



March 2026

SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER

This month, we want to highlight the growing number of online-related incidents we are responding to across different age ranges in school. These include learners being unkind to each other through messaging, learners making and uploading videos online without parental permission, and learners using language linked to online games that are not age-appropriate. While the online world offers many benefits, it also brings significant risks, particularly when a child's use is unsupervised.

Research shows that excessive use of social media can increase a young person's vulnerability to anxiety, depression, poor self-esteem, and negative body image. It can also impact healthy sleep routines, which in turn affects their learning, concentration, and wellbeing in school.

Age Restrictions

Please be mindful that online games and social media platforms have strict age restrictions to help keep children safe. Most social media platforms are not suitable for anyone under 13, and some require users to be even older.

We encourage families to discuss online safety at home, supervise device use where appropriate, and speak with us if you ever have concerns. Together, we can help keep all our learners safe, kind, and responsible online.

Access & Response Team (ART)

The Access and Response Team (ART) are the "front door" of children's and young peoples' services in South Glos.

Tel: 01454 866000 (office hours) 01454 615165 (out of hours/weekends)

E-mail: accessandresponse@southglos.gov.uk

Notes: Office hours are Mon - Thurs 9.00 – 5.00 and Friday 9.00-4.30

The Safeguarding Team

If you have any concerns about a child's welfare or safety, please speak to a member of our safeguarding team.



Mrs Rea
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)



Miss McDonnell & Miss Black
Deputy Designated
Safeguarding Leads (DDSL)

CONTACT THE WFA SAFEGUARDING TEAM



Safeguarding@wfa.clf.uk



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SPOTLIGHT ON: Bullying

Understanding Bullying

Learning to understand and manage conflict is an important part of growing up. However, bullying is not the same as a simple disagreement or 'falling out' between friends. Research shows that experiencing bullying can have a significant impact on a child's wellbeing, confidence and mental health, both during childhood and into adulthood.

To ensure we can prevent bullying, act quickly when it occurs and avoid misidentifying behaviour, it is vital that we have a shared definition.

At Wallscourt Farm Academy, we define bullying as:

The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological, and it can take place face-to-face or online.

Types of Bullying Behaviour - Bullying behaviour can include:

- **Physical:** pushing, poking, kicking, hitting, biting, pinching.
- **Verbal:** name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, belittling.
- **Emotional:** isolating others, tormenting, hiding belongings, threatening gestures, ridicule, humiliation, intimidation, exclusion, manipulation and coercion.
- **Sexual:** unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, abusive comments, homophobic or sexist language, exposure to inappropriate content.
- **Online / Cyber:** posting on social media, sharing images without consent, sending unkind messages, social exclusion in online spaces.

Useful Contacts:

North Bristol Food Bank: 0117 472 5172

Nextlink Domestic Abuse support services: Call: 0800 4700 280 Text: 0740 789 5620 or email: enquiries@nextlinkhousing.co.uk

Kooth: a free, safe and anonymous online mental health and wellbeing service for children and young people (10-18)

YoungMinds: supporting children and young people's mental health

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

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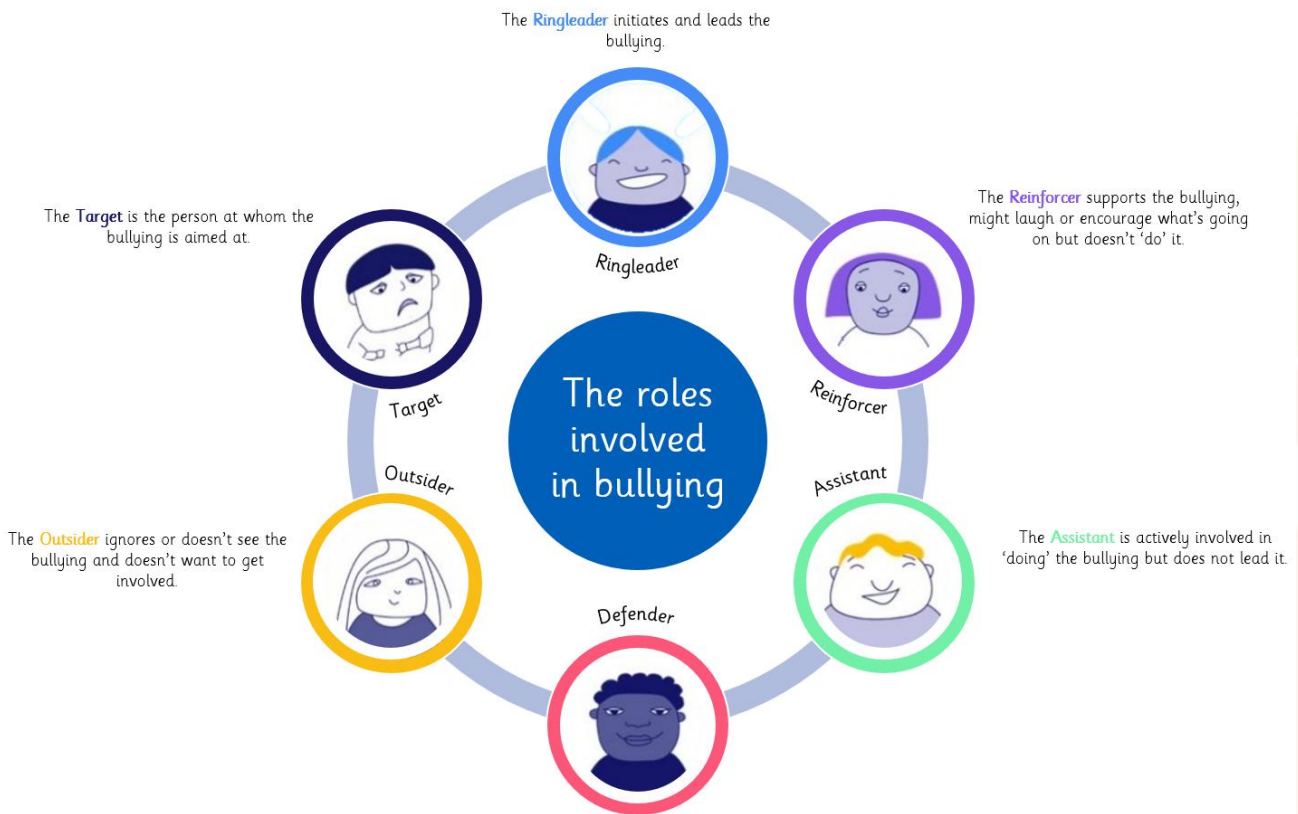
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“It’s Just Banter...”

Learners may sometimes describe harmful behaviour as “banter”, “just a joke”, or “just messing around.” It is important to recognise that if the behaviour is hurtful, repeated, or involves a power imbalance, it may be bullying, even if it is presented as humour. We encourage all learners to speak up if something said or done makes them feel uncomfortable or targeted.

The Roles Involved in Bullying

Bullying is rarely limited to just the child displaying the behaviour and the child being targeted. Children may take on different roles within a bullying situation. Understanding these roles helps adults intervene effectively and allows us to teach children how to be safe, responsible and kind members of our community.



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10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

ENCOURAGING HEALTHY FRIENDSHIPS

Navigating the complexities of childhood and adolescent friendships can be challenging – but with the right guidance, children and young people can cultivate meaningful, supportive relationships, some of which may last for many years. These top tips provide a comprehensive approach to fostering healthy friendships among children and young people. It's important to remember, however, that each child is different, and will require an individual approach to relationship support.

1 GRANT FRIENDSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Encouraging children and young people to join extracurricular activities can foster healthy friendships by providing shared interests and common ground. Engaging in these pastimes offers a platform for interaction, sometimes alleviating the social pressure of knowing what to say, and helps children develop meaningful connections.

2 LEAD BY EXAMPLE

The children and young people in our lives see how we behave, the connections that we've made and the interactions between us and others. When we model healthy friendships, we set an example and help youngsters to understand what healthy friendships looks like and how to navigate them.

3 HELP THEM LOVE THEMSELVES

Healthy friendships aren't just about dynamics with other people. They're about our relationship with ourselves. For overall wellbeing, it's important for a child to have the space to build their self-esteem and a positive self-image, as these factors can have a notable influence on the friendships they form throughout life.

4 MONITOR SCREEN TIME

Too much screen time can affect some children's wellbeing in general, but it can specifically impact friendships if it results in fewer positive social interactions. In some cases, reducing screen time and encouraging children and young people to find ways to interact face-to-face can have positive results. It's also important to remember that young people can make positive friendships online, but they will require support to do this safely.

5 TEACH PROBLEM-SOLVING

Inevitably, friendships can run into problems. However, this is also an opportunity to support children and young people to work through any difficulties that may arise. It can be tempting to intervene and try to fix these issues for those involved, but helping them consider ways of resolving conflict or managing difficult situations for themselves can help them create stronger friendships.

6 EMPOWER THE CHILD

When we give children and young people the confidence to choose their friends, navigate interpersonal boundaries and consider how they want to interact with the different people around them, we empower them to take control of the friendships they have. When young people feel in control of these things, they're more likely to make positive choices and remain aware of the signs of a negative relationship.

7 TEACH EMPATHY

'Healthy friendships' doesn't always mean 'perfect.' Sometimes, disagreements can happen. When we teach children and young people to have empathy, we help them to see both sides of a relationship; to be mindful of the challenges a friend might be facing or whatever else might be going on. This can help children and young people to build stronger friendships.

8 BE OPEN TO QUESTIONS

Talking to young people about their friendships, who they spend time with and who they interact with can open the door to questions if they have concerns. Initially, these queries may be straightforward, but if we are receptive to discussion from the outset, young people are more likely to come to us for help when they are older as well.

9 UNDERSTAND BOUNDARIES

One of the keys to a healthy friendship is honouring boundaries. This can include anything from respecting personal space and belongings to acceptable language and behaviour. Understanding the importance of setting these limits and upholding those set by others can help children stay safe. If young people figure out their boundaries and feel comfortable enforcing them, they're more likely to call someone out if they go too far.

10 SPOT THE SIGNS

We can't always supervise young people: sometimes, we need to step back and give them some space. However, it's important to consider any indicators that they may be struggling in their friendships. Are they becoming increasingly irritable? Does their behaviour alter when they've been with their friends? Are they becoming withdrawn or reluctant to take part in certain activities? These could all be signs that they're finding things difficult, and we should remain alert to such changes.

Meet Our Expert

Becky Dawson is an experienced educator who has worked in primary and secondary schools for 20 years. She is a facilitator, consultant and coach working with young people and the adults who work with them, with a focus on developing understanding and skills around mental health, wellbeing and safeguarding.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College