



Safeguarding Newsletter – April 2019

Helping Year 11 Students with Exam Stress

On Friday 22nd and Monday 25th March local wellbeing group **Karma Kids** visited the academy to give our Year 11 students advice and guidance on coping with stress.



The sessions incorporated focused breathing techniques as well as mindfulness exercises and methods to develop positive attitudes. We hope that this will help our students feel better prepared for the summer examinations.



Instagram



In March, our Safeguarding Team were alerted to a series of inappropriate communications targeting students in the academy. The academy's Designated Safeguarding Leads are working in partnership with local police and relevant agencies to address the issues of online grooming, and we would ask parents to be vigilant when monitoring their child's social media accounts.

We suggest that parents:

- Are aware that Instagram advises that no child under the age of 13 has access to an Instagram account
- Conduct frequent reviews of the child's contacts on social media
- Children's accounts are set to private

If you think your child has received inappropriate communications via social media, please contact the local police immediately.

Cycle Helmet Launch – 23rd April

Recently, a number of students have been injured whilst cycling to or from the academy and in some instances have required significant medical attention. In addition, Duty Staff have responded to incidents of dangerous cycling behaviour in the local community before and after the school day.

At Belfairs, we currently have the highest amount of cyclists in the borough and we are enforcing a new rule in order to help support the safety of our students before and after school.

From Tuesday 23rd April students will only be permitted to ride their bicycles to the academy if they are wearing a cycle helmet.

To support parents and carers with this we are working in partnership with **Cycles UK** which is based on the London Road, Leigh-on-sea, to provide helmets at a discounted rate.

Cycles UK have agreed to a 25% discount for all Belfairs students and a further 10% discount on bike accessories.

For more information, please see our letter dated 12th March on our academy website or contact Mr Williams if you would like to speak to someone at the academy.





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County Lines

This term, both staff and students have received information regarding emerging concerns around County Lines criminal activity in Essex.

"County Lines" is a national term used by police to commonly describe the approach taken by gangs and criminal networks originating from urban areas, who travel to locations such as county or coastal towns to sell class A drugs.

Gangs typically use children, young people and vulnerable adults to deliver drugs to customers and this often involves the child being subjected to deception, intimidation, violence and grooming.

The county lines business model is linked by a marketed mobile phone line through which users phone for specific drugs to be supplied.

There are several signs to look out for that might suggest a young person's involvement in County Lines activity. These are:

- Change in behaviour
- Signs of assault and/or malnutrition
- Access to numerous phones
- Use of unusual terms e.g. going county
- Associating with gangs
- Unexplained bus or train tickets
- School truancy or going missing
- Unexplained cash or gifts (clothes, trainers)

If you are concerned about a young person and suspect that they might be vulnerable to County Lines activity, please contact the police or a member of the Academy's Safeguarding Team.

Who to contact?

If you would like to contact outside agencies for advice, help or guidance, please contact one of the numbers below:

First Contact Team (Social Care):
01702 215007 (Mon-Fri)

Out of Hours Team (Social Care):
08456061212 (365 days)

NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000

Childline: 0800 1111

Police:
999 (Emergency) or 101 (Non-Emergency)

Gang Activity

We have also been speaking to our young people regarding gang activity in the local area. This activity can encompass a range of issues from anti-social behaviour and vandalism to higher levels of criminal activity such as the drug trade and knife crime.

Know the facts: Before you talk to your child about gangs, you'll need to make sure you know what you're talking about. There's a big difference between the fantasy of being in a gang and the reality, which may seem obvious to you but will not be so obvious to your child.

Know the signs: There are a number of warning signs to look out for which could suggest that your child is involved with a gang. Things like a change of appearance, new slang words, new friends and even falling out with old friends could all be significant.

What you can do: There are many things you can do to help prevent your child getting involved with a gang. The most important thing is to talk to and be open with your child, and be as involved in their life as possible.

For more advice on parental approaches to dealing with this issues please visit:

[Advice to Parents and Carers on Gangs](#)

Student Safety Audits

During April, students in Y7 to 10 will be completing a Student Safety audit. The purpose of this survey is to gain an insight into how well students feel able to keep themselves safe in the following areas of their lives, so we can support where necessary:

- Online/Social media
- In the local community either alone or with friends
- In relationships with others
- Making healthy choices about what to eat and drink
- General wellbeing

We would also welcome any comments from parents around promoting student safety in any of the areas listed above. Please contact Mr Evans for more information.

Belfairs Designated Safeguarding Leads:



Mrs Foster
Assistant Principal



Mr Zweistra
Vice Principal



Mr Evans
Assistant Principal