in the future.

For further advice visit [www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)

## Be aware...Child Sexual Exploitation

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is classified as a type of sexual abuse in which children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It is of course a highly sensitive and difficult subject, but by making yourself aware you can be alert to the signs - whether this is in relation to your own child or a young person that you know.

There are some startling facts about CSE, and in today's world of social media, young people face risks from online sources. Some of these facts include:

- Almost 98,000 images and videos of children as young as 11 were hacked from Snapchat and posted online.
- Over 2,700 children were identified as needing protection from sexual abuse last year.
- 1 in 20 children in the UK have been sexually abused.
- 1 in 5 indecent images of children shared online were taken by the child themselves.

CSE can take a number of forms, and as parent you should be aware that there are considered to be three main types:

### **Inappropriate relationships**

Usually involving one perpetrator who has inappropriate power or control over a young person. There is often a significant age gap and the victim may believe that they are in a loving relationship.

### **'Boyfriend' model**

The perpetrator befriends and grooms the young person into a 'relationship' and then convinces them or forces them to have sex with friends or associates. This is sometimes associated with gang activity.

### **Organised sexual exploitation**

Young people are passed through networks where they are forced into sexual activity.

## Be aware...of the signs of CSE

Grooming and sexual exploitation can be very difficult to identify. Warning signs can sometimes be mistaken for 'normal' teenage behaviour and/or development. Below you can find some of the warning signs to be aware of:

- Missing school regularly or staying out all night.
- Change in behaviour - becoming aggressive and disruptive or quiet and withdrawn.
- Unexplained gifts or new possessions such as clothes, jewellery, mobile phones or money that can't be accounted for.
- Appearing to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Being picked up or dropped off in cars by unknown adults.
- A significantly older 'boyfriend,' or 'friend,' or lots of new friends.
- Spending an excessive amount of time online, and becoming increasingly secretive about time spent online.
- Sudden involvement in criminal behaviour or increased offending.
- Sexual health problems.

There are a number of agencies that can support you if you feel any child may be the victim of CSE:

- NPSCC - 24/7 trained helpline counsellors - call 0808 800 5000 or e-mail [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)
- Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOPS) - advice and guidance for parents and children visit [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)
- SaySomething - support network for families affected by CSE. Call or text 116000 or visit [www.stop-cse.org/saysomething](http://www.stop-cse.org/saysomething)
- If you have any concerns that a child you know may be a victim of Child Sexual Exploitation report it to West Yorkshire Police by calling 101 or you can call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111. In an emergency, or if a crime is ongoing, always dial 999.

***“Being equipped with the knowledge of what CSE can look like is an important part of ensuring that as adults we can protect all children and young people. All parents are encouraged to talk to their child about the different forms CSE can take and how they need to be alert to the approaches a potential predator may try to take.”***

## **Be aware...of how to help your child stay safe online**

The internet has of course opened up a world of positives, but as a parent you will be aware that the internet also presents a number of risks.

As your child grows older, they will naturally become more independent online. The majority of teenagers have grown up with the internet, and as with anything there is the potential to explore, try new things and sometimes push the boundaries.

Technology and social media have changed the way we all communicate, and young people in particular may use this to explore, be creative or express themselves. However, by doing this they can increase their vulnerability to the following:

- Cyberbullying
- Online predators and grooming
- Viewing inappropriate websites
- Viewing of pornography
- Posting information online that may be damaging to their reputation
- Loss of control over personal pictures and videos.

## **Be aware...staying safe online**

Of course, the internet and social media are part of daily life. However, there are some simple steps you can take as a parent to ensure that your child is aware of the potential risks and can protect themselves online. Some ideas include:

### **Ensure your private life remains private**

Many social media sites have automatic settings that mean a user's profile is completely open to anyone who wants to look. Speak to your child about ensuring that they change their settings - they wouldn't let a complete stranger look at pictures on their phone, or read a personal diary, but without the correct settings on an online profile, this could potentially happen!

### **Set boundaries**

Set boundaries in the online world just as you would in normal everyday life. Keep track of what your child might see, who they are talking to, and how long they spend online.

## Parental controls

The majority of internet providers offer a 'Parental Control' option, enabling you to limit and monitor what your child is doing online. You may wish to use this, and also sit with your child to ensure that their privacy settings on social media accounts allow only friends and family to view personal information.

### Be aware...of how you can report issues

If you suspect that any child could be facing online abuse, you can report it via the 'settings' tab. For example, on Facebook you can 'report page' and on Twitter 'report tweet.'

### Use the CEOP button



*The CEOP button is featured on most social media websites (usually in the bottom left hand corner), this will take you directly to CEOP. The icon will look like this.*

The CEOP button allows you to instantly report anything online to the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre, 24 hours a day. Children and young people can also use this button to report a person or a website. We encourage parents to ensure that their child understands that this button helps them to remain safe online. This button is on the academy's website.

## Local organisations

There are number of local organisations that can support any child or young person at risk of sexual exploitation, online or otherwise.

### The Children's Society in Calderdale – Safe Hands

The Safe Hands project works to support children and young people who are involved in or vulnerable to sexual exploitation in its many forms.

[www.childrensociety.org.uk](http://www.childrensociety.org.uk)

### BLAST

Supports boys and young men who have been, are being, or are at risk of being sexually exploited.

[www.mesmac.co.uk/blast](http://www.mesmac.co.uk/blast)

Tel: 0113 2444209



**Trinity Academy Sowerby Bridge**  
**Albert Road**  
**Sowerby Bridge**  
**West Yorkshire**  
**HX6 2NW**

**T: 01422 831001**  
**[sowerby.trinitymat.org/](http://sowerby.trinitymat.org/)**