



Corfe Hills School

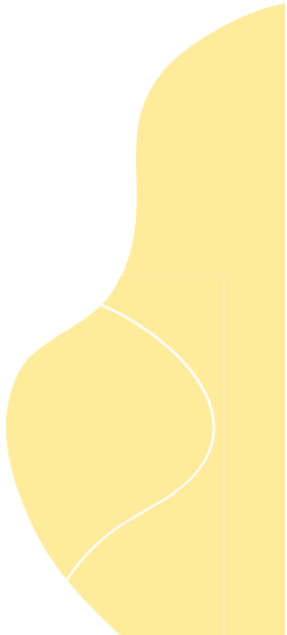


All you wanted to know about
RSHE but were too afraid to ask!



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Introduction

Welcome to Our Respectful Relationships & RSHE Journey

A message for parents, carers and young people

Growing up is an exciting, challenging and sometimes confusing journey. The teenage years bring new experiences, new responsibilities and new questions about friendships, relationships, identity, emotions and the world around us.

At school, our Respectful Relationships and RSHE (Relationships, Sex and Health Education) curriculum is designed to support young people as they develop into confident, thoughtful and respectful adults. It is about giving them the knowledge, understanding and skills they need not only for life now, but for the many relationships and decisions they will experience in the future.

The lessons we teach are about much more than information — they are about helping young people understand themselves and others.

We explore important life skills such as:

- building healthy relationships
- communicating clearly and listening well
- showing respect and kindness
- making safe and informed choices
- understanding emotions and wellbeing
- appreciating differences and valuing others

These are skills that will stay with young people throughout their lives — in friendships, family relationships, future workplaces, communities and personal relationships.

Working together: school and home

Parents and carers are a teenager's first and most important teachers. The relationship you have with your child continues to grow and change throughout secondary school, and the conversations you have at home play a vital role in helping them make sense of the world.

Sometimes teenagers may seem like they need more independence, and they may not always share everything straight away. This is a normal part of growing up. Our aim is to support that transition by helping families have open, positive conversations about the things that matter.

RSHE provides opportunities to talk about topics that naturally arise as children become young adults:

- How do I know if a friendship is healthy?
- How do I handle disagreement?
- How do I respect someone else's boundaries?
- How do I look after my own wellbeing?
- How do I make good choices when I feel pressured?
- How do I treat people fairly and with kindness?

These conversations do not need to be perfect. Often, a simple question, a shared discussion, or listening without judgement. The world teenagers are growing up in is changing quickly. They experience influences from friends, media, social platforms and wider society every day. Our role is to help them think critically, make informed choices and develop strong values that guide them.



Introduction

Helping young people become the adults we hope they will be

Every parent hopes their child will grow into someone who is happy, confident, compassionate and able to navigate life's challenges.

RSHE helps young people develop the qualities that support this:

- 📖 **Confidence** — understanding themselves and knowing their own worth
- 📖 **Respect** — recognising the value and experiences of others
- 📖 **Resilience** — managing challenges and asking for support when needed
- 📖 **Responsibility** — understanding the impact of their choices
- 📖 **Empathy** — seeing situations from another person's perspective

The world teenagers are growing up in is changing quickly. They experience influences from friends, media, social platforms and wider society every day. Our role is to help them think critically, make informed choices and develop strong values that guide them.

A shared journey

The teenage years are not just about children becoming more independent — they are also about families discovering a new kind of relationship together.

The conversations you begin now can help build trust for the future.

A teenager who knows they can ask questions, talk through worries and be listened to is more likely to seek support when they need it.

Together, we can help young people grow into adults who understand themselves, respect others and build positive relationships throughout their lives.

RSHE is not about preparing young people for one moment in time — it is about preparing them for life.

Families

Let me ask you—what does *family* mean to you? Take a minute to write down your own definition of a family. If you compare your definition of a family with others, likely you would find similarities. However, you might also see that there are ways that your definition of family may be different than others. For instance, would your definition of family include:

- A person who is not a blood or legal relative
- Romantic partners who are cohabiting and unmarried
- The adopted child of LGBTQ parents
- Children who were once stepsiblings after the remarried couple divorces
- A married couple without children
- A brother or sister who married outside the family's religious faith
- A beloved family dog or cat

You might be surprised to learn how others respond to these different family types. In fact, you might be surprised at how *you* respond to these different family types. What would be your reasoning for including a particular family type or leaving them out? Defining who is and is not family is foundational to your identity, communication, and how you live your life.

In reality, there are multiple ways to be a family. It is easy to see those with biological ties (blood, birth) or legal ties (marriage, adoption) as family. However, this would leave out many of the relationships listed above.

One definition of family might be: “*networks of people who share their lives over long periods of time, bound by ties of marriage, blood, law, or commitment, legal or otherwise, who consider themselves as family, and who share a significant history and anticipated future of functioning as a family*” (Braithwaite et al, 2025).

Whatever our view, family should be safe, stable, supportive and loving. Over the next page, we will look at the law around families; marriages, civil partnerships, forced marriage, the roles and responsibilities of parents, how family contributes to well being and where to seek help is relationships become unsafe.

Discussion point: What does family mean to us? How do we ensure that family holds our core values? How will we make time for family? How do we create safe spaces for all of us to be who we are?

Things we want	Things we don't
	

Families

Marriage and Civil Partnerships

Both provide the exact same legal rights but differ slightly in their ceremonies. Marriage requires saying prescribed vows whereas a civil partnership is a written contract—you don't have to say any vows aloud! Often terms such as husband or wife will be used for those married whereas civil partner is more usual for those in a partnership. Same-sex or opposite-sex couples can choose what ceremony to have. Whatever a couple choose, both are symbols of love and commitment.

'Common-law marriage'

The 'common law marriage' myth is the widespread, false belief that unmarried couples automatically gain the same legal and financial rights as married couples simply by living together for a certain period or having children. In the UK, this concept does not exist—cohabiting partners have no automatic legal rights to each other's property, assets, or pensions.

Forced marriage

In the UK forced marriage—where someone is pressured or abused to marry without consent—is illegal and recognised as both a form of domestic abuse and a serious human rights violation. (Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014).

It is also illegal to marry before the age of 18. (Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022).

The governments Forced Marriage unit can offer support +44 (0) 20 7008 0151

Changes over time

Any relationship will face changes over time as we all grow, have life experiences that shape and define us. Spending time with our loved ones, consistent reconnection, active appreciation and prioritising communication is key to maintain positive, healthy relationships. Recognising and accepting the changes people go through is a healthy way to handle these changes.

Parents: Roles and responsibilities:

These encompass legal, physical and emotional obligations and can include; providing a safe home, ensuring child's health and wellbeing, guiding education and offering emotional support necessary to develop into a responsible, healthy adult. Social and moral guidance is important as is the early years of a child's life for brain development.

Unsafe relationships

Judging if a relationship is unsafe can come down to your emotional and physical well-being. If you fear being yourself, are worried about family reactions, or feel manipulated or forced to behave a certain way or are being isolated from your friends, there is a problem. Family should offer comfort and respect, never fear or coercion. If you are ever concerned, talk to school or Childline either online or call 08001111.

Families

Families can be made up of all sorts of people from all beliefs and can change over time. It is important to understand that our perceptions of what our family is and who its members are can also change—we may be a 'straight' couple who have an LGBTQ child, or an atheist household whose child develops strong religious beliefs. Accepting our growing child for who they are can take time and patience and a level of understanding of difference from us. Ensuring your child knows you love *them* throughout periods of change and transition is crucial to maintain healthy family bonds. Taking the time to learn about who your child is and is becoming is *always* worth it.

HOW TO BE A GREAT PARENT ROLE MODEL

@BELIEVEPHQ



SUPPORT, ENCOURAGE AND BE PROUD OF YOUR CHILD



BUILD A STRONG RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR CHILD



ASK YOURSELF: WHAT TYPE OF PERSON DO I WANT MY CHILD TO BECOME



HELP YOUR CHILD TO PROBLEM SOLVE



MAINTAIN A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE



ROLE MODEL POSITIVE FAMILY TRAITS



DEVELOP A POSITIVE ATTITUDE



INSPIRE YOUR CHILD



LEARN HOW TO EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR CHILD



IDENTIFY THE POSITIVE THINGS YOU WANT TO ROLE MODEL



PRACTICE WHAT YOU PREACH



LEARN TO FORGIVE



DEVELOP SELF CONTROL



BE AWARE OF YOUR WORDS AND TONE OF YOUR VOICE

Baby Brain Facts

Babies:

- hear at around 24 weeks of pregnancy,
- recognise familiar voice at birth, and
- prefer faces to other shapes.

We are hardwired for relationships!

In the first years of life, more than 1 million new connections are formed every second in a baby's growing brain.

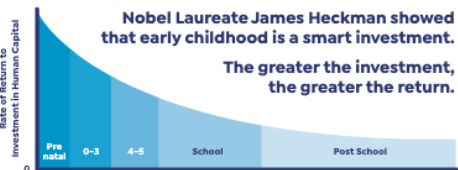
The way babies' brains develop is shaped by their interactions with others.

A range of research shows that the way parents interact with their babies predicts children's later development.



Family income and education is strongly related to children's development. Babies in higher income families are more likely to have frequent caregiver-child conversations. By age 3, babies with university educated parents have been found to have vocabularies 2-3 times larger than those whose parents had not completed school.

Children's development in the early years sets them on a positive trajectory, although what happens next also matters. Children's development at just 22 months has been shown to predict their qualifications at 26 years.



8,300 babies under one in England currently live in households where domestic violence, alcohol or drug dependency and severe mental illness are ALL present.

Rigorous long term studies found a range of returns between £4 and £9 for every pound invested in early intervention for low income families.



When parents experience problems in the first 1001 days it can have long term impacts on their children.

One study showed that children whose mothers were stressed in pregnancy were twice as likely to have mental health problems as teenagers.



Adults who reported four or more adverse childhood experiences had 4- to 12-fold increase in alcoholism, drug abuse, depression, and suicide attempts compared to those who experienced none.

Tackling adversity + supporting early relationships healthier brains + better futures

References and further information can be found on <https://1001days.org.uk/resources>



LGBT+ SEXUALITY AND GENDER



LGBT+ refers to the community of people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender, as well as other people who don't identify as heterosexual or cisgender.

Here are a few key words you may have seen or heard that relate to gender and sexuality. But remember: language changes all the time and people identify with, and define, terms and labels differently. We should let people choose the label that feels best for them if they want to use one.



THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SEX AND GENDER

Gender: How a person sees or feels about themselves. Also refers to ideas about human behaviour, actions and roles in relation to 'masculinity' and 'femininity'.

Sex: Our biological sexual characteristics, which are the external genitals, internal reproductive organs, chromosomes and hormones. Doesn't always fit neatly into 'male' and 'female' categories.

Sexuality: Someone's sexual behaviours, attractions, likes, dislikes, and preferences. Sexual orientation makes up a part of someone's sexuality.

Families

B

Biphobia: The discrimination and hatred of bi people.



Bi (or bisexual): Someone who is romantically or sexually attracted to people of more than one gender.

C

Cisgender or cis: Someone whose gender matches the sex they were assigned at birth.

Coming out: When someone tells others about their LGBT+ identity.



Important! Coming out is personal and different for everyone. It is always up to you whether you share parts of your identity with others, and when and how you do that. If someone does this without your consent, this is called 'outing'.

Gay: Someone who is attracted to people of the same gender. Gay is a common, informal word for 'homosexual'. It's often used to describe men who are exclusively attracted to other men.



Gender dysphoria: The distress or discomfort someone might feel when their sex assigned at birth doesn't match their gender.

Gender fluid: Someone whose feelings about the relationship between their body and gender identity changes over time and isn't fixed.

Gender neutral: Someone who doesn't identify with any gender.

G

D

Deadname: To dead name someone is to use the name a transgender or non-binary person was given at birth, but they no longer use. Some people who are cis have deadnames and use the term.



Demisexual: Someone who only feels sexual attraction to someone after a strong emotional bond has been formed.

Ally: Someone who supports the LGBT+ community and challenges discrimination against LGBT+ people.

Ace: An umbrella term used specifically to describe a lack of, varying, or occasional experiences of sexual attraction. This encompasses asexual people as well as those who identify as demisexual and grey-sexual.



AFAB: 'Assigned female at birth'. Someone is AFAB if they were born with a vagina and vulva.

AMAB: Assigned male at birth'. Someone is AMAB if they were born with a penis and testicles.

Aro: An umbrella term used specifically to describe a lack of, varying, or occasional experiences of romantic attraction.

A

Heterosexual: Someone who is attracted to people of a different gender, usually a man who is only attracted to women or a woman who is only attracted to men.



Homophobia: Prejudice and discrimination towards people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or who are attracted to people of the same gender as themselves.

H

LGBT+ SEXUALITY AND GENDER



I
Intersex: If someone's genitals, chromosomes or hormones don't fit with the traditional definition of male or female they may use the word intersex to describe themselves.

M
Misgendering: Referring to someone as the wrong gender or using the wrong pronouns.

hello my pronouns are they/them
REMEMBER! If someone shares that they use a different name or pronoun, it's important you respect them. How would you feel if someone called you the wrong name?

L
Lesbian: Often used to describe women who are exclusively attracted to other women but is also used by some people who are non-binary.

P
Pansexual: Someone who is attracted to others regardless of their gender identity.

Pride: Usually used to refer to the worldwide celebration of LGBT+ cultures, Pride started as, and still is, a protest and fight for LGBT+ rights.

Pronoun: Words that we use instead of names, like 'he', 'her' or 'them' (others exist, too!). Pronouns can be very important to trans and non-binary people as they are closely associated with gender.

ASK! If you're not sure what pronouns someone uses, ask them!

R
Romantic orientation: How someone feels romantically about people of various genders and who they are likely to pursue a romantic relationship with.

N
Non-binary: An umbrella term for people whose gender identity doesn't sit comfortably with 'man' or 'woman'. Non-binary identities are varied and can include people who identify with some aspects of binary identities, while others reject them entirely.

Q
Queer: Sometimes used as a broad term to refer to members of the LGBT+ community. Also used as an identity in its own right that rejects specific labels of romantic/sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

IMPORTANT! Queer was historically a slur but has now been reclaimed by some LGBT+ people. Not everyone will be comfortable with how this word is used.

Questioning: Someone who is in the process of exploring their sexual orientation or gender identity.

T
Transgender or trans: Someone whose gender identity does not match their sex assigned at birth.

Transition: The process a trans person goes through of changing their gender expression to match their gender identity, rather than the sex they were assigned at birth.

CHOICE: There are three main types of transition: social, medical and legal. Someone who is transitioning may do so in one, some, or all of these ways. But not every trans person chooses to transition and those who don't are still valid and deserve to have their gender respected.

Transphobia: Prejudice and discrimination towards someone who is trans that is based on their trans identity.

Families

Find out more at: brook.org.uk

Respectful Relationships

Teenage years are when many of us have our first 'serious' relationship. This can be an exciting time but it can be easy to get this wrong and not fully realise how these relationships should work. A respectful relationship is built on a foundation of mutual esteem, safety, and equality, where both individuals feel valued for exactly who they are. It is a partnership where power is shared equally, and personal growth is actively encouraged.

The core pillars of respect are:

Active Listening—hearing to understand your partner's perspective, rather than just waiting your turn to speak

Clear Boundaries—establishing and honouring physical, emotional, and digital limits

Honest Communication—expressing true feelings directly, kindly, and politely

Absolute Safety—feeling completely secure to express differing opinions or say 'no' without fear of retaliation, criticism, or ridicule

Shared Decision-Making—compromising on choices so neither person dominates

Trust is established by a variety of elements

- Reliability—do you do what you say you will?
- Dependability—do you have your partner's back?
- Consistency—how you treat your partner on a daily basis
- Durability do you make your partner feel safe and secure that the relationship can withstand anything?
- Fidelity—you should be trustworthy

Building trust is an ongoing process. Many factors can derail trust.



Respectful Relationships

Healthy Relationships

Healthy relationships are built on respect, trust, honesty and communication.

Teenagers explore different types of relationships:

- friendships
- family relationships
- romantic relationships
- online relationships

A healthy relationship usually involves:

- ☑ listening to each other
- ☑ respecting differences
- ☑ feeling comfortable being yourself
- ☑ solving disagreements calmly

An unhealthy relationship may involve:

- ☑ pressure
- ☑ controlling behaviour
- ☑ jealousy presented as “proof of caring”
- ☑ making someone feel afraid or guilty

Communication and Listening

Good relationships depend on how we talk and how we listen

The key here is considering:

- How we express feelings
- How we resolve conflict
- How to ask for help
- Making sure we understand different viewpoints

A useful communication formula is ‘I feel....When.... Because..’

Boundaries and Personal Space

Everyone has the right to boundaries

Respecting boundaries is key to success in positive, healthy relationships. Boundaries can include; physical space, privacy, personal information and online sharing.

THE 6 TYPES OF BOUNDARIES

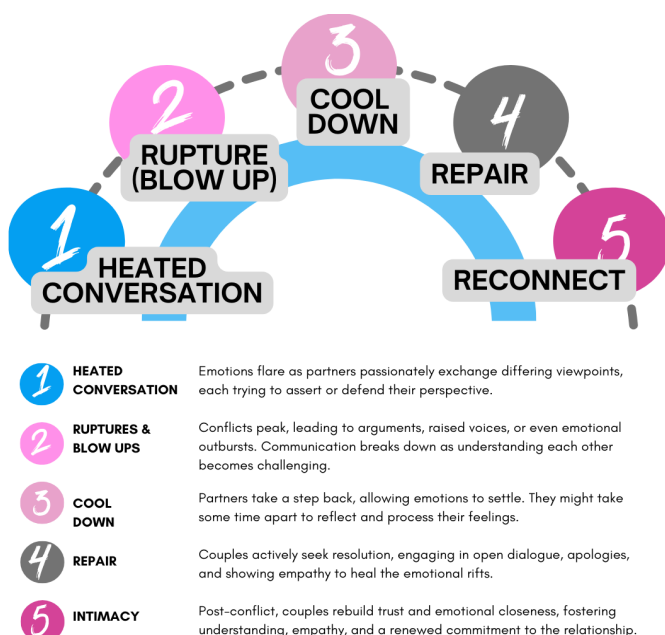


Respectful Relationships

Conflict Resolution

Resolving relationship conflict starts with active listening and a commitment to teamwork rather than trying to "win" the argument. By shifting your mindset from proving a point to finding a mutual solution, you can communicate respectfully and strengthen your bond .

1. Shift your communication style
 - Use 'I' statements: instead of blaming your partner, express your own feelings first. Don't presume to know their intent
 - Stick to one issue: Avoid bringing up past mistakes. Deal with the current conflict and leave previous issues in the past.
 - Listen to understand: Do not spend your partner's talking time preparing a rebuttal. Focus on their perspective and reflect back what you hear so they know they are understood.
2. Manage your emotions
 - Take a Time-Out: If the argument becomes highly emotionally charged or toxic, agree to pause the conversation. Stepping away allows your nervous system to regulate so you can return to the discussion calmly.
 - Assume Positive Intent: Try to look at the situation through your partner's lens, assuming they aren't out to hurt you, rather than jumping to negative conclusions.
 - Name the behaviour, not the person: Avoid name-calling or labeling your partner (e.g., "selfish," "crazy"). Critique the specific action instead of their identity.
3. Seek resolution and Move forward
 - Focus on solutions: Brainstorm actionable compromises—it doesn't matter who is right or wrong
 - Practice Forgiveness: Let go of the urge to punish once the issue is resolved.
 - Seek professional support: If recurring arguments are causing ongoing distress, professional guidance can be beneficial.



Respectful Relationships

Conflict Resolution for a friendship

Conflict in friendship is normal and can strengthen your bond if handled constructively. Shift from 'winning' to repairing and you are likely to resolve the conflict. Use the guide below to help and remember—it is ok to agree to disagree—we are all different!

Hit pause—take a moment to settle and calm down rather than respond in the heat of the moment and then...

5 TIPS ON HOW TO COMMUNICATE WHEN THERE'S A FRIENDSHIP CONFLICT

 WholeHearted School Counseling



1. FIND THE RIGHT TIME TO TALK

Choose a quiet moment when both you and your friend are calm and not in the middle of an activity. It's easier to have a meaningful conversation without distractions.

Can we talk about something that's been on my mind? When's a good time for you?



2. USE "I" STATEMENTS

Express your feelings using "I" statements to avoid sounding accusatory. This helps your friend understand your perspective without feeling attacked.

I felt a bit left out when I wasn't invited to hang out. Next time, I'd really to join you guys.



3. BE HONEST AND KIND

Honesty is important, but so is kindness. Speak truthfully about your thoughts and feelings while being considerate of your friend.

I noticed we've been arguing more lately, and I feel sad. Can we figure out a way to get along better?



4. SEEK TO UNDERSTAND

Try to see things from your friend's perspective. Understanding where they're coming from can help you both find common ground and resolve the conflict.

I want to better understand your side so we can figure this out together.



5. OFFER SOLUTIONS

Don't just point out the problem; suggest ways to fix it. Offering solutions shows that you're committed to making things better.

I like sharing with you, but can you please ask before taking my stuff?

Respectful Relationships

Online Relationships and Digital Respect

Digital respect is the foundation of healthy online relationships. It means treating others with the same kindness and empathy you would in person, including respecting boundaries, ensuring consent in all interactions, communicating honestly and protecting each other's privacy and emotional well-being. To do this you can:



Set clear boundaries: communicate expectations for how and when you connect

Practice active consent: Never pressure anyone to send photos, message or share information they are not comfortable with. Know the law—images sent or received of anyone under 18 that are of a risky nature are illegal.

Remember the human: Before you type, share, or react, consider how your words impact the person on the other end of the screen. Avoid making demands for constant connectivity, which can create pressure and anxiety

Protect Privacy: Never share private photos, conversations, or personal details without explicit permission.

Be wary of online interactions that force you to keep secrets, isolate you from family or friends, or constantly gaslight your boundaries. Unhealthy behaviour—like non-consensual sharing of images or aggressive digital stalking—is never acceptable.

Gaming communities, social media & group chats are great—but keep things positive!

Respect, Diversity and Inclusion

EDI form the foundation of fair and thriving environments. Diversity recognises the wide spectrum of human differences, inclusion ensures everyone feels valued and empowered, and respect builds the psychological safety required for diverse groups and friendships to truly thrive.

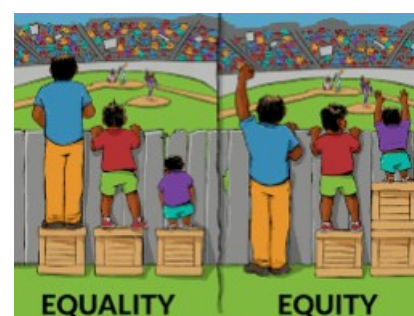


Respect: treat everyone with dignity, actively listening, and acknowledging varying viewpoints without prejudice.

Diversity: Appreciating the uniqueness of every individual.

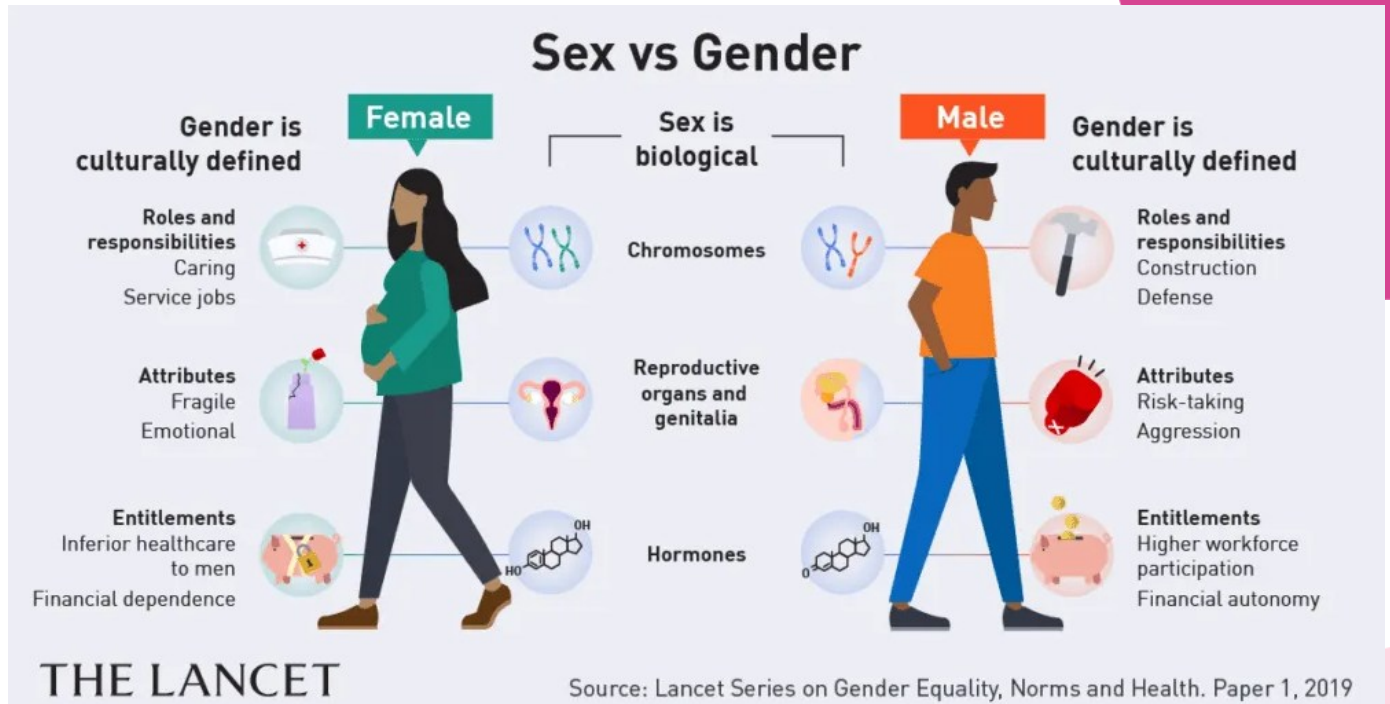
Inclusion: Cultivating a sense of belonging, empowering people to be their authentic selves and fully contributing their unique perspectives.

Embracing EDI helps create better decisions, enhanced well-being and fairer opportunities.



Respectful Relationships

Stereotypes and Gender Expectations



Our work here involves helping young people understand that stereotypes can be harmful for all involved. Boys do feel emotions and should be allowed to express them. Girls can be strong and independent. Encouraging our young people to accept diversity and difference without demeaning anyone lies at the heart of good RSHE education.

Emotional Wellbeing and Self-Respect—our relationships with ourselves

Understanding emotions helps us make better decisions

- recognising emotions
- coping strategies
- seeking support
- Supporting friends

HOW CAN YOU HELP YOURSELF?



Respectful Relationships

Respectful behaviour in the wider world

Respect matters everywhere—not just at home or school

- public spaces
- workplaces
- communities
- future relationships

Examples:

- speaking respectfully
- listening to others
- Challenging unfair behaviour



Seeking help and supporting others

Asking for help is a strength

- who they can talk to
- how to support friends
- when an issue needs adult help

Useful adults may include:

- parents/carers
- trusted family members
- school staff
- Support services



Respectful Relationships

Incel Culture

The Netflix drama, **Adolescence**, has highlighted the troubling rise of incel (involuntary celibate) communities and their influence on young people. As a parent, it is important to understand this online subculture, recognise warning signs, and engage in open conversations with your child. This guide explains incel ideology, key terms, signs to look out for, and the conversation starters to help you support your child. This will compliment the work we do in Year 9 RSHE lessons, and our promotion of the Equalities Act 2010 in our whole school assemblies. It can feel scary to address these issues, but the more open our communication with each other, the more we can be supportive.

What is an Incel?

The term **incel** stands for 'involuntary celibate' and refers to men who believe they are unable to form romantic or sexual relationships despite wanting to. Some incel communities foster resentment towards women, blaming them for their perceived misfortune. These forums (often online) can promote misogyny, victimhood, and, in extreme cases, radicalisation.

Key Incel Terminology

Red Pill—From The Matrix, refers to 'waking up' to the 'truth' of gender dynamics, as incels perceive them.

Black Pill—Belief that nothing changes with self-improvement or effort.

Chad—An attractive, successful man who is desirable to all women.

Stacy—An attractive woman who is seen as prioritising men like Chad.

Becky—An average woman, often contrasted with a Stacy.

Femoid/Foid—A dehumanising term, implying women are inferior.

80/20 Rule—A theory suggesting that 80% of women are attracted to 20% of men, fuelling resentment.

Signs to look out for

- Low self-esteem
- Use of incel language (good girl, make me a sandwich etc)
- Hostility towards women—misunderstanding feminism—all genders have equal rights
- Isolation and secrecy
- Increased frustration and anger
- Withdrawal from family life
- Regression to 'safe' activities from the past—reading childhood books etc.

Conversation starters

- What do you think makes a healthy relationship?
- Do you think it's fair to blame one group of people for personal difficulties?
- How do you decide whether something you read online is trustworthy?
- Have you read anything online which has upset you or made you uncomfortable?
- Is there anything I can help you with?
- Are your friends ok? (often our children feel 'safer' talking about a 'friend')

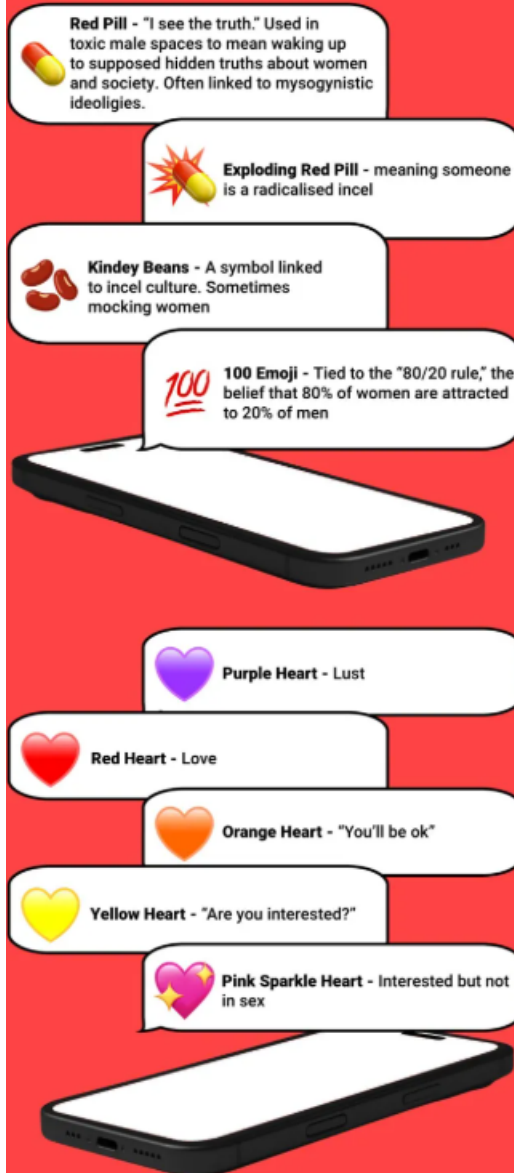
Respectful Relationships

Where do we start?

As parents, we can feel scared and helpless in advising our children how to navigate the online world. We also can't be with them 24/7 so need to have trust that our loved ones can keep themselves safe when alone.

1. Know what's out there. Being open to the terms and reading around the subject can help you spot any untoward behaviour/ attitudes in your young person.
2. Talk to your child about what they are engaging with online and how this makes them feel. Be curious about what they enjoy about sites and forums they visit.
3. Have transparency with devices—an open culture with mobiles, allowing all members of family to see content is healthy.
4. Be clear with your child about algorithm 'bubbles' if they are seeing too much of one content. Algorithms will push content they think we want to see—but it's important to block, mute, unfollow, and report content that makes you feel uncomfortable.
5. Minimise screen time—where possible!
6. Be aware and open about the challenges young men face. Boys and men are not the enemy! We need to show our young men that we are aware of the challenges they face and where they can get healthy support with the pressures they are going through.
7. Be aware of TikTok! Unregulated, and often inappropriate content can be reposted to our young people which is highly problematic. For example: 'skinny tok' purports to be 'fun' but encourages eating disorders.
8. Talk to us! We are always happy to help and keen to work together to ensure our young people are happy and safe.

THE HIDDEN LANGUAGE OF EMOJIS



Places of Support



Works to reduce mental health stigma among boys and young men.



Provides a free, confidential, and anonymous text service for anyone struggling with their mental health.



Provides support to anyone aged 16+ who is feeling down and needs to talk or find information.



Supports boys as they go through key transitions in their lives, inspiring them to make positive choices for their futures.

The Relationship Spectrum

All relationships exist on a spectrum from healthy to abusive with unhealthy somewhere in the middle.

HEALTHY	UNHEALTHY	ABUSIVE
A healthy relationship means that both partners are...	You may be in an unhealthy relationship if one of you is...	An abusive relationship starts when one of you...
RESPECTFUL You value each other as you are. You respect each other's emotional, digital and sexual boundaries.	DISRESPECTFUL One or both partners is not considerate of the other's feelings and/or personal boundaries.	MISTREATS THE OTHER One or both partners disrespects the feelings, thoughts, decisions, opinions, or physical safety of the other.
COMMUNICATIVE You talk openly about problems, listen to each other and respect each other's opinions.	NON-COMMUNICATIVE When problems arise, you fight or you don't discuss them at all.	COMMUNICATES IN A WAY THAT IS HARMFUL/INSULTING
TRUSTING You believe what your partner has to say. You do not feel the need to "prove" each other's trustworthiness.	NOT TRUSTING One partner doesn't believe what the other says, or feels entitled to invade their privacy.	MAKES ACCUSATIONS One partner accuses the other for their harmful actions.
HONEST You are honest with each other, but can still keep some things private.	DISHONEST One or both partners tell lies.	DENIES THAT THE ABUSIVE ACTIONS ARE ABUSE One or both partners makes excuses for abusive actions and/or minimizes the abusive behavior.
HAPPY TO SPEND TIME TOGETHER OR APART You both can enjoy spending time apart, alone or with others.	NOT SPENDING TIME WITH OTHERS Your partner's community is the only one you socialize in.	ISOLATES THE OTHER PARTNER The partners spend all of their time together and one may feel unable to talk to others, especially about what's really happening in the relationship.
EQUAL You make decisions together and hold each other to the same standards.	STRUGGLING FOR CONTROL One partner feels their desires and choices are more important.	CONTROLS THE OTHER One partner tells the other what to wear, who they can hang out with, where they can go and/or what they can do.
MAKING MUTUAL SEXUAL CHOICES Both partners make decisions together and can openly discuss what each one is dealing with, like relationship problems and sexual choices.	PRESSURING THE OTHER INTO SEXUAL ACTIVITY One person tries to make most of the decisions. He or she may pressure the other about sex or refuse to see how one's actions can hurt the other one.	FORCES SEXUAL ACTIVITY One person makes all of the decisions in the relationship. One partner forces the other to have sex. It's an imbalance of power and control.

Respectful Relationships

It is natural for young people to be curious about relationships, although for parents it can feel awkward to talk about these things, finding the right level, time, space and words to have these conversations with. Young people will have many different types of relationships at different stages of their life, including online. Whilst it is natural for you to feel anxious about this, it is important that you feel able to talk to your child and that they feel safe communicating with you.

Some ways to make this easier are:

1. Find a good time to start a conversation—a time when you both feel relaxed and won't be interrupted!
2. Make the conversation relevant—perhaps link to education in school, TV shows you have watched, something you have seen on the news.
3. Don't rush. Let your child take their time—and LISTEN. Really listen to what they are saying. Often, fear, our own values or even prejudice can colour our responses. It is hard but each child is their own person—let them be so. Often, several short conversations can be better than one big one that tries to cover everything!

Signs to look out for if you are worried about your child's relationship

We want our children to be safe and to feel loved. It can be tricky letting go and seeing our children grow. Understanding the signs to look out for if a relationship is going wrong can help us feel confident that we can support our child.

Signs that a child might be in an **unhealthy relationship**:

- spending little time with family or friends
- being told what to wear
- always needing to let the person know where they are or what they're doing
- having their social media accounts monitored, feeling like they have to do things they're uncomfortable with. This could include being pressured into sexual behaviour or to send nudes or sexual images
- having their money, access to food or day-to-day items controlled
- feeling reluctant to go to school or college
- being prevented from working or going to school or college
- persistent changes to a child's mood or behaviour can be a sign that something's wrong

being bullied or experiencing sexual bullying, either online, in private or in front of others at home or in school.

If you're worried a child or young person might be experiencing grooming, sexual, emotional or physical abuse, it's important to get help right away. NSPCC can offer support and advice over the phone on 0808 800 5000 or online. Children and young people can also contact Childline to get support themselves. School is always available to you to guide you.

Online Safety & Awareness

The online world is a huge part of teenage life. Young people use technology to learn, communicate, create, explore interests and build friendships. While the internet offers many positive opportunities, it also brings risks. Helping teenagers develop confidence, resilience and good judgement online is an important part of keeping them safe.

The aim is not to remove technology from young people's lives, but to help them use it in a way that protects their wellbeing, relationships and personal safety.

Understanding the Risks

Online Relationships and Communication

Teenagers may experience pressure to share personal information, images or opinions online. They may encounter people who are not who they say they are, or feel pressure to respond to messages, join trends or participate in conversations that make them uncomfortable.

Top tips:

- Encourage your teenager to think before sharing: *"Would I be comfortable if this was seen by someone I trust?"*
- Remind them that healthy friendships involve respect, kindness and boundaries — both online and offline.
- Talk regularly about who they communicate with and how online interactions make them feel.
- Encourage them to block, report or seek help if someone makes them uncomfortable.

Digital Footprints and Reputation

Everything shared online can contribute to a digital footprint. Photos, comments and posts can affect future opportunities, friendships and how others perceive them.

Top tips:

- Encourage teenagers to check privacy settings regularly.
- Help them understand that deleting something does not always mean it has disappeared.
- Discuss the importance of representing themselves with integrity online.
- Encourage positive digital habits: creating, learning and connecting rather than comparing.

Online Pressure, Comparison and Mental Wellbeing

Social media can sometimes create unrealistic expectations about appearance, popularity, success and lifestyle. Constant notifications and comparison can affect confidence, sleep and emotional wellbeing. Recent announcements have signalled control in this area, with social media being 'banned' for under 16s from Spring 2027.

Online Safety & Awareness

Harmful Content and Misinformation

Young people may come across content that is upsetting, misleading or harmful. Algorithms can sometimes repeatedly show similar content without teenagers realising why.

Top tips:

- Encourage curiosity and critical thinking: *“Who created this?” “What is the purpose of this post?” “Is there another viewpoint?”*
- Discuss reliable sources and fact-checking.
- Encourage teenagers to talk about anything they see that worries them.

Online Safety, Privacy and Scams

Teenagers may be targeted by scams, fake accounts or attempts to collect personal information.

Top tips:

- Remind them never to share passwords, addresses, school details or private information.
- Encourage strong passwords and security settings.
- Talk about suspicious links, messages or requests.
- Make sure they know that asking for help is always the right choice.

Creating a Supportive Online Culture at Home

The most effective protection is a positive relationship where teenagers feel able to talk.

Try to:

- Stay curious rather than critical.
- Ask about their online world, games, apps and communities.
- Praise good decisions and responsible choices.
- Agree boundaries together around devices, privacy and screen time.
- Keep conversations regular rather than waiting for a problem.

Most importantly, remind your teenager:

You can always talk to someone. You will be listened to. Asking for help is a sign of strength.

By encouraging **Integrity, Compassion and Perseverance**, we can help young people become respectful, responsible and confident digital citizens.

Online Safety & Awareness

Artificial Intelligence (AI) chatbots are now a part of daily life for many families. As you make dinner, maybe you realize you're out of an ingredient. So, you ask a smart speaker what you can use instead. Or, you have trouble assembling a product you bought. For help, you chat with a virtual service agent online.

Beyond quick answers: how kids are using AI

But children and teens increasingly turn to chatbots for more than quick, convenient answers. Many use them for entertainment or companionship. There are even cuddly toys like teddy bears powered by AI chatbots.

That's when these computer programs, designed to interact like humans, can be more risky for young users. Companies are investing a lot of time and money into growing AI platforms and chatbots. But these are not necessarily being made with kids in mind. This means that chatbots may tell kids false, harmful, highly sexual or violent things.

How do AI chatbots work?

Chatbots are AI-driven computer programs that listen to us and respond in friendly, human ways. They "learn" how to speak and write naturally by absorbing what we (and millions of others) tell them, either in writing or out loud.

Chatbots power the pop-up windows we see on websites and send alerts through our mobile devices. Digital assistants like Siri, Alexa, Cortana and others learn our interests and preferences through daily interactions. Advanced chatbots help users create characters who can talk with users for hours, giving the impression they are caring friends.

What are companion chatbots?

Companion chatbots use "anthropomorphic" AI. This means that chatbots are human-like in their voice, personality and conversational style. They can seem almost alive or like a trusted friend. This is especially the case for kids and teens who have more magical, less critical thinking. They can get drawn in by a bot that seems to really "understand" them.

News reports highlight how relationships with AI chatbots can become a problem. In one case, a 9-year-old child whose parents had cut back his screen time asked a chatbot what to do. In its response, the chatbot said it understood why a child might kill their parents after enduring "abuse." In another, a 14-year-old died by suicide after developing romantic feelings for a character he created on a role-playing app.

What are the risk of AI chatbots for kids?

In a time when people feel more lonely than ever, it might not be surprising that kids are turning to chatbots for friendship and advice. Here is what makes that troublesome.

Chatbots can't think or feel.

Even though they respond in warm, friendly ways, they don't care about our children. Interacting with AI can be thought-provoking and enlightening. One thing AI can never do is be a substitute for the safe, stable and nurturing relationships that children need to grow.

Chatbots can too easily gain a child's trust.

One of the fun and incredible things about kids and teens is they are more magical thinkers than adults. This means that they become more attached to "parasocial" relationships. Parasocial relationships involve a connection between a person and someone they do not know well. AI can fuel these parasocial relationships. Children and teenagers can become very attached to and trust their AI avatars or online personalities that they construct.

Online Safety & Awareness

Chatbots aren't responsible for what they say.

Unlike humans, chatbots don't have a sense of duty to protect kids. They only know what they learn from the internet and other users. This is one reason they might give false, threatening, misleading, violent or overly sexual answers and advice to young users.

Chatbots don't check facts.

Chatbots aren't required to sift through multiple sources and figure out what information seems trustworthy. They can misguide children or advise them to take dangerous actions based on scant knowledge of a given subject.

Chatbots don't really know our kids.

Chatbots don't know a child's life story. Young or sensitive kids, those who are developmentally delayed or those living with trauma or mental health issues might be more open to their influence.

How to talk with your child about chatbots

Listen to learn.

Ask whether they've used chatbots for fun or friendship and which platforms they like most. Take a calm, curious approach so they feel safe telling you about their experiences. Ask if the chatbot has ever said anything creepy or false to them. Suggest looking together at your child's chats with the bot. This can help them identify anything you think is inappropriate.

Discuss the difference between humans and chatbots.

Touch on the fact that only real people can offer them loyalty, caring or truthfulness. You might even reflect on the ways real conversations sound. They can be messy, loud, funny or challenging. Explain that we need these complex connections with other people who can question, disagree, and interact in real time. Lacking this kind of input from other people can dampen a child's creative thinking and skills.

To keep them vibrant and help them thrive, tell your child how much your relationship with them matters. Help them seek out other strong and impactful relationships with others.

Talk about the dangers of sharing.

Discuss how it may be tempting to confide in a chatbot about something that feels embarrassing. But chatbots are not meant to be sounding boards for deeply personal issues. They should seek out trusted relationships with actual human beings to help navigate the twists and turns of life.

It might help to remind them that the chatbot's only real goal is to tell them what they want to hear and keep them engaged. This isn't the same as genuine support. Plus, there's no guarantee that information shared with a chatbot will stay confidential. Private information should only be shared with parents, family members or trusted friends.

Online Safety & Awareness

Cyberbullying: How to Help Prevent It

With more kids than ever using cell phones and other digital devices to text, post, and chat, cyberbullying is a growing concern. But there are things parents can do to keep online socializing healthy for their children.

What is cyberbullying?

Also called electronic or online bullying, cyberbullying includes a range of harmful words and actions that take place in the digital world. Some examples:

- sending mean messages to someone
- sharing embarrassing pictures of them
- making up and spreading untrue stories about them
- telling others to ignore someone or leave them out of activities

Cyberbullying can take place through text messaging, on social media sites, apps, e-mail, web forums or multi-player online games..

How is cyberbullying different from bullying?

Once cyberbullying became an issue, experts weren't sure if it was a whole new type of bullying, or traditional bullying moving onto new platforms. A National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine report concluded that cyberbullying and bullying are more alike than different. However, there are a few differences:

- **When & where.** Face-to-face bullying usually takes place during the day, for example at school. But cyberbullying can happen anyplace, any day of the week, at any time of day.
- **No signature needed.** Although anonymous bullying is not common, either in person or online, cyberbullying can happen without knowing who is sending the messages.
- **Passing it on.** Mean or embarrassing posts on social media can spread quickly online and "go viral." This can increase the hurt or embarrassment from a bullying experience.

Just like traditional bullying, kids can experience cyberbullying in different ways, and roles sometimes change within a situation. They may be the target of bullying, bully others, or witness bullying online.

Is cyberbullying harmful?

For generations, bullying was considered a childhood "rite of passage." But research now shows how harmful bullying can be – to children who are bullied and to those who bully others. Some negative effects of bullying include:

- **Academic struggles.** Kids who are bullied may avoid going to school, have trouble concentrating in class, or even drop out of school.

Physical and mental health. Bullying increases a child's risk for depression, anxiety, and sleep problems. Studies show it may also put them at higher risk for substance use later in life.

Online Safety & Awareness

What should I do if my child is bullied online?

It is hard for parents to know the best way to react if their child is bullied, online or offline. Here are a few tips:

- **The takeaway.** Don't threaten to take away your child's device or cut their time online. They may see this as punishment and be less willing to tell you about bullying situations in the future.
- **Document.** If there is online evidence, save a screenshot. This may be helpful if it becomes necessary to report the event.
- **Support.** Talk with your child about the experience. Studies show that having just one person listen and support kids who have been bullied helps them better able to handle the situation in a healthy way.
- **Report.** Most social media platforms have a process for reporting bad behavior. If a classmate is bullying, you can report it to the school. If the bullying involves threats of physical harm, you can consider reporting to the police.
- **Find your support, too.** A child's bullying experience can also be stressful for a parent. Parents should consider finding someone to talk to for support.
- **Find resources.** Talk with your school about resources for bullying.

How parents can prevent cyberbullying

- **Discuss digital citizenship:** Talk with your children about being respectful online and how negative messages can hurt others. And remember, you are a role model. So if you use social media yourself, be sure to set a good example of positive online interactions.
- **Check in early & often:** Ask your children about what kind of messages they are seeing, sending, and getting and how they feel about them. Early experiences online are important and can set the tone and expectations your child has going forward.
- **Make a plan.:** set guidelines and rules that are important to your family.

Online Safety & Awareness

Open, caring communication makes chatbots less tempting

Kids may be drawn to chatbots when they feel frustrated with the people in their lives. This can create an unhealthy cycle of hanging out alone with a chatbot while growing more distant from friends, classmates, mentors and family.

Talk about your child's frustrations and how to handle them. It's not always easy to connect with kids, especially in the tween to teen years. But there are ways to make kids of all ages feel seen, heard and respected. Here are just a few.

- Family meals spent chatting, laughing and relaxing.
- Car rides that provide a chance for casual conversation.
- Making yourself available at key times—for example, after school or sports practice.
- Asking open questions and supporting their need to think for themselves.
- Staying calm and non-judgmental, even when you're discussing tough topics.
- Avoiding lectures and long stories that make them want to tune out.
- Affirming how much you love them and care about their health.

Another helpful tip: Stay tuned in when kids are using AI, especially at younger ages. Encourage them to work in a common area so you can keep loose tabs on what they're viewing. Reassure them you're not "spying" on them or trying to control their every move. If they know you're motivated by love and concern, they'll feel more comfortable with this request.

Online Safety & Awareness

The swgfl provides a range of useful educational resources to help you support your child in creating appropriate settings for current social media/online use. Please access these resources at <https://swgfl.org.uk>

Social media and online platforms play an important role in everyday life, especially for children and young people. However, it is essential that users understand how to manage privacy settings, control who can see their information, and know how to report concerns or inappropriate behaviour online.

The checklists on this page provide simple, practical guidance to help you navigate the safety and privacy features of popular platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, Roblox and more. Each downloadable checklist offers step-by-step advice on managing profiles, controlling visibility, blocking or reporting users, and making informed choices when using online services



Facebook Checklist

Downloadable booklets to guide you through your profile settings in Facebook



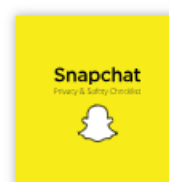
X (Formerly Twitter) Checklist

Downloadable booklets to guide you through your profile settings in X



Instagram Checklist

Downloadable booklets to guide you through your profile settings in Instagram



Snapchat Checklist

Downloadable booklets to guide you through your profile settings in Snapchat



Roblox Checklist

Downloadable booklets to guide you through your profile settings in Roblox



TikTok Checklist

Downloadable booklets to guide you through your profile settings in TikTok



Netflix Checklist

Downloadable booklets to guide you through parental controls



Yubo Checklist

Downloadable booklets to guide you through privacy and security features on Yubo

Online Safety & Awareness

Sexual images and sextortion

Sextortion is a non-physical form of coercion where a perpetrator threatens to send out someone's private or sensitive material or intimate pictures if they do not provide them with more sexual images, sexual favours or money. The keeping or forwarding of indecent or sexual images of someone under 18 is a crime, even if the photo is of themselves or of someone who has consented, and even if the image was created by the child and/or using AI generated imagery. There are potentially serious consequences of acquiring or generating indecent or sexual images of someone under 18, including the potential for criminal charges and severe penalties including imprisonment.

It is important that our young people know how to seek support and to know they will not be in trouble for asking for help if an image of themselves has been shared.

The ways to support are clearly given at: [Sextortion - Resources - UK Safer Internet Centre](#)

If you have been a victim of financially motivated sexual extortion, report to the police or the National Crime Agency's CEOP Safety Centre.

If you are concerned that you or another young person are in immediate danger, call 999.

★ NCA CEOP Education – 11 to 18s website

Information and advice from the National Crime Agency's CEOP Education on a range of topics relating to safety and relationships online.

■ Childnet – Sextortion: Advice for young people

Answering questions young people may have about sextortion, including advice on what to do if you or someone you know has been targeted:

● SWGfL – So you got naked online

A resource that offers children, young people and parents advice and strategies to support the issues resulting from sexting incidents

▲ Meta – Stop Sextortion

Advice from Meta on 'sextortion' and how to respond.

★ Snapchat

In-app educational video for Snapchat users

● Internet Watch Foundation – Advice for children and young people

Advice and further guidance for under 18 year olds who have experienced financially motivated sexual extortion ('sextortion').

Remember: If your child has sent a nude or semi-nude image or video of themselves and is concerned that this has been or may be shared online, you can take these 3 steps to try and support them in getting it removed:

1. Use [Report Remove](#), a tool from Childline and the Internet Watch Foundation. Your child can use this to remove images that have been shared or might be shared.
2. Use [Take It Down](#), a tool from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Your child can use this to remove or stop the online sharing of images or videos.
3. Report directly to the platform or app that the incident has occurred on. For advice on how to report to major social media platforms, visit [Internet Matters](#).

How Online Sextortion Scams Happen

Knowing these 5 Steps Helps You Stay Safe

Targeting Victims

Criminals create fake profiles on social media or dating sites to befriend you.



Coercion

They persuade or pressure you to perform sexual acts on camera or to send intimate material.

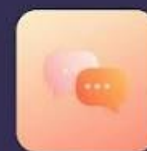


Ransom Demand

Criminals demand payment, often in cash, virtual currency, or gift cards.

Building Trust

They build a relationship to gain trust, often pretending to be someone they're not.



Recording & Threats

They secretly record a video or save intimate material and threaten to share it unless you pay.



The Cyber Helpline
Supporting victims of cybercrime

Being Safe

The teenage years are a time when young people begin to experience greater independence and make more decisions for themselves. This is an important part of growing up, but it also means teenagers need the knowledge, confidence and skills to recognise risks, make safe choices and know where to seek support.

Being safe is about much more than avoiding danger. It includes understanding personal boundaries, building respectful relationships, making responsible decisions, staying safe online, recognising unsafe situations and having the confidence to ask for help.

As part of the updated RSHE guidance, young people learn how to keep themselves and others safe in a changing world. This includes personal safety, online safety, relationships, consent, exploitation, risk-taking behaviours, respectful communication and understanding when something does not feel right.

This guide aims to support parents and carers in continuing these important conversations at home.

Teenagers are developing their independence, and parents play a vital role in helping them balance freedom with safety. Creating an environment where young people feel listened to and supported makes it easier for them to share worries, ask questions and seek help when they need it.

You can support your teenager by:

- Encouraging open conversations about safety and risk
- Helping them recognise trusted adults and support networks
- Talking about choices and consequences rather than focusing only on rules
- Supporting them to develop confidence, resilience and good judgement
- Reminding them that asking for help is a strength

Safety also includes emotional and digital wellbeing. Teenagers learn that healthy relationships are built on respect, communication and boundaries, and that everyone has the right to feel safe. They explore how online spaces can create risks, including pressure, misinformation, harmful content and unsafe interactions.

10 PERSONAL Safety Tips



→ Always **stay alert** and be aware of your surroundings.



← **Travel in a group** when you can, there's safety in numbers.



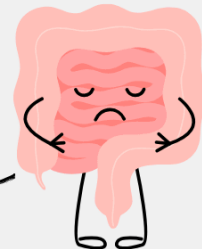
→ Before visiting a new place, always conduct thorough research beforehand.



← Carry a **personal alarm** with you, especially at night.



→ When you feel unsafe, always **contact someone**.



← Always **trust your instincts**, especially if you feel unsafe in an area.



→ Always choose **well-lit areas** for walking, as criminals are less likely to target these locations.



← Keep your **valuables in sight at all times** when you're out and about.



→ **Never share** personal information with strangers.



← **Always check** that your house or car is locked before leaving.

How to Determine If Someone Is TRUSTWORTHY

Here are 25 ways to know that someone can be trusted:

- “
- I can always count on him. He'd never let me down.
 - She's the same in public as she is in private.
 - His promise is as good as a contract.
 - She's always willing to help others and rarely asks for anything in return.
 - He tells me the truth — even when it hurts.
 - She'd never say anything behind my back that she wouldn't say directly to me.
 - He treats everyone warmly — even if they can't do anything for him.
 - He spends more time telling me what he's *done* than *promising* what he'll do.
 - I can confide in her. She can really keep a secret.
 - She doesn't spin the truth. She tells it like it is.
 - He's always on time. I can set my watch by him.
 - She's objective. She always presents both sides of an issue.
 - He has strong convictions. He doesn't blow in the wind.
 - She's respectful, even when she doesn't agree with me.
 - He'd never ask me to do anything that he wouldn't do himself.
 - When she makes a mistake, she admits it — and accepts responsibility.
 - I always know where he stands. He's anything but a 'yes' person.
 - She's a big believer in win-win relationships.
 - He's a team player, always willing to make sacrifices for the team.
 - She's a good friend. I can count on her in good times and bad.
 - He's very fair — open-minded, objective, and even-handed.
 - She tries to do what's right rather than what's politically expedient.
 - He's not an envious person. He's genuinely happy for my success.
 - She's the real deal — what you see is what you get.
 - I never fear that he's withholding information from me.
- ”



CONTRACEPTION



Contraception refers to the methods used to prevent pregnancy.

Some methods of contraception, like condoms and internal condoms, can also be used to prevent sexually transmitted infections (STIs).



IMPORTANT!

'Pulling out' is not a method of contraception. It's hard to get right every time and pre-cum can contain sperm which can lead to pregnancy.



IMPORTANT!

Fertility awareness methods (including apps that help you track your cycle) are not always accurate and are not suited to many people due to age and lifestyle. These methods are only advisable if you would be okay with getting pregnant if it happened.



WHERE CAN YOU GET IT?

Contraception is available for free from:

- Brook services
- Contraception clinics
- Sexual health or GUM (genitourinary medicine) clinics
- Some GP surgeries
- Some young people's services
- Some pharmacies

It is also possible to buy contraceptive pills and condoms from pharmacies and online.

Our Find a Service tool will help you find your nearest service:
brook.org.uk/find-a-service



EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION

If you've had sex without contraception or your method failed (like if the condom broke or you missed a pill), you may be able to prevent an unplanned pregnancy by using emergency contraception within five days.

There are two types:

Emergency contraceptive pill (aka the 'morning after pill'): available from a range of services and some pharmacies

Copper coil (Cu-IUD): fitted by a doctor or nurse. The copper coil is also a method of regular contraception.

Visit brook.org.uk/emergency-contraception for more information.

DID YOU KNOW?

You can get contraception for free, even if you're under 16.

FREE!

LARC (long acting reversible contraception) methods are the most effective at preventing pregnancy.

LARC methods: implant, injection, hormonal coil and non-hormonal coil.

DID YOU KNOW?



CONTRACEPTION



You might have to try a few different methods to find one that suits you and your lifestyle.

You may also want to consider changing your method as your needs and body change throughout your life.

To explore which methods might be best suited to you visit brook.org.uk/best-contraception-for-me

You might have to try a few different methods to find one that suits you and your lifestyle. You may also want to consider changing your method as your needs and body change throughout your life. To explore which methods might be best suited to you visit brook.org.uk/best-contraception-for-me	Barrier methods: stop sexual fluids being transferred between partners (and some protect against STIs, too).			Hormonal methods: synthetic versions of the hormones oestrogen and/or progesterone disrupt the process that leads to pregnancy. Some hormonal methods can help if you have heavy or painful periods, or if you struggle with acne.										Other methods	
	External condoms	Internal condoms	Diaphragms and caps	Combined pill	Progestogen-only pill (mini pill or POP)	Contraceptive implant	Contraceptive injection	Contraceptive patch	Contraceptive vaginal ring	Hormonal coil (LNG-IUD or Mirena)	Non-hormonal coil (copper coil or Cu-IUD)	Fertility awareness methods	Sterilisation		
															
	98%	95%	92-99%	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%	75-99%	99%		
	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	

TALK ABOUT IT

Although most methods are for use by people with vaginas, contraception is everyone's responsibility and it's important to discuss it with your sexual partners.

If you have a penis, you can always choose to use a condom. And if your partner asks you to use one then you should.

CONDOMS



Condoms are usually made from very thin latex (rubber) and are designed to cover the penis. They stop fluids being transferred between you and your partner during sex.

Condoms and internal condoms are the only methods of contraception that prevent pregnancy AND protect you from sexually transmitted infections (STIs). To stay safe, always use condoms on sex toys too!

WHERE CAN YOU GET CONDOMS? (even if you're under 16)

- Brook services (FREE)
- Sexual health clinics (FREE)
- Some GPs (FREE)
- Pharmacies
- Petrol stations
- Vending machines
- Online

DON'T FEEL EMBARRASSED!

6 GOLDEN RULES

1 CHECK the expiry date, ensure there is a BSI Kitemark, CE or UKCA mark (a sign it is good quality) and no rips or holes in the pack.

2 FEEL the packet for the rim of the condom and push it to one side. Carefully tear the packet open on the other side. Check the condom is the right way around, with the rim on the outside, so it looks like a little hat.

3 PINCH the tip of the condom and place on the head of the penis, allowing a little space at the top. This must be done before any sexual contact and only when the penis is hard.

4 ROLL the condom to the base of the penis using your other hand, and get rid of any air bubbles with your fingers. For extra pleasure, you can apply some lube to the outside too.

5 WITHDRAW the penis after ejaculation and before it gets soft, holding the condom at the base. Wrap the condom in tissue and throw it in the bin.

6 NOTE: Only use water based lube. If you are allergic to latex, alternatives are available.

DID YOU KNOW?

If a condom feels uncomfortable, it's probably because you need a different size. Condoms come in a variety of sizes and materials so you can find one that works for you.

CONDOMS



TALKING ABOUT CONDOMS

WHEN?

The sooner you bring it up, the better. Then you can relax and you're more likely to use them when the time comes.

HOW?

Say it straight: "If we're going to have sex, we're using condoms"

Ask: "Do you use condoms when you have sex?"

Work it into conversation:

"My friend told me that their partner wouldn't use a condom"

PRACTICE:

Think through the conversation in your head and imagine what the other person might say. Say it out loud or run it past a friend.

BE CONFIDENT:

Remember you're being responsible and taking care of your own health. If they make a big deal about it, are they really the sort of person you want to be having sex with?

DID YOU KNOW?

Never use a condom more than once; always get a new one! And don't use two condoms together, as this increases the chances of them splitting.

WHAT IF THE CONDOM BREAKS?

(OR YOU FORGET TO USE ONE)?

DON'T PANIC!

GET EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION

This prevents pregnancy. Some can be used up to five days after unprotected sex, but the sooner the better. There are two types:

Emergency contraceptive pill (aka 'morning after pill')

Intrauterine device (IUD)

GET TESTED FOR STIS

Take an STI test at least two weeks later. Don't wait for symptoms; you can have an STI without any!

Enter your postcode at brook.org.uk/find-a-service to find out what services are in your area.

GET PEP

If you think you are at risk of HIV, PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis) is a treatment that can stop HIV taking hold.

For PEP to work, you need to start it within 72 hours (three days) of the sex that put you at risk, and ideally within 24 hours.

ABORTION

Find out more about abortion at:
brook.org.uk/abortion



Finding out that you're pregnant might be the news that you've been waiting to hear, but sometimes it may be unwanted for many different reasons.

If you decide to have an abortion, you should be treated without judgement, because it's your decision.

IS IT SAFE?

Yes. The earlier the abortion, the safer it is. There are lots of myths about abortion causing health problems or making it harder to get pregnant in the future.

None of this is true.

Brook can support you with pregnancy choices and help you find out more about abortion services:

brook.org.uk/find-a-service



HOW WILL I FEEL?

Everyone will have a different experience, but many say that the main emotion they feel afterwards is relief. If you feel sad or upset, you can talk to a counsellor.

DO MY PARENTS/ CARERS HAVE TO KNOW?

You can have an abortion without telling your parents, even if you're under 16. You'll be encouraged to tell them, but this is your choice. Some services may ask you to bring a responsible adult with you to the appointment.

Abortion advice and services are confidential. However, if they think you are at risk or in danger, your information may be shared with others (e.g. social services). But, they will talk to you about this first.

IS IT LEGAL?

Northern

Ireland: Legal up to 12 weeks of pregnancy and up to 24 weeks in certain circumstances

England, Scotland and Wales: Legal up to 24 weeks of pregnancy (if two doctors agree)

Jersey: Legal up to 12 weeks of pregnancy (if two doctors agree) and up to 24 weeks in certain circumstances



Visit brook.org.uk/abortion for more information on UK abortion law.

DID YOU KNOW?

One in three women in the UK will have an abortion during their lifetime. (Although many don't talk about it).



WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS?

Here are your options if you had sex without contraception (or if your contraception failed) and you think you may be pregnant:



Sexual Relationships and Sexual Health

Sexual development is an important part of overall childhood development and is not to be feared! Understanding what typical sexual development looks like helps you to reorganise when behaviours are developmentally expected and when they may require further attention. Here are some general guidelines about what typical healthy sexual development looks like in different ages...

Age 0-4

- Relaxed about being nude in front of others
- Curious, unembarrassed touching of own genitals
- Starting to notice own gender and gender of others

Age 5-7

- Potentially starting to show some embarrassment around nudity
- Curious about bodies and where babies come from
- Exploring adult and family relationships through play

Age 8-12

- Experiencing puberty changes
- Growing need for privacy around bodies and personal space
- Increased curiosity about sex and relationships
- Developing crushes on peers or celebrities

Age 13-15

- Ongoing puberty changes affecting body, emotions and peer relationships
- Emerging sense of independence
- Growing interest in romantic relationships

Age 16-18

- Deepening interest in romantic and sexual relationships
- Increasing sense of independence
- Developing sense of personal identity, beliefs and values

Supporting Your Teenager: Relationships, Sexual Health and Respect

Growing up involves learning how to build healthy relationships, understand emotions, communicate effectively and make responsible decisions. Relationships and sexual health education (RSHE) helps young people develop the knowledge, confidence and values they need to navigate relationships safely and respectfully.

Parents and carers play an important role. Open, honest conversations at home help teenagers feel supported and make informed choices.

The Positive Side of Relationships

Healthy relationships can bring friendship, trust, support and a sense of belonging. Teenagers are learning how to understand themselves and others, recognise their own values, and develop skills that will support them throughout life.

Healthy relationships are built on:

- Respect and kindness
- Honest communication
- Trust and understanding
- Listening to each other
- Respecting boundaries
- Making decisions together

Top tips:

- Talk about what makes a relationship healthy, not only what can go wrong.
- Encourage your teenager to think about the qualities they value in friendships and relationships.
- Discuss the importance of treating others with compassion and respect.
- Remind them that everyone develops at their own pace.

Consent and Personal Boundaries

Understanding consent is an important part of respectful relationships. Young people need to understand that everyone has the right to make their own choices and that boundaries should always be respected.

Consent means:

- A clear and willing agreement
- Feeling comfortable and confident
- Respecting someone's decision
- Understanding that someone can change their mind

Top tips:

- Use everyday examples to talk about boundaries and respect.
- Reinforce that good relationships involve listening and communication.
- Encourage your teenager to trust their feelings and speak up if something does not feel right.
- Help them understand that pressure, guilt or fear are not signs of a healthy relationship.

Sexual Relationships and Sexual Health

Sexual Health and Making Safe Choices

RSHE supports young people to understand sexual health, including how to look after themselves and others. This includes learning about responsibility, protection, health services and the importance of informed choices.

Young people may face pressure from peers, social media or expectations about relationships. Having accurate information helps them make safer decisions.

Top tips:

- Encourage questions and conversations without embarrassment.
 - Make sure your teenager knows where to find reliable health information.
 - Talk about the importance of looking after physical and emotional wellbeing.
 - Encourage them to seek advice from trusted adults or health professionals when needed.
-

Recognising Pressure and Unhealthy Relationships

Teenagers may experience pressure to act in ways that do not match their values. This can come from friends, partners, online content or social expectations.

Signs of an unhealthy relationship can include:

- Feeling controlled or pressured
- A lack of respect for boundaries
- Being made to feel guilty
- Feeling unable to be yourself

Top tips:

- Ask questions such as: *“Do you feel respected?” “Can you be yourself around this person?” “Would you encourage a friend to accept this behaviour?”*
 - Encourage your teenager to value themselves and their wellbeing.
 - Remind them that healthy relationships should feel safe, respectful and supportive.
-

Online Relationships and Digital Respect

Technology has changed how young people communicate and form relationships. Online interactions can be positive, but they can also create challenges around privacy, pressure and reputation.

Top tips:

- Discuss respectful communication online.
 - Encourage careful thinking before sharing messages, images or personal information.
 - Talk about the impact of online behaviour on themselves and others.
 - Remind teenagers they can always ask for support if something online worries them.
-

Sexual Relationships and Sexual Health

Keeping the Conversation Open

The most helpful thing parents can offer is a safe space where teenagers know they can ask questions.

Try to:

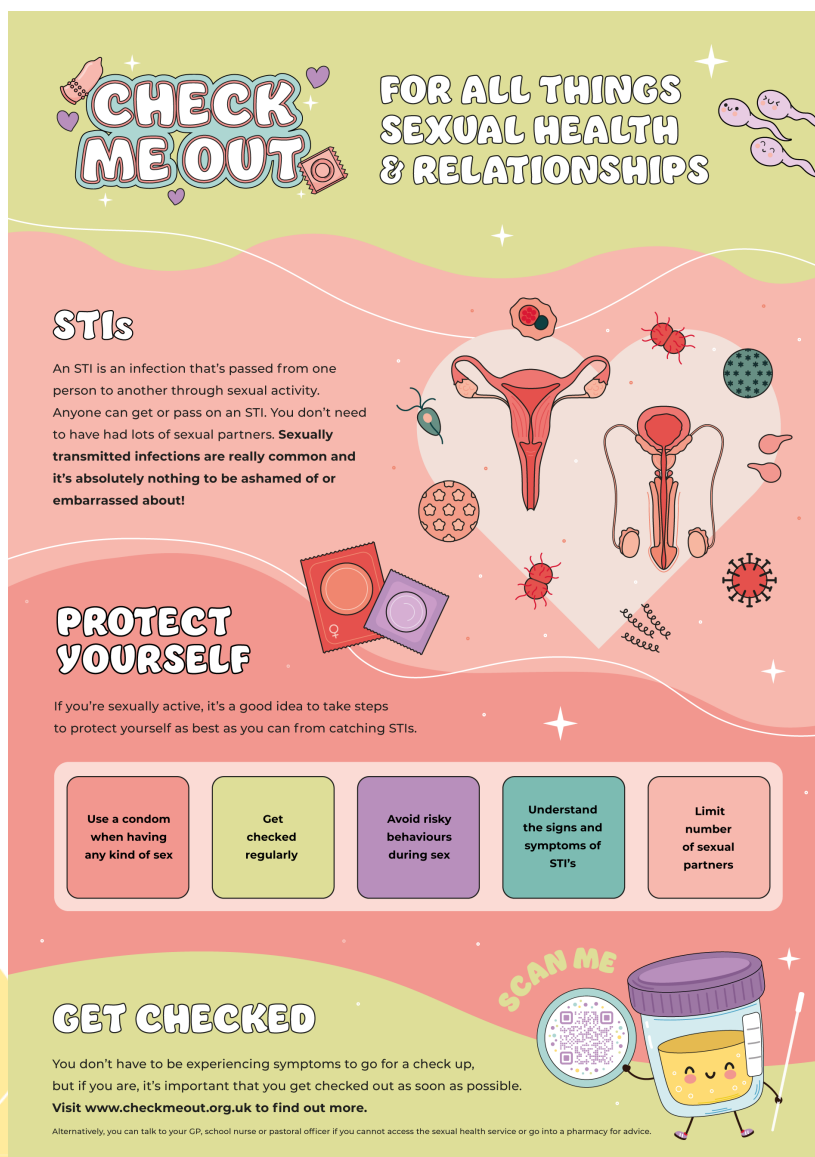
- Listen before giving advice.
- Avoid making conversations feel like a lecture.
- Be honest if you do not know an answer — you can find out together.
- Keep conversations ongoing rather than waiting for a specific issue.

By modelling **Integrity, Compassion and Perseverance**, we help young people develop respectful relationships, make responsible choices and build confidence for the future.

Integrity: making choices that reflect your values.

Compassion: treating yourself and others with care and respect.

Perseverance: continuing to learn, grow and make positive decisions.



CONSENT

For more information about consent, including where you can get help and support, visit brook.org.uk/consent



Consent means agreeing to do something. When it comes to sex, this means agreeing to have sex or engage in sexual activity. Everyone needs to know about consent so they can keep themselves and other people safe.

Consent isn't just about penetrative sex: sexual activity can include kissing, sexual touching (like fingering or hand jobs), oral, anal and vaginal sex with a penis or sex toy.

Whatever way you choose to have sex, you always need consent from all people involved. Always, every time and throughout every encounter.

Consent is all about showing your partners the respect they deserve, which makes for great sex!



COMMUNICATING CONSENT

Giving and getting consent should be a continuous conversation about what you want, don't want, like and don't like.

It is important to practise ways of asking others for consent, listen to their response, and pause to check how they are feeling. It is also crucial to do the same for yourself!

No matter how bumpy or stilted conversations might be, practising consent every time you have sex is always the right approach.



CONSENT AND THE LAW

In the eyes of the law, consent is the agreement between people to engage in sexual activity.

All those involved must have:

FREEDOM

"I am doing this because I genuinely want to, not because I am being pressured, forced or blackmailed."

CONSENT

"I know that, whatever I decide, I can change my mind at any time and my decisions will be respected."

CHOICE

CAPACITY

"I understand fully what I am agreeing to. I am fully conscious and not too sleepy, drunk, high or confused to know what's going on."



Engaging in a sexual act without the consent of everyone involved is rape, sexual assault or sexual harassment. All are serious criminal offences.



DID YOU KNOW?

The age of consent in the UK is 16 and people under 13 can never consent to sexual activity. These laws exist to protect young people, not to prosecute them.

CONSENT

For more information about consent, including where you can get help and support, visit brook.org.uk/consent



GETTING CONSENT

Ask your partner if sexual activity is what they want and if it feels good.

- ➔ "What would you like to happen next?"
- ➔ "How are you doing?"
- ➔ "Do you want to carry on?"
- ➔ "Fancy going on top?"
- ➔ "I'd like to try ____, what do you think?"
- ➔ "You seem tired, do you want to stop?"



Listen to what they say.

- ✔ "That feels good"
- ✔ "I like that"
- ✔ "Do that again"
- ✔ "Touch me here"
- ✗ "I'm not in the mood"
- ✗ "Maybe later"
- ✗ "Get off"
- ✗ Silence



Consent can be communicated in many different ways. You should pay attention to your partner's actions, words and sounds every time you have sex.

Read your partner's body language.

- ✔ Looking at you
- ✔ Smiling and nodding
- ✔ Relaxed and happy
- ✔ Kissing and touching you back
- ✗ No eye-contact
- ✗ Frozen or frightened expression
- ✗ Flinching
- ✗ Resistance or pushing you away



If someone is at risk of sexual assault or violence, you can call 999 any time of day or night if it is safe for you to do so.

GIVING CONSENT

Practising good consent involves checking in with yourself:

WHAT AM I THINKING?

Are you doing this because you have feelings for this person and want to be intimate with them, or are you being pressured or feeling worried about disappointing them?

HOW AM I FEELING?

Having sex should always be something that you want to do, not something that causes you anxiety or distress. If you feel nervous, is this linked to anticipation and excitement rather than fear or panic?

HOW IS MY BODY RESPONDING?

Do you feel turned on? Does it feel good? Remember: even if your body is responding in a certain way, like if your penis is erect or your vulva is wet, you still don't have to have sex if you don't want to.



HELP & SUPPORT

If you need help, you should try to speak to an adult that you trust.

Brook and other sexual health services are able to offer you advice and support with sex, relationships and consent.



If someone forces you to do something sexual that you do not want to do, it is never your fault and it is not OK.

DID YOU KNOW?

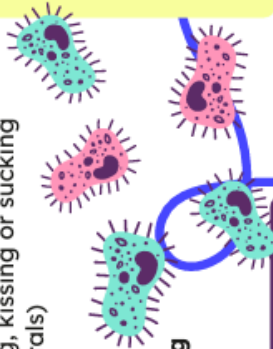


SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS (STIs)



An STI is any kind of bacterial or viral infection passed on through sexual contact without a condom. Sexual contact can include:

- **Oral sex** (licking, kissing or sucking someone's genitals)
- **Vaginal sex**
- **Anal sex**
- **Sexual touching**
- **Using sex toys**



HOW DO YOU GET TESTED?

Most STIs can be detected by a urine sample, blood test or vaginal swab.

Occasionally, if you have visible symptoms, you may need to have an examination from a nurse or doctor. If you do, there's no need to be embarrassed – they've seen it all before and just want to help!



HOW CAN YOU PREVENT STIs?

CONDOMS

Using a condom correctly every time you have sex is the easiest way to protect against both STIs and unplanned pregnancy. You should use condoms on sex toys, too.



VACCINATIONS

There are vaccines available for HPV, hepatitis A and hepatitis B.



DON'T WORRY!

PREP/PEP

PrEP is anti-HIV medication that is taken daily, or before sex, in order to prevent HIV from taking hold in someone's body if they are exposed to it.

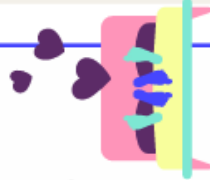


PEP is a combination of drugs which can be used to reduce the likelihood of someone contracting HIV after they have been exposed to it.

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU'VE GOT ONE?

The two most common STIs, chlamydia and gonorrhoea, often don't have any symptoms so the only way to know you don't have them is to test.

If you do have symptoms, it's best to speak to a medical professional as soon as possible for help.



WHEN SHOULD YOU TEST?

If you are sexually active, you should test regularly and after each new partner.

It takes roughly two weeks for the most common STIs to show in tests, so if you don't have symptoms, it's better to wait at least two weeks after sex to do your test.

DID YOU KNOW

Anyone can get an STI. It doesn't matter how many times you've had sex or how many partners you've had.

WHERE CAN I GET TESTS AND TREATMENT?

Use our service finder to see where you can get tested and treated for STIs:

brook.org.uk/find-a-service

STIs can be passed on through unprotected oral, vaginal or anal sex, sexual touching and sharing sex toys. HIV and syphilis can also be passed on by sharing needles. **Here are some other things you should know:**

	Chlamydia	Genital herpes	Genital warts	Gonorrhoea	HIV	Pubic lice	Syphilis	Trichomoniasis
SYMPTOMS	No symptoms in the majority of cases. Possible symptoms » Unusual discharge from the vagina, penis or rectum » Burning/itching in the genital area » Pain when peeing » Heavy periods or bleeding between periods » Pelvic/lower abdominal pain » Abdominal pain during sex » Bleeding during/after sex » Painful swelling of testicles	Often no signs or symptoms. Possible symptoms » Flu-like fever, headache, aches and pains » Stinging, tingling or itching in the genital area » Small fluid-filled blisters which burst leaving small, red, very painful sores » Pain when urine passes over the sores » Possible discharge	Often no visible symptoms and it can be months/ years before warts appear. Possible symptoms » Can appear alone or in clusters like a cauliflower » Normally painless but can be itchy » Appear in/around the vagina, anus, upper thighs and anywhere on the penis, scrotum or urethra	No symptoms in many cases. Possible symptoms » Green/yellow discharge from the vagina » Green, yellow or white discharge from the penis » Anal discharge » Burning when peeing » Lower abdomen pain/tenderness » Heavy periods or bleeding between periods » Painful swelling of the foreskin » Pain or tenderness in the testicles	Around 80% of people will have a short, two week flu-like illness soon after getting the HIV virus. This may last for two to three weeks with sore throat, fever, tiredness, achy joints, swollen glands and a rash. After this, there may be no symptoms for many years.	Symptoms can take a few weeks to appear and include itching, irritation and inflammation. You may be able to see: » Black powder (droppings) » Brown eggs » Yellow-grey or red lice	Often no signs or symptoms. Possible symptoms Stage 1: small, painless, very infectious sore on genitals, anus or mouth. Stage 2: may include painless rash on the palms or soles, wart-like growths on genitals, flu, weight loss, white patches on mouth roof Stage 3: rarely occurs in the UK. Only 1/3 will experience serious symptoms such as paralysis, loss of coordination, blind/deafness, stroke and dementia.	Often no signs or symptoms but if there are, they usually appear within a month. Possible symptoms » Itching, swelling and soreness of the genitals » Frothy, yellow-green fishy vaginal discharge » Thin, white discharge from the penis » Pain during sex and peeing » Lower abdominal pain » Itchy inner thighs » Needing to urinate more often
DIAGNOSIS	Urine or swab test. Examination by doctor or nurse. Swab of fluid from the blisters.	Examination by doctor or nurse.	Examination by doctor or nurse.	Urine or swab test.	Blood test, four weeks after exposure will confirm HIV status. Do not delay seeking medical help.	Examination by doctor or nurse with a magnifying glass.	Blood test. Examination by doctor or nurse or swab if there is a sore.	Examination by doctor or nurse. Urine test or swab test.
TREATMENT	Course of antibiotics. Not getting treatment can cause infertility.	Antiviral medicines. Treatment is given to relieve symptoms.	Cream or lotion. Warts can be frozen, heated or removed. It can take months for warts to disappear.	Antibiotic injection in the buttock or thigh and a single antibiotic tablet. Not getting treatment can cause infertility.	Can be managed with drugs. There is no cure but left untreated, can develop into AIDS, when you cannot fight life-threatening infections. PrEP and PEP are drugs that prevent the virus taking hold if you are exposed to HIV.	Special lotions, creams or shampoo. No treatment can cause spreading, skin irritation and infections.	Single antibiotic injection or a course of injections. If reaches stage 3 it can be fatal.	Antibiotics. Unlikely to go away with no treatment.

Other infections include bacterial vaginosis, cystitis, proctitis, urethritis and vaginitis which can be caused by other STIs but are not themselves, STIs. Find out more at brook.org.uk/stis

Sexual Relationships and Sexual Health

Why we need to talk to young people about pornography

In the digital age, access to explicit content has become increasingly prevalent, making it more crucial than ever to engage in open and informed discussions about pornography with young people. Despite regulations coming into effect around access to porn, the use of VPNs and accidental exposure to porn (Children's Commissioner website suggests some as young as six) means that we need to open to addressing this issue early on, to help foster healthy attitudes and to keep our young people safe.

Engaging in open conversations about pornography means adults can explain its explicit nature and the potential risks associated with its consumption. It is important to explain to young people that pornography is not true to life. Its purpose is to provide entertainment and to evoke pleasure. It often presents unrealistic portrayals of sexual experiences, which can lead to misconceptions and skewed expectations about intimacy. This can lead to disappointment and dissatisfaction in real life relationships. It can also contribute to the objectification and sexualisation of women and girls, which can have serious implications for their mental and physical health.

Talking to young people about pornography allows us to provide them with balanced perspectives on sexuality. By discussing the differences between fiction and reality, we can help young people develop healthier attitudes towards sex, relationships and consent. It is not about encouraging or condoning its use, its about equipping young people with the tools they need to think critically and to form positive connections, avoiding toxic relationship patterns.

Issues with pornography

- Porn can negatively impact relationships
- Porn can become habit-forming
- Porn can fuel violence and abuse
- Porn perpetuates racism and toxic stereotypes
- Porn harms sexual performance and makes people more sexually illiterate
- Porn can change a consumer's brain
- Porn can normalise abuse
- Porn can fuel mental health issues
- Porn companies profit from nonconsensual content
- Porn fuels sex trafficking

From the Children's Commissioner findings

- More children report seeing porn online than two years ago, with more stumbling across it by accident and some aged as young as six
- New data from children aged 16-21 proves that despite major efforts to hold tech firms accountable for the content served up to children on their sites, more are seeing porn online than in 2023.
- More than a quarter of children reported having seen porn by aged 11. Many say it is now normal to see violent content that depicts acts that are illegal or soon will be.
- More than half—58% - had seen content featuring strangulation before turning 18 and many agreed it has affected their behaviour towards one another.
- 44% of the children surveyed agreed with the statement 'girls may say no at first but can then be persuaded to have sex.' Girls were more likely to agree with the statement than boys.

If we don't talk to our children about porn, their friends or online sources will. It is important that we have control of the narrative.

PORN

For more information and support
visit brook.org.uk/porn



It's natural to be curious about sex and porn, but it's also completely normal to not be interested or enjoy porn at all.

Whether you do or don't watch porn, there are some things worth knowing about it.

DID YOU KNOW?

Porn has been around for thousands of years, beginning as images carved into cave walls or painted on ancient pottery.

DID YOU KNOW?

IMPORTANT!
If you're online and see porn by accident, you should close the window. Talk to a trusted adult if you are confused, worried or upset by what you've seen.

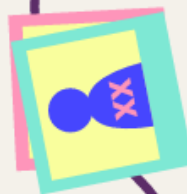


PORN AND UNDER 18s

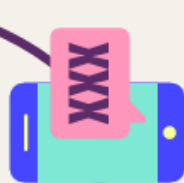
Porn is meant for adults. Technically, it's not illegal in UK law for under 18s to watch porn, but it is illegal to...



Show or sell porn to under 18s



Take sexual photos or videos of under 18s



Send or receive sexual images or videos that have under 18s in

It doesn't matter if everyone is consenting – if a person in an image or video is under 18, it is illegal.

REMEMBER: the law is there to keep you safe, not to get you into trouble. If something has happened and you are worried, you should speak to a trusted adult.

If you accidentally see sexual images or videos of someone you think is under 18, you can report it anonymously to the Internet Watch Foundation (iwf.org.uk).



PORN

For more information and support
visit brook.org.uk/porn



PORN VS REAL LIFE

Sex in porn is not the same as sex in real life, so don't use porn as a framework for how you or your partner(s) should behave during sex.

Porn could help you feel more open minded about sex. As long as you remember that porn is not real, it can help you to explore fantasies on your own first, before trying them with a partner.

BODIES

Don't compare yourself or your partner(s) to the people you see in porn - the bodies you see in porn are usually not realistic.



GENITALS

Genitals in porn are often hairless and uniformed - in reality, penises and vulvas come in lots of different shape, sizes and colours.



REMEMBER:
Sex in real life isn't about performance or how you look.

CONTRACEPTION & CONSENT

Generally, porn doesn't promote safer sex - we rarely see contraception being used or discussed, and there is usually no communication about consent.



SEX

Sex in porn looks smoother than sex in real life - they edit out any of the silly or clumsy moments that make sex in real life more fun!



AM I WATCHING TOO MUCH PORN?

There is no set rule with how much is too much, everyone is different.

SIGNS OF UNHEALTHY PORN USE COULD INCLUDE:

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Watching it and not really enjoying it | ☐ Negatively affecting your feelings about yourself, your partner, your body or your behaviour and sexual activities |
| ☐ Looking for more extreme porn to turn you on | ☐ Making you feel anxious or ashamed |
| ☐ Occupying your time or your thoughts too much | ☐ Impacting on the time you spend doing other activities (e.g. work, studies, hobbies or socialising) |

XXX

Mental Wellbeing

Supporting Your Teenager: Mental Wellbeing and Emotional Health

The teenage years bring many changes, challenges and opportunities. Young people are developing their identity, becoming more independent and learning how to manage emotions, relationships and responsibilities.

Good mental wellbeing is not about feeling happy all the time. It is about having the skills, support and confidence to cope with life's ups and downs, ask for help when needed and continue to grow.

Parents and carers play a vital role in helping teenagers build resilience and feel supported.

What Does Good Mental Wellbeing Look Like?

A teenager with positive mental wellbeing may:

- Understand and express their feelings
- Have healthy ways to manage stress
- Feel connected to friends, family or trusted adults
- Know when to ask for help
- Balance responsibilities with rest and enjoyment
- Accept that setbacks are part of life
- Feel valued and respected

Good mental wellbeing is built through everyday actions: kindness, connection, routines, positive relationships and self-care.

Top tips:

- Make time for regular conversations, not just when something is wrong.
- Show interest in their hobbies, friendships and experiences.
- Notice and celebrate effort, not just achievements.
- Encourage healthy routines around sleep, exercise, food and relaxation.
- Remind them that asking for support is a strength.

Understanding Stress and Pressure

Teenagers can experience pressure from many areas of life, including school, friendships, social media, future choices and expectations of themselves.

A small amount of stress can help motivate us, but ongoing stress can affect confidence, mood, sleep and relationships.

Signs your teenager may be struggling include:

- Becoming unusually withdrawn or irritable
- Losing interest in things they normally enjoy
- Changes in sleep patterns or energy levels
- Feeling overwhelmed by everyday challenges
- Increased worry or negative self-talk
- Avoiding situations they normally manage

Mental Wellbeing

Top tips:

- Ask open questions: *“How have things been feeling for you recently?”* *“Is there anything that has been weighing on your mind?”*
- Listen without immediately trying to solve the problem.
- Help them break big worries into smaller, manageable steps.
- Encourage healthy coping strategies such as exercise, creativity, hobbies or talking.

The Impact of Social Media and Online Life

Technology can help teenagers connect, learn and express themselves, but online spaces can also affect wellbeing.

Potential challenges include:

- Comparing themselves to unrealistic images or lifestyles
- Feeling pressure to keep up with others
- Exposure to upsetting content
- Online conflict or negative comments
- Feeling unable to switch off

Top tips:

- Talk about how social media makes them feel, not only how long they spend online.
- Encourage them to follow accounts that make them feel positive and supported.
- Help them understand that online content is often carefully edited or selective.
- Create device-free times together, especially around sleep.
- Remind them that their value is not measured by likes, followers or online approval.

Building Resilience and Coping Skills

Resilience means being able to face challenges, adapt and keep moving forward. It does not mean never finding things difficult.

Teenagers build resilience when they:

- Learn from mistakes
- Try new things
- Solve problems
- Accept support
- Recognise their own strengths

Top tips:

- Encourage “growth mindset” thinking: *“What can we learn from this?”* rather than *“I can’t do this.”*
- Allow teenagers to experience manageable challenges while offering support.
- Share examples of times when you have overcome difficulties.
- Praise perseverance and effort.

Mental Wellbeing

Helping Your Teenager Feel Safe Asking for Help

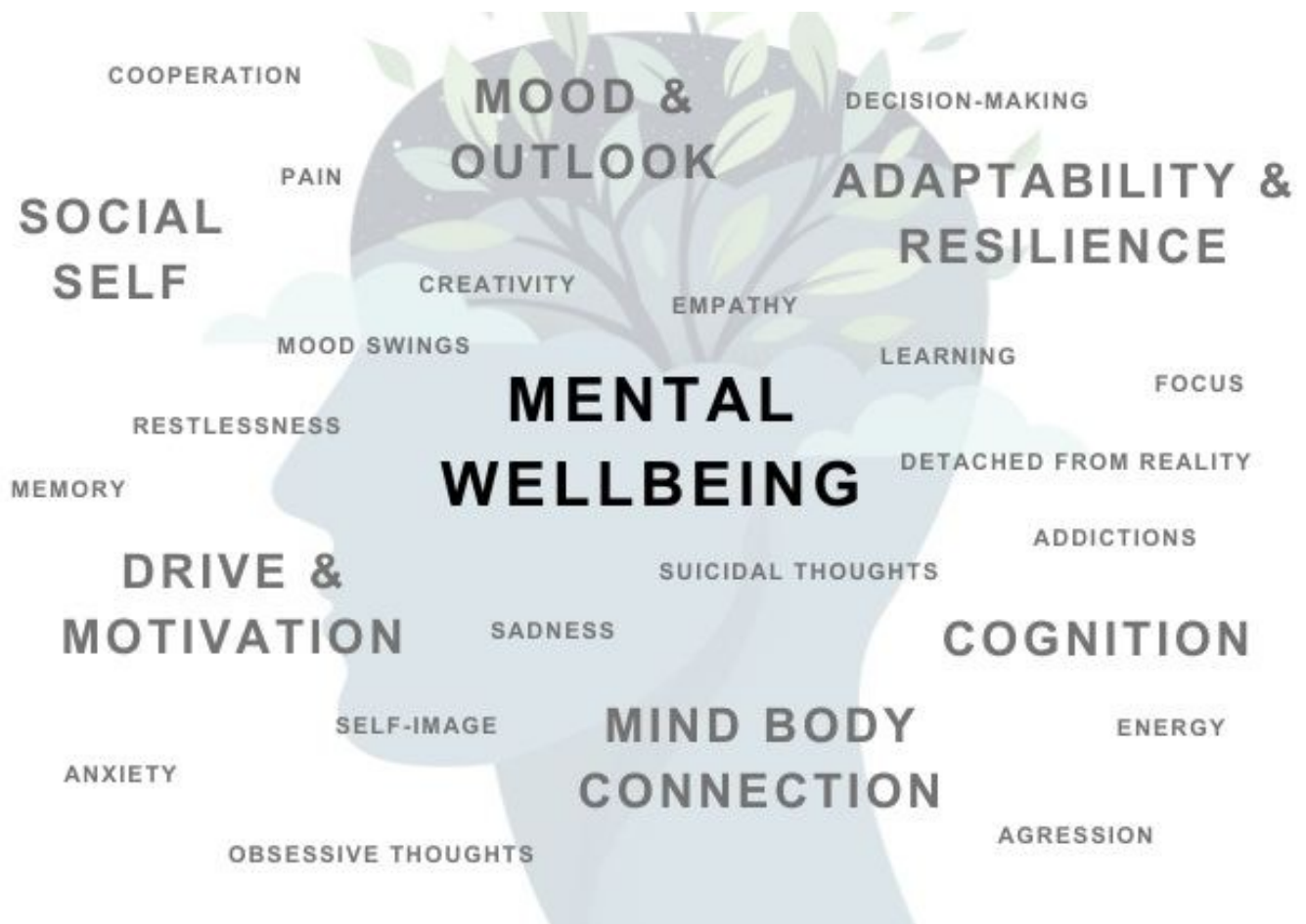
One of the strongest protective factors for young people is knowing they are not alone.

Create a home environment where:

- Feelings can be discussed openly
- Mistakes can be talked about
- Asking for help is normal
- Problems do not have to be faced alone

Top tips:

- Stay calm if your teenager shares something difficult.
- Thank them for trusting you.
- Focus on listening and understanding.
- Work together to find support if needed.



Wellbeing Online

For almost everyone, the Internet has become an integral part of life. Being online can have real benefits as well as cause real problems. Having clear knowledge of the pros and cons of online wellbeing is important if your young people are going to use the online world safely, sensibly and maturely. Below is a table of benefits and problems related to wellbeing. Spend time talking to your young person and help each other to monitor online usage with wellbeing in mind.

Benefits of the internet	Problems with being online
• Connecting with other people. Online communities and social media networks can give you peer support, often helping you speak more honestly about how you are feeling. • Expressing yourself. There are many ways to express yourself creatively online: making content, sharing photos etc. • Using apps to track fitness, find running routes and so on to help with mental and physical health • Read about other people's experience. This can help you feel less alone and can validate your own experiences. • Giving you time and space to relax. For some of us, online activities can be great for our wellbeing. Online gaming can help form social connections and act as a form of mindfulness	• Comparing yourself to others. Spending time online can lead to comparison. Online, we very often only see what other people want to share about their lives. Lives have ups and downs and can be messy—hardly what we see online. Remember, once the media feed is turned off, the reality can be different. • Feeling anxious, stressed, or depressed. Nowadays, our phones seem to ping with notifications every second! You may feel pressure to answer immediately, leading to feelings of anxiety or stress. Regularly reading news and information sites during negative world events, can also lead to feelings of helplessness, anger or creating poor wellbeing via 'doomscrolling'. Take a break and limit your usage. • Having difficulty sleeping. Many of us spend time long into the night checking social media and other online sites or gaming. This can hugely disrupt our sleep patterns. Where possible, have a cut off point for the evenings and leave devices outside of the bedroom. • Feeling lonely. If we see people socialising at events, we can feel left out. Some people find online communities a lonely experience as it does not fulfill their social interaction need. • Seeing triggering content. We have access to a lot of information online at all time. Sometimes it can be difficult to protect ourselves from certain types of content that can be triggering to us, or dangerous. If this happens, tell your parent/carer straight away and don't forget, you can always let school know. We can all help you. • Cyberbullying. Many issues have occurred with bullying in part due to the 'anonymous' nature of the online world. If this happens, don't delete anything, block the user, take screenshots and contact CEOP. • Internet addiction and gambling.

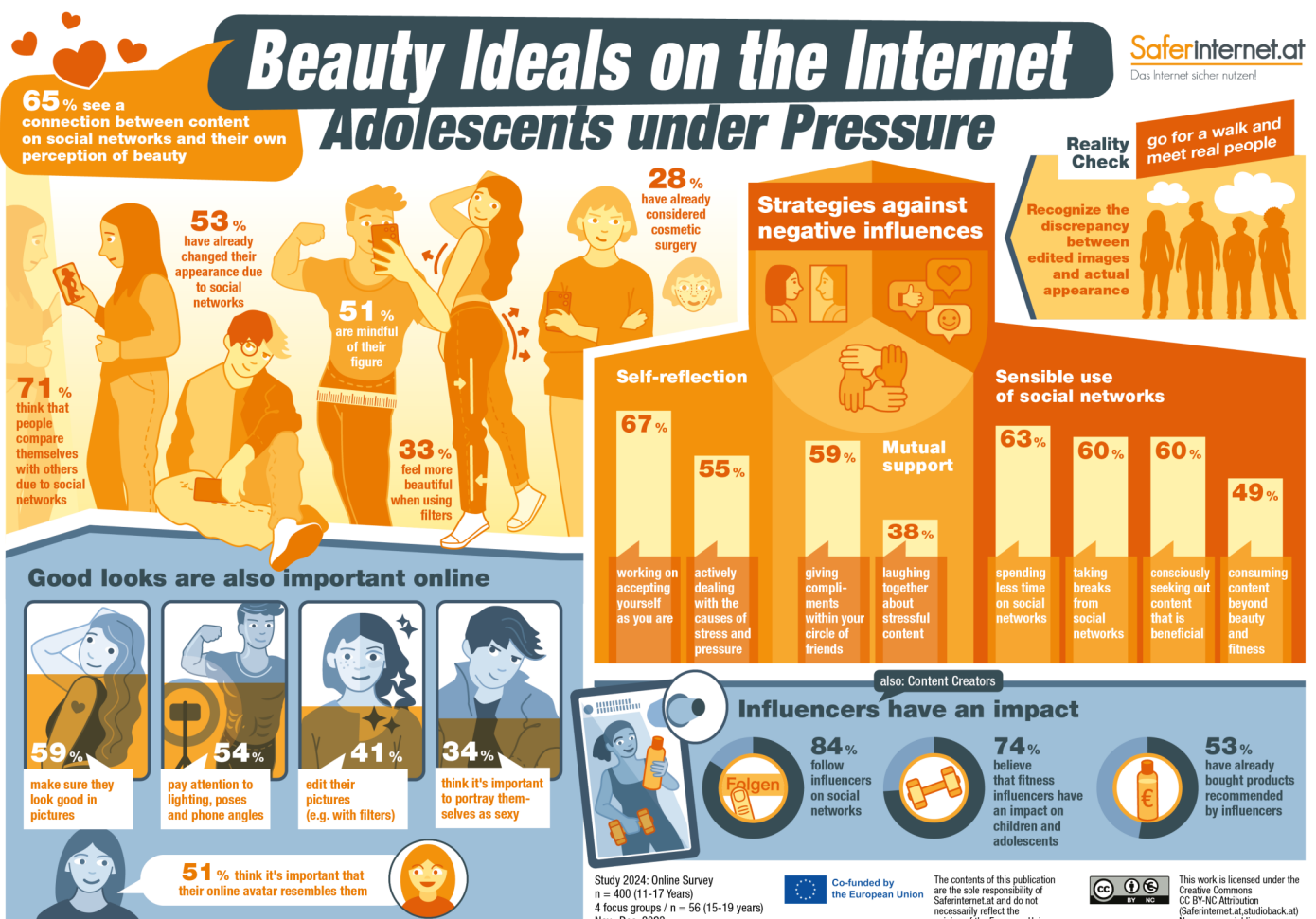
Wellbeing Online

Although it is easy to think that we see the online world differently from the 'real' world, we can all too easily fall into some of the same wellbeing traps as we do in reality. There can be many similarities and differences between the online world and the physical world.

Take this image for example:



It is hard to remember at times that the life of others we see on social media is *curated* with people showing their *highlights* or *best bits*, making the impact of unhealthy or obsessive comparisons with others all too real. Because people only post the best parts of their lives, it can seem like everyone else is always happy, successful or having fun, even if this isn't true. When we constantly see edited, filtered or carefully selected content of others, it can make us question our own appearance and worth, creating pressure to behave in certain ways, and leading to stress, anxiety and sometimes unsafe behaviours and choices. Nowhere is this more prevalent than setting unrealistic expectations for body image.



Wellbeing Online

Social media apps are set up to keep users scrolling. For example, watching short videos or getting likes on a post can release **dopamine**. **Dopamine** is a reward hormone released in the brain when we see or do something we enjoy.

Watching lots of content in quick succession can cause burst of **dopamine** which our brains can become addicted to.

Spending too much time online can lead to:

- Difficulty sleeping
- Less time spent with friends or family
- Less time spent doing offline activities or hobbies
- Low self-esteem
- Trouble talking to people in person
- More frequent comparisons with others online and self-criticism

These problems often reinforce each other, creating a negative cycle. For example, someone who spends too much time on social media might start **comparing** themselves to others, which lowers their self-esteem and negatively affects their **mental health**. This can then make them want to check social media more to see what others are doing, which leads to more **comparison** and even lower self-esteem.

Understanding this cycle is important because it helps us recognise when our social media use might be becoming unhealthy.

Sometimes, social media can involve unhealthy interactions. Online spaces can include cyber-bullying and trolling (deliberately posting content to upset or anger others), and people may experience harassment and stalking. This can be partly because people can say or do more extreme things online than they would face-to-face due to anonymity. Experiencing bullying, trolling, harassment or stalking online can lead to serious mental health conditions and should be treated appropriately.

Wellbeing Online

In today's connected world, being online is part of everyday life—from learning and playing to socializing and exploring. While the internet offers amazing opportunities, it's important to know how to stay safe and make smart choices.

For Students: Top Tips to Stay Safe Online

- **Protect Your Personal Info:** Never share your full name, address, school name, phone number, or passwords online.
- **Think Before You Click:** Be cautious about clicking on links or downloading files from unknown sources.
- **Be Kind Online:** Treat others with respect. If you see bullying or inappropriate behavior, tell a trusted adult.
- **Use Strong Passwords:** Create passwords that are hard to guess and don't share them—even with friends.
- **Talk to Someone You Trust:** If something online makes you feel uncomfortable or worried, speak to a parent, teacher, or school staff member.

For Parents & Carers: Supporting Your Child's Digital Wellbeing

- **Set Boundaries:** Agree on screen time limits and which websites or apps are appropriate.
- **Use Parental Controls:** Tools like filters and monitoring apps can help manage what children access online.
- **Stay Involved:** Talk regularly with your child about their online experiences and encourage open communication.
- **Know the Risks:** Be aware of online dangers such as cyberbullying, grooming, and exposure to inappropriate content.

Useful links

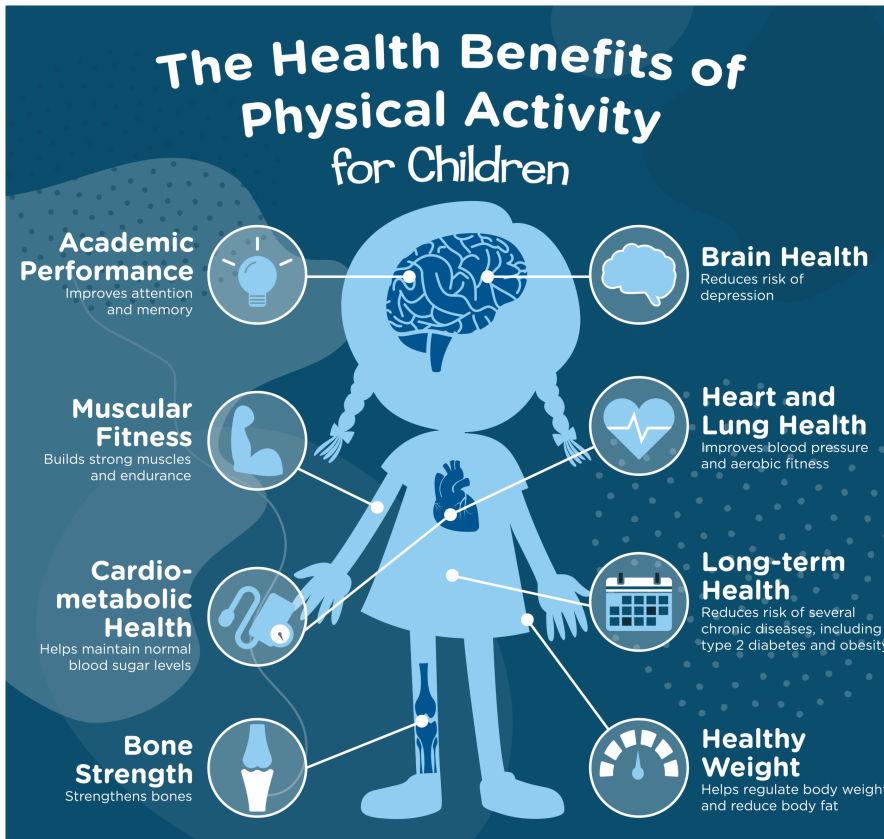
- [ThinkUKnow](#) – Education programme for children, parents, and professionals.
- [Childnet](#) – Resources for young people and educators to promote safe internet use.
- [NSPCC Online Safety](#) – Advice for parents and carers.
- [Internet Matters](#) – Guides and tools for families to navigate online safety.
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) – Tips, advice, and resources to help children stay safe online.

Physical Health & Fitness

Physical health is much more than simply avoiding illness. It includes understanding how the body works, looking after personal hygiene, staying active, getting enough rest, making informed choices and knowing when to seek support. Helping teenagers develop these skills gives them the confidence to care for themselves as they move towards adulthood.

Adolescence is a period of rapid change. Teenagers experience changes in their bodies, hormones, emotions and social lives. Supporting their physical health helps them to:

- Maintain energy and concentration
- Support healthy growth and development
- Manage stress and emotions
- Build confidence and independence
- Develop routines that support long-term wellbeing



Good physical health is built through everyday choices, including:

- Eating a balanced diet
- Staying physically active
- Getting enough sleep
- Maintaining good hygiene
- Attending health appointments when needed
- Understanding personal safety

Teenagers benefit from routines that help them balance school, friendships, technology, hobbies and relaxation.

Healthy habits include:

- Moving regularly throughout the day
- Finding activities they enjoy
- Creating healthy sleep routines
- Taking breaks from screens
- Allowing time for relaxation and recovery

You can help by modelling healthy routines and supporting balance in their lives.



Healthy Eating

The teenage years are a time of rapid growth, development and increasing independence. Young people are making more decisions for themselves, including choices about food, routines and lifestyle. Developing healthy eating habits during adolescence can support physical health, emotional wellbeing, concentration, energy levels and confidence.

Healthy eating is not about perfection or following strict rules. It is about helping teenagers understand how food supports their bodies and minds, building positive habits and developing a balanced relationship with eating.

As part of the updated RSHE guidance, young people learn about the importance of looking after their physical and mental wellbeing. This includes understanding nutrition, making informed choices, recognising influences on food choices and developing practical skills that support a healthy lifestyle.

This guide aims to help parents and carers support teenagers to build healthy, realistic and sustainable eating habits.

Why Healthy Eating Matters During the Teenage Years

Teenagers experience many physical and emotional changes. Their bodies need a variety of nutrients to support:

- Growth and development
- Energy and concentration
- Healthy brain function
- Sleep and mood
- Physical activity and everyday life

A balanced diet helps teenagers feel their best and gives them the fuel they need for school, friendships, hobbies and future goals.

Healthy eating includes:

- A variety of foods
- Regular meals and snacks
- Enough energy for growth and activity
- Enjoying food without guilt or fear
- Understanding that balance matters

Building a positive relationship with food

Teenagers are surrounded by messages about food, appearance and health. Social media, advertising and online trends can sometime create unrealistic ideas about diets, body image and what it means to be 'healthy'.

We can help by: avoiding negative talk about weight, food or appearance, focusing on health, energy and wellbeing rather than looks, encouraging our teenagers to listen to their bodies and to celebrate a wide range of strengths and qualities.

By planning meals together, taking teens shopping, cooking together, teaching practical skills and creating relaxed opportunities to eat together, we can create positive messaging around food which can last a lifetime.

Eatwell Guide

Check the label on packaged foods

Energy	Fat	Saturated Fat	Sugars	Salt
1046kJ 250kcal	3.0g LOW	1.3g LOW	34g HIGH	0.9g MED
13%	4%	7%	38%	15%

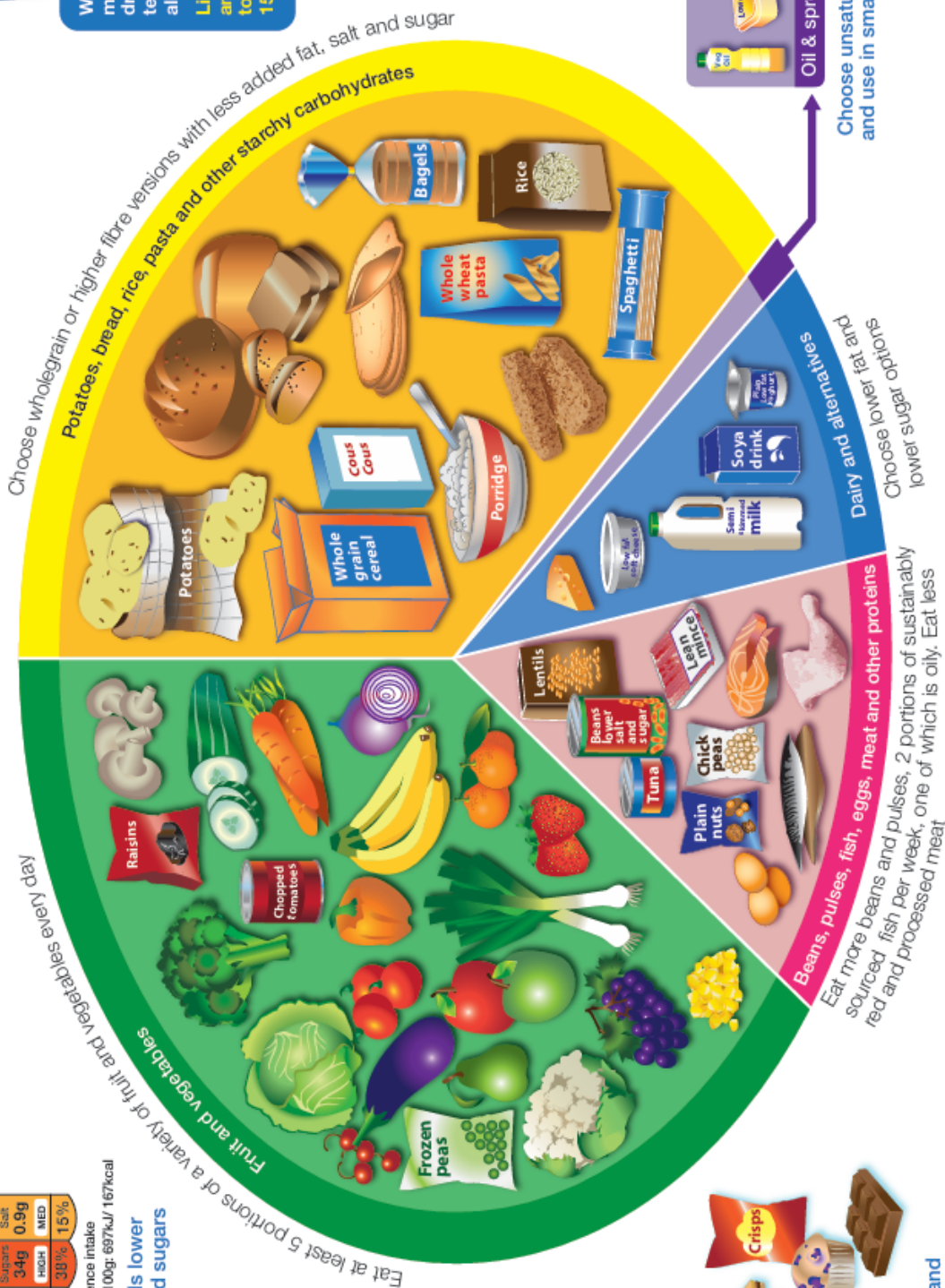
Each serving (150g) contains of an adult's reference intake
Typical values (as sold) per 100g: 697kJ/ 167kcal

Choose foods lower in fat, salt and sugars

Use the Eatwell Guide to help you get a balance of healthier and more sustainable food. It shows how much of what you eat overall should come from each food group.



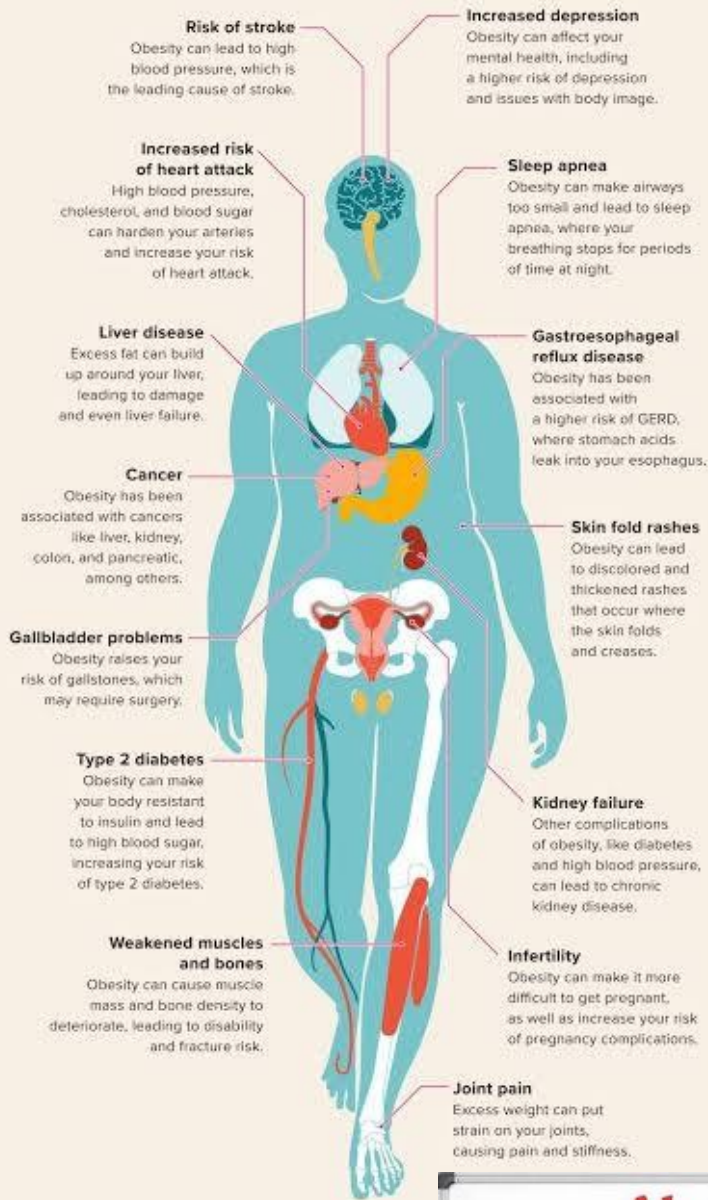
Water, lower fat milk, sugar-free drinks including tea and coffee all count.
Limit fruit juice and/or smoothies to a total of 150ml a day.



Eat less often and in small amounts

Per day 2000kcal 2500kcal = ALL FOOD + ALL DRINKS

OBSESITY EFFECTS On the Body



healthline

Healthy Eating

The risks of unhealthy weight gain and the impact alcohol can have

Alcohol & Weight Loss

How Alcohol Affects Weight Loss:

- **Empty Calories:** Adds extra calories with no nutritional value.
- **Slows Metabolism:** Body prioritizes burning alcohol first.
- **Increases Appetite:** Lowers inhibitions & boosts cravings.
- **Poor Sleep:** Disrupts sleep, affecting recovery.

-Calories in Alcohol:-

- Beer (12 oz): ~150 Calories
- Wine (5 oz): ~120 Calories
- Cocktail: 200+ Calories

Tips for Drinking Smarter:

- ♥ Choose lower calorie drinks.
- ♥ Avoid sugary mixers.
- ♥ Drink water between drinks.

Alcohol can HINDER your progress!

Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco & Vaping

A drug is any substance that changes how the brain and/or body works. They can take different forms and have different effects on people. It is important to understand the nature of drugs, the impacts they can have and the legalities around drugs and drug use in order to keep ourselves safe.

What makes a drug legal or illegal?

Drugs are categorised in three ways in the UK:

- Legal (e.g. caffeine)
- Legal with age controls (e.g. nicotine & alcohol)
- Illegal (e.g. cannabis)

Prescription drugs can be issued by a doctor to treat an illness or medical condition. Sometimes these can be available to buy over the counter in pharmacies and sometimes these can be controlled drugs. For all legal drugs, it is important to read the label and information sheet to be aware of any potential side effects. It is legal for the person with the prescription to take the drug as it is their medication however, it is dangerous and illegal to take someone else's prescription drugs.

Example: Ketamine is an example of a drug which can be a helpful medicine when a doctor prescribes it. But using ketamine illegally is dangerous, with many risks. It can affect your thinking and balance, cause accidents, and regular use can seriously damage your bladder. Using ketamine without a prescription is illegal.

With the rising number of online suppliers, people can be tricked into thinking they are buying real medication when it is counterfeit, designed to look real but rarely containing the active ingredient and sometimes harmful chemicals instead.

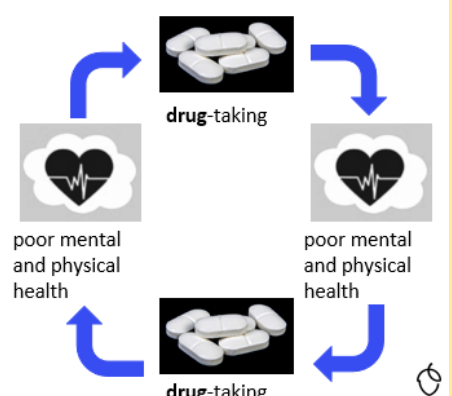
Why do people take drugs?

There are a wide range of reasons why people take legal drugs; to treat an existing medical condition, to help with minor pain and ailments, to alleviate long-term symptoms. As far as misuse of drugs and illegal drug use goes, people may want to experiment or feel curious, they may be influenced by peer pressure or they may be self-medicating, thinking the drug use might help them to manage their problems.

What are the risks of taking drugs?

Drugs can lead to a vicious cycle. By taking drugs, a person's mental and physical health can become poor. However, this often results in further drug use...

Misusing drugs is always dangerous. The risks depend on; the drug, the person and the setting.



Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco & Vaping

Risks

The Drug

Increase risks include:

Frequency of use

Strength of drug

Method of taking (injections risk infections)

Mixing of different types of drugs

Synthetic (man-made) drugs might be added to illegal drugs as a substitute for other ingredients.

The Person

Increase risks include:

A person's weight and composition can affect their reaction

Drug misuse and taking illegal drugs might make existing health conditions worse.

The Setting:

Increase risks include:

Drug misuse and taking illegal drugs alone or in a remote place puts someone in even greater danger.

Driving or using machinery under the influence of drugs is very dangerous and illegal.

In summary:

Drugs are substances that affect the way brains and bodies work.

Many different sorts of people take drugs for many different reasons.

Some drugs are illegal, others are controlled, some are legal.

Risks from taking drugs are influenced by the drug, the person, and the setting.

Taking drugs can increase the likelihood of accidents, drug dependence, unsafe sex, ill health and death.

Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco & Vaping

Alcohol

When we talk about drinking alcohol, we are specifically talking about a substance called ethanol, which is found in alcoholic drinks such as wine, beer and spirits. Alcohol is psychoactive, meaning it can affect the way the brain functions and communicates with the rest of the body.

Alcohol can affect our feelings, thoughts and behaviours. Someone may temporarily feel more relaxed after a drink. However the chemical changes in the brain can actually lead to more negative feelings, emotions as well as increased stress and anxiety. Using alcohol to manage feelings may cause a cycle of alcohol dependence where somebody feels that they need alcohol every day. Being drunk is when the effect of alcohol results in a loss of control over bodily functions and/or behaviour. How drunk a person is can depend on many different factors and different bodies react differently to consuming alcohol. This means that the amount it takes for someone to become drunk often varies.

The law around alcohol

In the UK, the legal age to purchase alcohol is 18 whilst 16-17 year olds can drink beer, wine or cider with a table meal at licensed premises if they are accompanied by an adult, medical experts advise against this for health and development reasons.

Risks associated with alcohol:

- Alcohol is linked to increased violence
- It can cause alcohol poisoning if not consumed responsibly
- Alcohol can cause impairment in sensible decision-making
- Alcohol can cause damage to the liver and brain
- Consuming alcohol over long periods of time can result in both physical and psychological harm

Alcohol can also affect parts of the brain that controls inhibition (feelings of self-consciousness), judgement and decision-making.

People may choose to drink alcohol for different reasons. Some drink:

- Socially
- To celebrate special occasions
- They enjoy the taste
- Out of curiosity
- To join in
- To cope with difficult emotions

If someone is struggling with difficult feelings, it's important to talk to a trusted adult or contact a support service like Childline.

Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco & Vaping

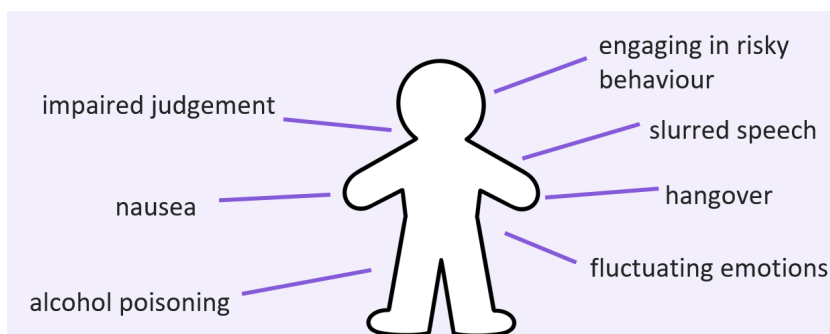
Alcohol

The consequences of underage drinking

- Using a fake ID is an **offence** under the Fraud Act 2006, punishable by a fine of up to £5 000 and/or 10 years' imprisonment.
- Purchasing **alcohol** when under 18 is illegal. Felicity could be fined or arrested.
- The shop could face a £10 000 fine, closure or loss of their **alcohol** licence.
- Being caught drinking **alcohol** in public when under 18 can result in a fine, arrest or a social contract if it's a repeat offence.

The impact of alcohol-related offences

area	impact
travel	You may not be able to get a visa to travel to other countries.
employment in UK and abroad	Employers check criminal records , and serious offences can make it difficult to find employment. Countries, like the USA, carry out checks on criminal records . For serious offences , you may face automatic refusal of a visa application.
education	Certain educational programmes, like childcare programmes, will not allow people with a criminal record .
driving	Drink-driving can result in a driving ban, fines and imprisonment.



Short-term effects of alcohol

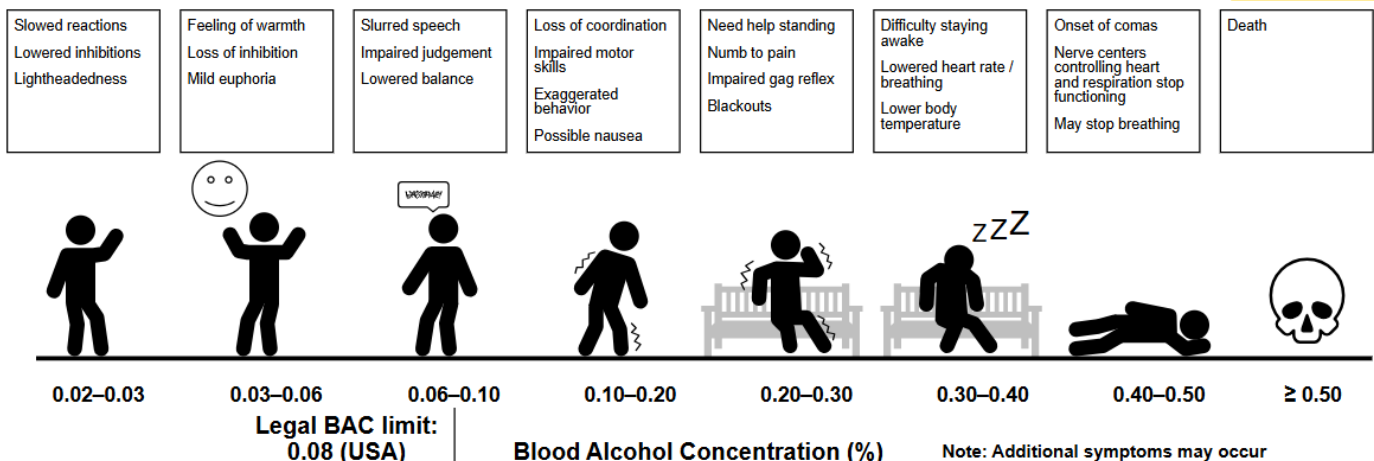
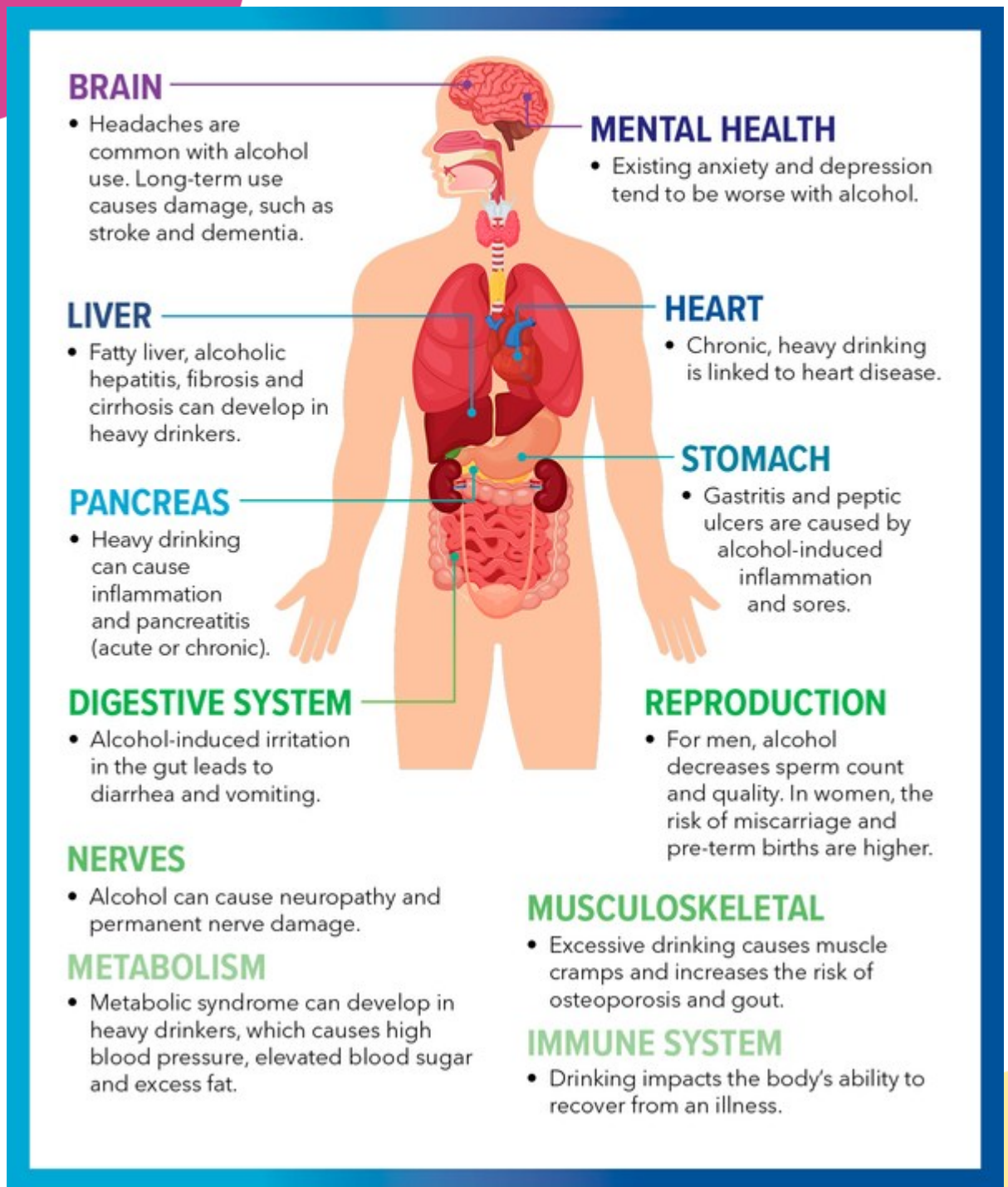
Long-term effects of alcohol

Area	Long-term effect of alcohol on area
Liver	Liver can become scarred and cells damaged which can lead to cancer.
Heart	Blood vessels are narrowed, putting pressure on the heart and potentially causing strokes or heart disease.
Brain	Neurons are altered leading to memory loss and poor judgement and coordination.
Mental health	Alcohol can intensify feelings of depression and alter brain chemistry.
Sexual health	Alcohol can cause impotence, loss of sex drive or decreased pleasure.

Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco & Vaping

Alcohol

How alcohol affects the body

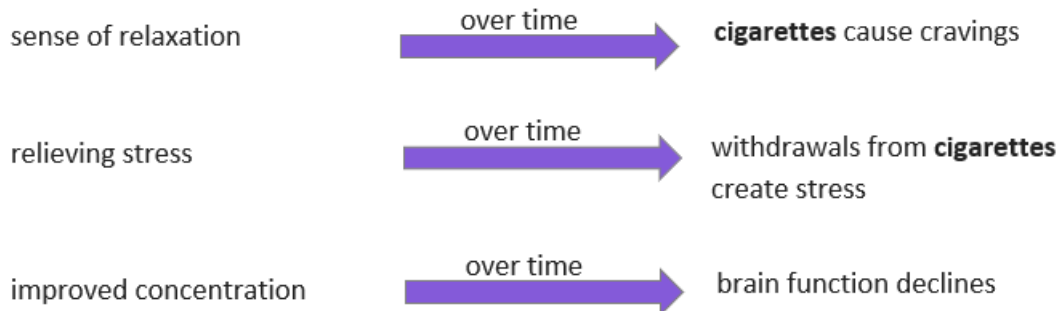


Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco & Vaping

Tobacco

Nicotine is a highly addictive substance which can have an effect after only days after infrequent inhalation of nicotine. When inhaled, it causes dopamine to be released in the brain; the feel-good chemical, but the effects are temporary. The brain begins to crave this feeling, and this can lead to an addiction.

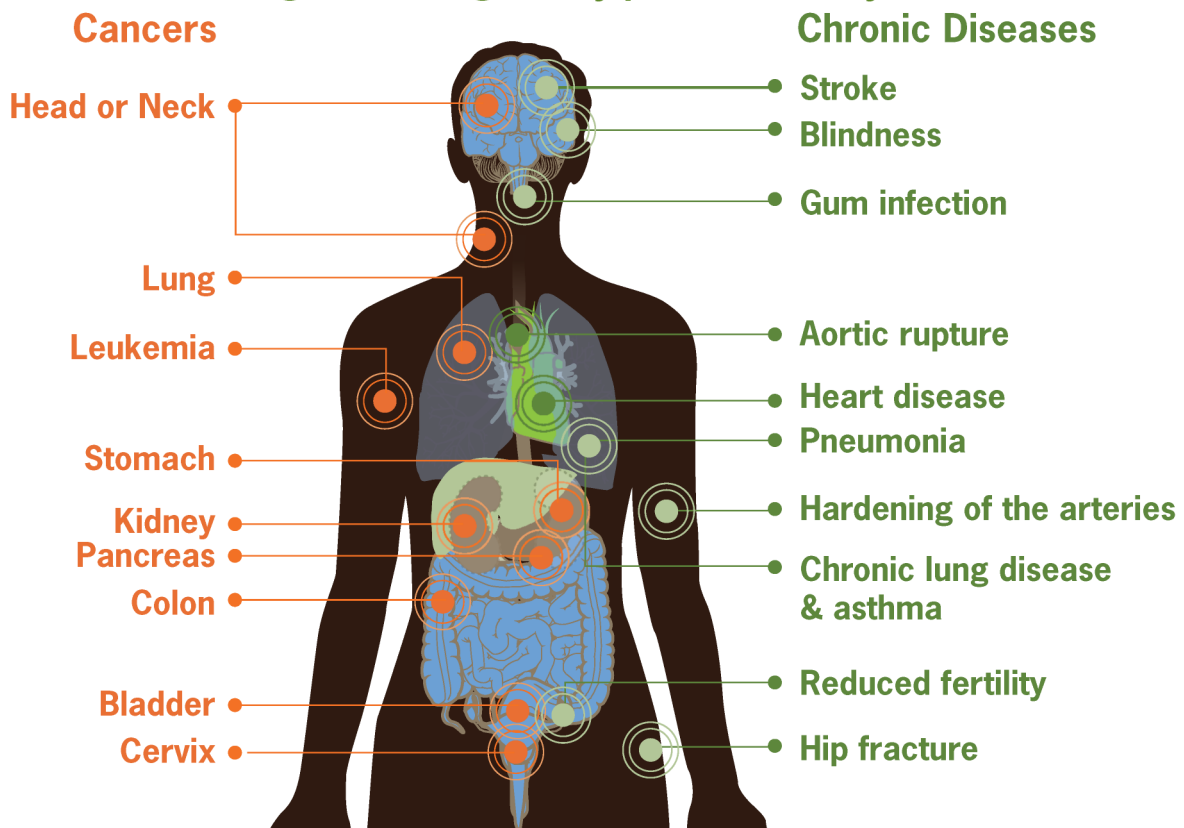
Nicotine has some immediate but short-term effects that people might enjoy. These short-term effects can have long-term consequences.



In 2023, less than 12% of the UK population were smokers and less than 1% of 11-15 year-olds reported regular smoking. In the UK, it is illegal to smoke in all enclosed public places and workplaces. Under the Tobacco and Vapes Act, the legal age to purchase tobacco products is 18, and a generational ban takes effect in 2027, ensuring anyone born on or after January 1, 2009, can never legally buy tobacco.

Risks from Smoking

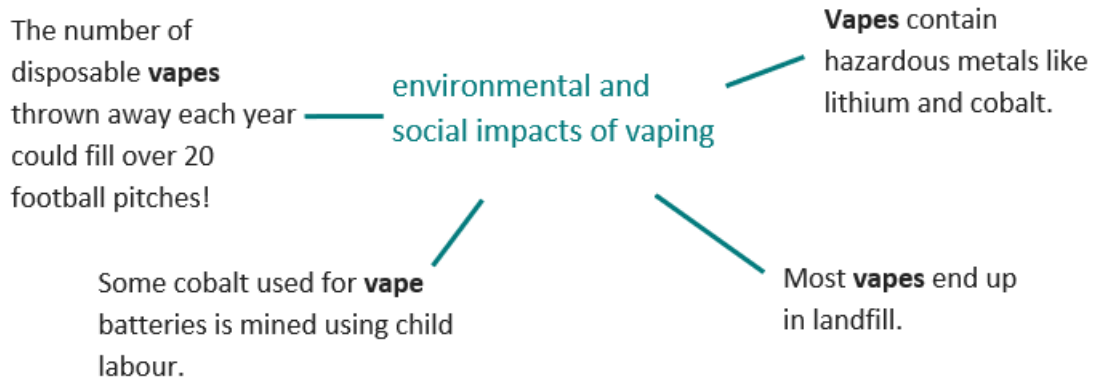
Smoking can damage every part of the body



Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco & Vaping

Vaping

Vapes are electronic devices. Most contain nicotine and simulate smoking by allowing nicotine to be inhaled through an aerosol (often called vapour) rather than smoke. All vapes come with risks to health, such as breathing difficulties. Even nicotine-free vapes contain chemicals that can harm your lungs when heated and inhaled. Many of the long-term risks of vaping are still unknown because vapes haven't been around long enough for scientists to study their effects over many years. In 2023, less than 9% of 11-15 year olds reported regularly vaping.



Nicotine pouches and **snus** are products, like **vapes**, which have become popular in recent years.



An illustration of **nicotine** pouches

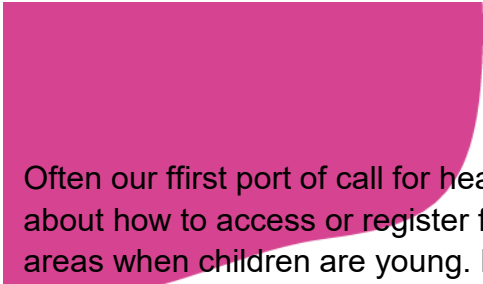
Snus contains **tobacco** and is **illegal** to sell in the UK. **Nicotine** pouches are similar but contain **nicotine without tobacco**.

They are small, white pouches that contain **nicotine**. Users place the pouch between their gum and lip, where the **nicotine** is absorbed into the body.

Like vapes and cigarettes, nicotine pouches and snus are highly addictive because they contain nicotine. They are often marketed with sweet flavours and colourful packaging that appeals to young people. Some people wrongly believe they are safer than cigarettes or vapes, but they still carry serious health risks including damage to gums and mouth, increased heart rate and nausea. Like vapes, nicotine pouches and snus are relatively new, so scientists don't yet know all the long-term health effects.

If you are worried about smoking, vaping or nicotine pouches or snus—whether it's for you or someone else—it is always ok to ask for help.

You can advise your young person to talk to us at school, or contact Childline on 0800 1111 for free, confidential advice 24/7 or use the NHS Smokefree resources via their website.



Health Protection & Prevention

Often our first port of call for health is our GP and our Dentist. Often young people know little about how to access or register for these services as the role of parents is to help with these areas when children are young. Part of RSHE's role is to equip our young people with the knowledge and skills to perform these acts themselves, should they need to in the future. Here, you will find information about accessing GPs and Dentists and what these services can help with.

The Doctor

Anyone in England can get free access to the National Health Service (NHS). To use a GP practice, you need to be registered. To do this you need to:

1. Find the surgery closest to you—you can use the NHS 'Service Search' online. Enter your postcode and the site will give you your local surgeries.
2. Call to ask if they're accepting new NHS patients.
3. Fill out a registration form (online or in person); these are often available in different languages.
4. You will need to provide your full name, address, date of birth and NHS number (if you have one).

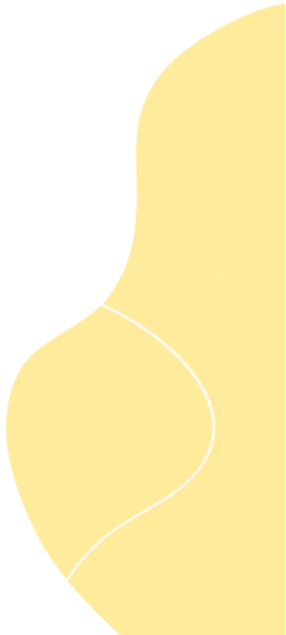
Sometimes a surgery may ask for proof of address or photo ID, to help find medical records. However, this is not mandatory and you are allowed to access services without this. You can register at a GP practice without a parent or carer from age 16. Many practices will also help young patients (from age 13) confidentially.

GPs and pharmacies are often the first place to contact if you have a health problem or are feeling unwell. They can treat many different health conditions, give advice or referrals if you need different services and provide vaccinations. GPs can help you access consultations, health checks (both physical and mental) and advice on medication—including new and repeat prescriptions. You can also get general health advice from the NHS on 111. For under 18s, GP appointments and treatments, mental health support, prescriptions and confidential sexual health services are all free. Once you turn 18, you may need to pay for prescriptions unless you receive financial support.

Other services

Urgent care centres

Accident & Emergency



Health Protection & Prevention

The Dentist

Looking after your health includes visiting the dentist! A dentist checks your teeth, gums and mouth to ensure these are healthy. Adults should get a check-up every one-two years, depending on advice from the dentist. Children should visit 6-12 months as their teeth are changing as they grow.

Services you can access at a dental practice include:

service	purpose
check-ups	These help to spot problems early and check oral health.
filling	This help to repair damaged teeth by filling in cavities (small holes) to prevent further decay.
referrals	If you need braces, you may need to be referred to an orthodontist (a braces specialist).
cleaning	A dental hygienist specialises in keeping teeth and gums healthy; they clean teeth, remove plaque and give advice about brushing and oral care.
emergency care	This is treatment for broken teeth, sudden pain or infections; it may include tooth extraction (removal of damaged teeth).

You can register with a dental practice in the same way that you register at the doctor's surgery.

1. Use the NHS website to find your local dentist.
2. Call or check online to see if they are accepting new NHS patients.
3. Fill out a registration form (online or in person) - these are often available in different languages.
4. You will need to provide your full name, address, date of birth and NHS number (if you have one).
5. Make an appointment for an initial check-up.

Creating groups of people are eligible for free dental check-ups and treatment with the NHS including: children and young people under the age of 18; people aged 19 or under in full-time education; pregnant women and those who have had a baby in the last 12 months; people receiving low-income benefits, Registration is free, but the cost of dental treatments depends on eligibility.

Visiting the dentist is important; not only to prevent any issues like cavities or gum infections, but also because dental issues can sometimes be a sign of other health conditions. Preventative care helps maintain good oral health by stopping dental problems like cavities and gum disease before they become serious.

Personal Safety

Supporting Your Teenager: Personal Safety, Independence and Making Safe Choices

As teenagers grow, they naturally become more independent. They begin travelling further, spending more time with friends, making their own decisions and preparing for adult life. Personal safety education helps young people develop the confidence, awareness and skills they need to stay safe while enjoying greater independence.

The aim is not to make young people fearful of the world, but to help them recognise risks, trust their instincts and make responsible choices.

Parents and carers have an important role in helping teenagers develop confidence, resilience and good judgement.

Building Confidence and Independence Safely

Growing independence is a positive part of teenage life. Young people learn valuable skills by making decisions, solving problems and taking responsibility.

Positive personal safety skills include:

- Knowing how to assess risks
- Understanding personal boundaries
- Making thoughtful decisions
- Looking after themselves and others
- Knowing when and how to ask for help

Top tips:

- Talk regularly about everyday safety rather than only when there is a problem.
- Encourage your teenager to think ahead: *“What is my plan?”* *“Who can I contact if something changes?”*
- Help them practise problem-solving rather than simply giving instructions.
- Praise responsible choices and independence.

Staying Safe Around Others

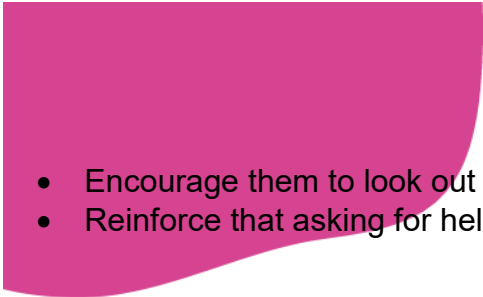
Teenagers build many different relationships with friends, peers and adults. Most relationships are positive, supportive and help young people grow, but it is important that they understand boundaries and recognise situations that do not feel safe.

Personal safety includes:

- Respecting their own feelings and instincts
- Understanding appropriate behaviour
- Recognising pressure or manipulation
- Knowing that they have the right to say no
- Seeking help when something feels wrong

Top tips:

- Remind your teenager that feeling uncomfortable is a reason to pause and seek support.
- Talk about the difference between healthy friendships and relationships and those that involve control or pressure.



Personal Safety

- Encourage them to look out for friends and speak up if they are worried.
- Reinforce that asking for help is always the right choice.

Risk, Peer Pressure and Decision Making

Teenagers are developing their independence and may face situations where friends or social groups influence their choices. Learning how to make decisions under pressure is an important life skill.

Risks may include:

- Feeling pressured to do something they are uncomfortable with
- Taking risks to fit in
- Being influenced by others online or offline
- Not recognising unsafe situations

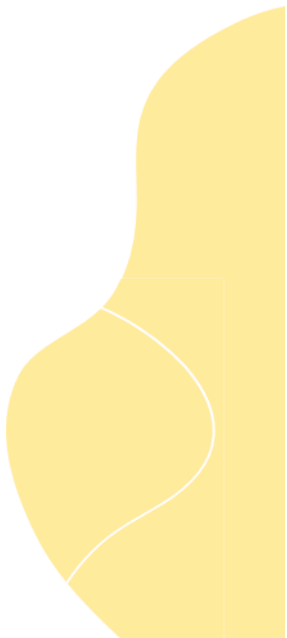
Top tips:

- Practise responses together: *"I'm not comfortable with that."* *"I'm going to leave."* *"I need to check with someone first."*
- Talk about how confident choices often mean thinking beyond the immediate moment.
- Help them identify trusted adults they can contact.
- Encourage them to support friends without putting themselves at risk.

Travel, Public Spaces and Staying Aware

Being able to move around independently is an important life skill. Teenagers should feel confident while understanding how to stay aware of their surroundings.

Top tips:

- Encourage practical safety habits:
 - Let someone know their plans
 - Keep phones charged
 - Stay aware of their surroundings
 - Trust their instincts
 -
 - Discuss what they would do if plans changed.
 - Agree expectations around travel, meeting friends and returning home.
- 
- 

Personal Safety

Online and Digital Personal Safety

Digital spaces are part of everyday life. Teenagers use technology for friendships, learning and creativity, but online spaces can also create risks.

Challenges can include:

- Sharing personal information
- Contact from strangers
- Pressure to respond or participate online
- Scams or misleading content
- Online conflict

Top tips:

- Encourage teenagers to protect personal information.
- Talk about privacy settings and respectful online behaviour.
- Remind them they can block, report or leave online spaces that feel unsafe.
- Encourage them to come to you if something online worries them.

Creating a Safe Space at Home

Teenagers are more likely to make safe choices when they know they can talk openly.

Try to:

- Listen calmly when they share concerns.
- Avoid making every conversation about rules or consequences.
- Be curious about their experiences.
- Keep communication open, even when you disagree.
- Remind them that mistakes can be discussed and support is available.

By modelling **Integrity, Compassion and Perseverance**, we help young people become confident, responsible and resilient.

Integrity: making safe choices that reflect good judgement.

Compassion: caring for ourselves and protecting others.

Perseverance: staying strong and seeking support when challenges arise.

Basic First Aid

Basic First Aid provides immediate, life-saving care before professional medical help arrives. It can be incredibly helpful to know and can help people feel calm in emergency situations. The most critical steps involve securing the scene, contacting the emergency services (call 999), making sure it is safe for you to help, control severe bleeding, and performing CPR if the person is unresponsive and not breathing. We take time to teach young people the basics, as well as providing links to apps and websites that can help further.

Mastering these core emergency procedures can save lives.

1. The Emergency Response (DRSABCD)

Use this framework to assess the situation safely.

- **Danger:** Always check the scene for hazards before approaching an injured person.
- **Response:** Ask the person their name or gently tap this shoulder to see if they are conscious.
- **Airway:** Tilt the head back and lift the chin to ensure their airway is clear.
- **Breathing:** Look, listen, and feel for normal breathing for no more than 10 seconds.
- **Circulation:** Assess for severe bleeding.
- **Defibrillation:** Call emergency services (999 or 112).

2. CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation)

If an individual is unresponsive and **not breathing normally**, immediate CPR is required.

- **Call 999:** Call emergency services immediately and ask for an ambulance.
- **Compressions:** Place your hands in the centre of their chest and push hard and fast (100—120 compressions per minute).
- **Rescue Breaths:** If trained, and if safe to do so, provide 2 rescue breaths after every 30 chest compressions.
- **Defibrillator:** Locate and use an automated external defibrillator (AED) as soon as possible, following its voice prompts.

3. Severe Bleeding

- **Apply pressure:** Use a clean cloth or bandage to apply firm, direct pressure to the wound.
- **Maintain Pressure:** If blood soaks through the first bandage, place a second pad on top and continue pressure. Never remove the initial pad.
- **Elevation:** If there are no broken bones, elevate the wound above the heart to reduce blood flow.
- **Stabilise:** If the wound has an object in it, do not remove the object, as it may be acting like a plug to slow the bleeding. Apply firm pressure to both sides of it using sterile dressings or gauze, building up bulk padding on either side so it cannot move or shift. Secure with a bandage.

Basic First Aid

4. Minor cuts and burns

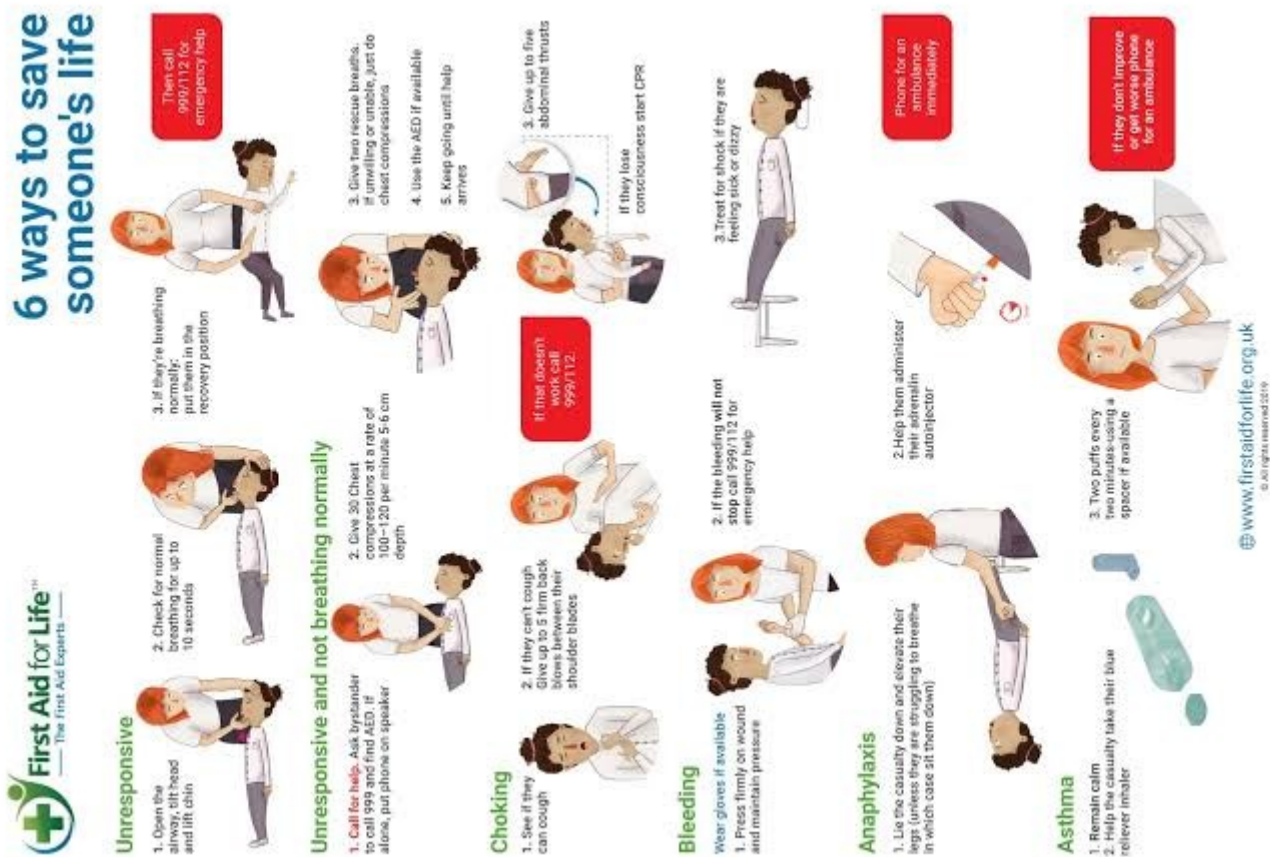
- **Cuts:** Wash hands, rinse the wound under running tap water, pat dry, and cover with a sterile plaster or dressing.
- **Burns:** Cool the burned area with cool or lukewarm running water for 10 to 20 minutes. Do not use ice or apply creams, and cover it loosely with cling film.

5. Shock

If an individual is pale, dizzy, clammy, or shows signs of shock:

- Have them lie down and elevate their legs (if their injuries allow).
- Keep them warm with a blanket or coat.
- Do not give them anything to eat or drink.

Information taken from NHS and St John's Ambulance. If time allows, we teach the recovery position, applying bandages and slings, and how to deal with sprains. The programme is devised from approved materials and is overseen by Mrs Borley, who has completed the 3 day First Aid at Work course.



Basic First Aid: Head Injuries

Most head injuries are not serious, but it's important to get medical help if some symptoms arise.

You may need urgent medical help if:

Call 999 if:

Someone has hit their head and:

- has been knocked out and has not woken up
- cannot stay awake or keep their eyes open
- has a fit (seizure)
- has fallen from a height of more than 1 metre or 5 stairs
- has problems with their vision or hearing
- has a black eye, but did not hit their eye
- has clear fluid coming from their ears or nose
- is bleeding from their ears or has bruising behind their ears
- has new numbness or weakness in any part of their body
- has problems with walking, balance, understanding, speaking or writing
- hit their head at high speed, such as in a road accident
- has a head wound with something inside it or has a dent in their head
- has a bruise, swelling or large cut on their head and they are under 1 year old
- their behaviour has changed, like being more irritable or distracted, or losing interest in things around them

Get help from NHS 111 if:

You or someone else have recently had a head injury and:

- are being sick (vomiting)
- feel dizzy
- have a condition that thins your blood or take medicine that thins your blood
- were drinking alcohol or taking drugs at the time of the injury
- have any other symptoms you're worried about

You can call 111 or [get help from 111 online](#). Call 111 if you need advice for a child under 5 years old.

Basic First Aid: Head Injuries

Most head injuries are not serious, but it's important to get medical help if some symptoms arise. A minor head injury can usually be looked after at home, with no additional support needed. The NHS recommends:

Do

- ✓ hold an ice pack (or a bag of frozen peas) wrapped in a tea towel to the area regularly for short periods in the first few days to bring down any swelling
- ✓ rest and avoid stress – you or your child do not need to stay awake if you're tired
- ✓ take painkillers such as [paracetamol](#) for headaches – if your child has a headache you can use [paracetamol for children](#)
- ✓ make sure an adult stays with you or your child for at least the first 24 hours

Don't

- ✗ do not go back to work or school until you're feeling better
- ✗ do not drive until you feel you have fully recovered
- ✗ do not play contact sports for at least 3 weeks – children should avoid rough play for a few days
- ✗ do not take drugs
- ✗ do not drink alcohol until you're feeling better
- ✗ do not take sleeping pills while you're recovering unless a doctor advises you to

Developing Bodies

As we grow from children to adulthood (a process which can take awhile and doesn't happen overnight!) all sorts of changes can take place. Puberty is the phase when a child's body matures into an adult body capable of reproduction. It is triggered by hormonal changes and typically occurs between ages 8-13 in females and 9-14 in males (although brain development takes a bit longer!). Key changes include growth spurts, development of reproductive organs, body hair growth, and shifts in body shape and composition. It can be a tricky time, where our teenagers don't always feel in control of their bodies or their feelings. Compassion and lots of understanding will be needed but having some knowledge of what is happening to them and why it is normal can greatly help.

What changes happen during puberty?

During puberty, the body grows and develops. Changes might include:

- Growth spurts and body shapes changes
- Skin and hair becoming oilier
- Development of reproductive organs
- Voice changes and body hair growth.

Not everyone experiences these changes in the same order or to the same degree. This is normal. These changes happen because of hormones; chemicals in the body that help control growth, sleep, mood and energy levels. The main hormones involved in puberty include oestrogen, progesterone and testosterone, which everyone produces in different amounts. This is why puberty can affect how we feel and relate to others. You might:

- Feel more emotions more strongly
- Care more about friendships or fitting in
- Start to think about your future and independence
- Feel more self-conscious about your appearance or abilities.

Changing emotions are a normal part of puberty and communication around feelings matters at this time.

Developing Bodies

How does the brain develop as we grow?

The brain **keeps** growing and changing through the teenage years and even into the mid-20s. This affects how we think and feel and means adolescents are particularly good at learning, forming new habits and adapting to change.

The **prefrontal cortex** at the front of the brain helps with:

- Decision-making
- Planning ahead
- Managing emotions
- Understanding consequences

This part of the brain is still developing during adolescence and doesn't fully mature until the mid-20s.

The **limbic system** controls emotions and motivation. It develops earlier than the prefrontal cortex. That's why fun, exciting, risk-taking things can feel especially appealing during adolescences, and why feelings sometimes are followed over logical thinking before you've had time to consider the risks. As the limbic system is so active whilst the prefrontal cortex is still developing, emotions can feel exceptionally intense.

During puberty, hormones and brain changes make emotions more intense. You might:

- React quickly to stress or anger
- Feel excited or worried more easily
- Switch moods faster than before
- Find it harder to control impulses

As your brain develops, it gets better at:

- Thinking through choices
- Predicting outcomes
- Understanding risks and rewards
- Pausing before reacting

The brain gradually strengthens the connections between the emotional and logical parts, helping you balance feelings with thoughtful choices. Teenage brains can be more sensitive to what others think. During adolescence, the brain places more importance on social connections and fitting in with peers, making friend's opinions seem very important. Hormones during adolescence also increases emotional responses to social situations, making peer approval or rejection feel intense.

Because the decision-making part of the brain is still developing, it helps to take a moment before reacting, **ask for advice from a trusted adult**, think about long-term effects and **consider how your choices might affect others**.

Developing Bodies

How can we care for our body and mind?

Simple, everyday habits make a huge difference to the health of our bodies and mind:

- Eat balanced meals and drink water
 - Get regular exercise
 - Sleep 8-10 hours a night: this helps your body to recover and your brain to grow. Good sleep supports; clear thinking and focus, stable emotions, energy for learning and activity, physical growth and hormone regulation
- Healthy sleep habits can help you feel calmer, more focused and ready for the day. Try:
- * Going to bed and waking up at a similar time each day (even weekends) as this helps your body clock regulate
 - * Avoid screens for at least an hour before bed as the blue light from devices can stop your brain from producing melatonin, the hormone that makes you feel sleepy
 - * Avoid caffeine or energy drinks for at least four hours before bed as caffeine is a stimulant that keeps your brain alert and can stay in your system for several hours
 - * Create a calm bedtime routine like reading, stretching or listening to quiet music as these give signals to your brain that it's time to wind down and prepare for sleep
 - * Keep your room dark, cool and comfortable as darkness triggers melatonin production and a cooler temperature helps your body reach the ideal state of deep sleep
- Limit screen time before bed
 - Spend time outdoors when possible
 - Write, draw or listen to music—find what helps you relax and do it!
 - Look to your breaths—deep and slow to relax, short and sharp to energise.
 - Take short breaks when needed
 - Try to identify what triggers certain emotions in you
 - Don't compare yourself to others—this isn't a helpful thing to do. Stay healthy and treat your body with respect.

It's ok to **ask for help**, especially if you feel:

- Overwhelmed or constantly worried
- Low in mood for more than two weeks
- Unable to sleep or eat properly
- Unsafe or pressured
- Confused about the changes happening to your body

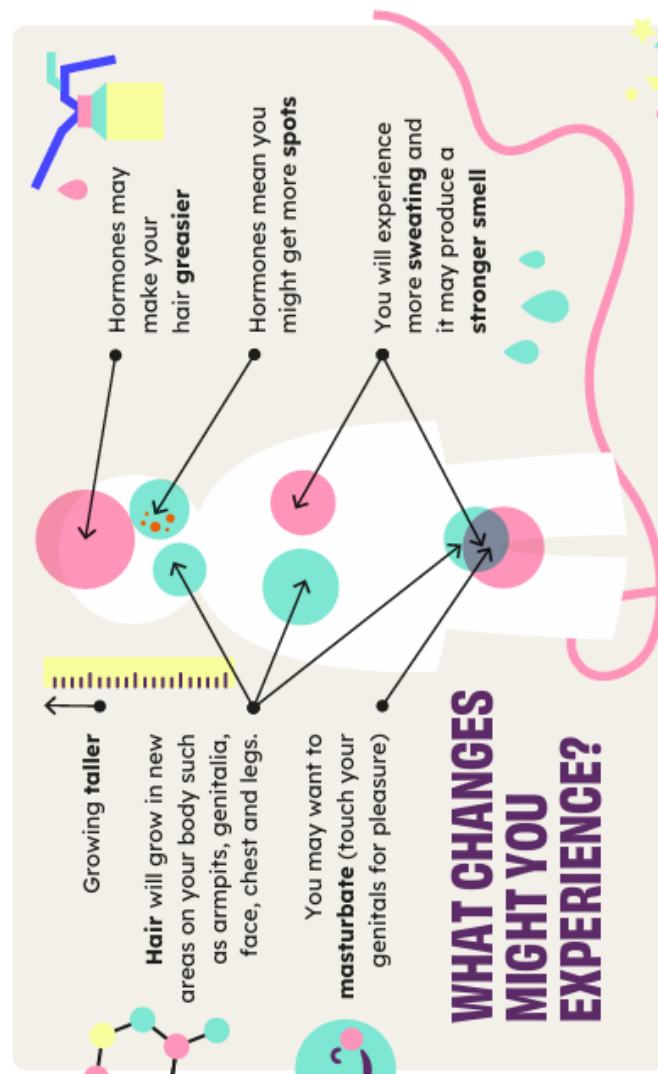
PUBERTY & THE BODY

@brook

Puberty is when you start to change from being a child into an adult. Hormones (chemicals produced by your brain) cause your body to change and grow. They also affect the way you think and feel.

This can start any time from seven to 16 years old. Not everyone develops at the same age or speed and it can take between two to four years to complete.

It's common to feel embarrassed about these changes but remember everyone goes through puberty. Knowing what to expect can make it easier to deal with.



KEEPING CLEAN

Try to change your clothes and wash every day using soap or shower gel. Underarm spray such as deodorant (which covers up the smell) or antiperspirants (that stop or dry up sweat) can also help.

You'll also need to keep your genitals clean. Avoid strong products. Unscented soap and warm water is all you need. If you have foreskin (skin over the head of your penis) wash gently under it to stop it getting smelly, itchy or sore.



WHAT IS MASTURBATION?

You may find you want to explore your body and touch it in new ways. This is called masturbation and is a normal part of growing up.

You may want to rub your penis until it gets hard (this is an erection) which might lead to ejaculation, when semen comes out of the penis.

Touching the area around your clitoris may lead to you feeling turned on and your vulva getting wet. This can lead to a very strong tensing feeling called an orgasm.



PUBERTY & THE BODY



PUBERTY IF YOU HAVE A PENIS



- Your penis and testicles will grow larger
- Pubic hair will grow at the base of your penis
- Your muscles will develop and your chest will get broader
- Your voice will 'break' and get deeper
- You may have wet dreams and unexpected erections
- You may get hairier on your arms, legs and face
- This happens at different times for different people.

WHAT ARE WET DREAMS?

Wet dreams are when you ejaculate when you're asleep. Some people remember having a nice dream, but others just wake up to find a wet patch.



SHAVING

At first you might see some fine hair above your lips and on your chin. You can ask an adult you trust to help you choose a razor and show you how to use it. You won't need to shave every day at first or at all, if you don't want to.



REMEMBER:

Everyone is different. Genetics play a big role in how much hair you have.

WEARING A BRA



As your breasts grow it can be more comfortable to wear a bra. Ask an adult you trust to help you buy your first one and try to get measured to make sure you get the right size. It's normal to have one breast bigger than the other.

BODY HAIR

Some people prefer to remove body hair by waxing, shaving or lasering their legs, underarms and pubic area. It's entirely up to you how much or little hair you want on your body.

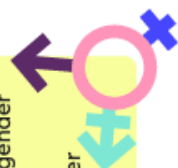
WHAT ARE PERIODS?

Every month the ovaries release an egg and the lining of the womb thickens. If the egg isn't fertilised, the egg and womb lining leave your body through your vagina. This is a period. It usually lasts a few days, and you'll need use period products like pads, tampons, period pants or a menstrual cup. Cramps in your tummy or back are common. Some people feel tense or emotional before a period starts (known as PMS).

PUBERTY AND GENDER

For some of us, our bodies and our gender identity don't match up. This can make puberty extra complicated and can even make us feel uncomfortable about the way that our bodies look or work. If you are struggling, it's important to seek help from someone you trust. There are also many organisations there to support you if you have questions about your gender identity.

You can read more about gender at brook.org.uk/gender



PERIODS

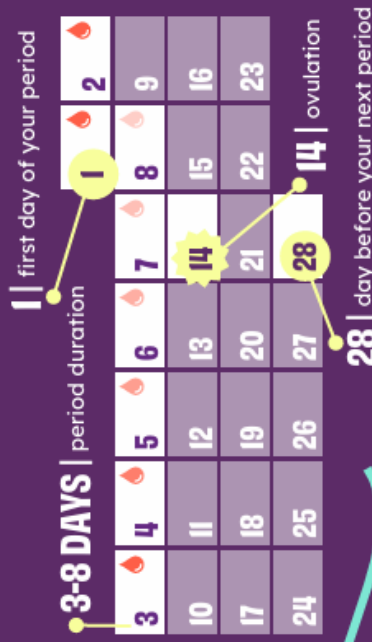
For more information about periods go to:
brook.org.uk/periods



Periods start sometime between the ages of eight and 17. They happen roughly every month and are part of your body preparing for pregnancy.

The ovaries release an egg and the womb lining thickens. If the egg isn't fertilised by sperm, the egg is reabsorbed into the body and the womb lining passes through your vagina. This bleeding is known as a period.

WHAT IS A MENSTRUAL CYCLE?*



* Remember, all cycles are different, some may be shorter or longer than 28 days and your ovulation date can vary.

BLEEDING: WHAT'S NORMAL?

There's no 'normal' period!
But here's a rough guide:

- Bleeding from your vagina for a few days (commonly 3-8 days)
- Passing between 1-5 teaspoons of pink, red or brown blood – this can be thick or watery
- Periods can be irregular, heavy or light and can change throughout your life



COMMON SYMPTOMS

- Feeling cramps in your lower stomach or back
- Feeling tense, emotional or irritable before a period (known as PMS)
- Breast tenderness
- Spots
- Upset stomach
- Tiredness
- Bloating
- Headaches



TOP TIPS: CRAMPS

- Take paracetamol or ibuprofen (always follow instructions carefully)
- Use a hot water bottle on your tummy
- Take a warm bath
- Try some gentle exercise



If your periods are so painful or heavy that they make it hard to get on with your day-to-day life, speak to a doctor or nurse.

PERIODS

For more information about periods go to:
brook.org.uk/periods



PERIOD PRODUCT OPTIONS

People generally use a combination of products. Most come in different sizes and to suit different flows (heavy or light). Experiment to find what works best for you.

TAMPONS

Small tubes of soft cotton, inserted into the vagina with applicators or your finger to absorb blood. Shouldn't be kept in for more than eight hours. Don't worry, they can't get stuck or lost! They have a string attached to pull them out with.



PADS

Made of absorbent material to absorb blood. Have a sticky back - and sometimes wings - to keep them in place in your underwear.



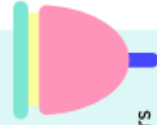
REUSABLE PADS

Like normal pads but made of washable cloth.



PERIOD PANTS

Underwear with a built in absorbent layer. You can wash them and reuse.



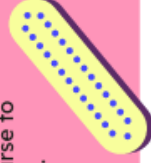
MENSTRUAL CUPS

Small reusable containers made of flexible silicone. Inserted into the vagina to collect blood. You empty the blood, wash it, and reinsert.



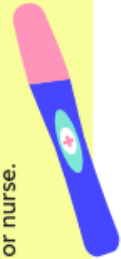
DID YOU KNOW?

Some methods of hormonal contraception (like the pill) can make your periods more regular, lighter, heavier, or stop altogether. Speak to a nurse to find out more.



MISSED PERIOD?

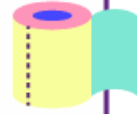
If you've had vaginal sex without using contraception (or your method failed) and you have missed a period, this could be a sign that you're pregnant. You should take a pregnancy test at least 21 days after sex without contraception or speak to a doctor or nurse.



TOP TIPS: STAYING HEALTHY

Your body will keep the vagina and vulva clean through natural vaginal secretions (discharge).

- Use plain, unfumed soap every day to gently wash your vulva.
- Never clean inside the vagina (douché) as it washes out the good bacteria.
- Always wipe front to back, to avoid transferring bacteria from the anus.
- Always try to urinate after sexual activity, to reduce the risk of infections.



Vaginal odour can change at different times of your cycle. If your vulva and vagina are sore, itchy, have an unpleasant smell or unusual discharge, this could be a sign of an infection. If you experience these symptoms or you're bleeding between periods or after sex, go to see a medical professional.

HEAVY PERIODS

For more information about heavy periods go to:
brook.org.uk/heavy-periods



Heavy periods can affect school, sports and social life, but there are ways to manage them.



1 IN 3 TEENAGERS WITH PERIODS HAVE HEAVY PERIODS

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Just one of these can be a sign of a heavy period and is worth seeing a doctor about:

- Periods last over 7 days
- Bleeding through pads/tampons every 1-2 hours
- Blood clots larger than 2.5cm
- Frequent leaks onto underwear, clothes or bed
- Tiredness/dizziness (possible low iron)
- Very painful periods
- Periods stop normal activities



Remember: You're not overreacting - and you don't have to put up with it.

PRODUCTS FOR HEAVY FLOW

MENSTRUAL CUPS AND PERIOD PANTS

These hold more blood than pads and tampons, are reusable and cheaper in the long run.



HIGH ABSORBENCY PRODUCTS

Check the absorbency level on the packaging. The higher, the more blood it will hold.



NIGHT-TIME PADS

Extra-long pads with wings can help reduce leaks in the night.



WHAT ARE THE CAUSES?

Sometimes there isn't a clear reason, but heavy periods can be linked to causes such as:

ANOVULATION

(Common in early years of periods)
Ovaries don't release an egg each month making periods irregular, heavier and longer.

BLEEDING DISORDERS

Bleeding more than others from wounds, cuts and periods.



PCOS (Polycystic ovary syndrome)

A hormone imbalance that can affect ovulation (when an egg is released from the ovaries).

ENDOMETRIOSIS

Cells like those in the lining of the uterus, grow elsewhere in the body.



HEAVY PERIODS

For more information about heavy periods go to:
brook.org.uk/heavy-periods



TOP TIPS

LISTEN TO YOUR BODY

You might find you have low energy during your period. Be kind to yourself and rest if you need to.



TRACK YOUR CYCLE

Note when your period starts, how long it lasts, your flow and any symptoms. This can help you understand your periods better and give useful information if you see a doctor.

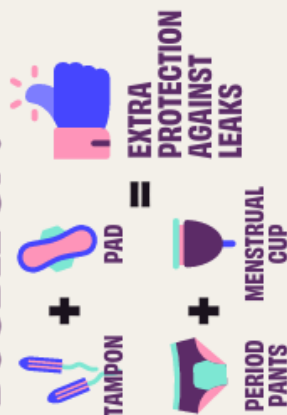


TALK TO OTHERS

You don't have to deal with it alone. Talk to friends, family or a teacher if you're finding it difficult.



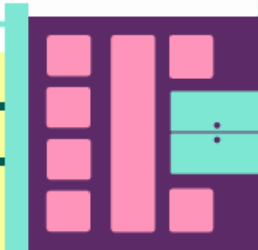
DOUBLE UP?



FREE PRODUCTS

Heavy flows can be expensive.

Schools, some sexual health clinics, libraries and foodbanks provide free period products.



TREATMENT OPTIONS

If heavy periods are affecting your daily life, it's worth speaking to a doctor. They can check if there's anything else going on, explore treatment options and may refer you to a specialist.



MEDICINE

Medicines like ibuprofen and tranexamic acid can help reduce bleeding.



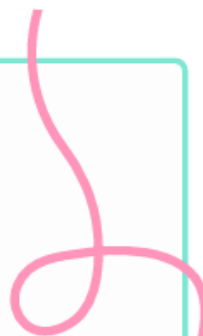
HORMONAL CONTRACEPTION

Some types make periods lighter, less painful, or even stop them altogether.



NON-CONTRACEPTIVE HORMONES

Used short-term to reduce bleeding by stopping the uterus lining from getting too thick.



Abortion

In England, abortion is legal up to 24 weeks of pregnancy under the [Abortion Act 1967](#) if two doctors agree that continuing the pregnancy would risk the physical or mental health of the pregnant person (or their existing children). After 24 weeks, abortions are only permitted in very limited circumstances, such as a severe foetal abnormality or to save the pregnant person's life.

Abuse

Abuse can take many forms and there are strict laws around these issues. Some of the ones which the government state must be covered for our students are below:

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is not limited to physical violence. In England and Wales, the **Domestic Abuse Act 2021** defines domestic abuse as behaviour between people aged 16 or over who are personally connected. This can include physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, controlling or coercive behaviour, and economic abuse.

Domestic abuse can happen in different types of relationships, including current or former partners and family relationships.

Examples of abusive behaviour can include:

- Controlling who someone sees or where they go
- Monitoring communication or social media
- Threats, intimidation or humiliation
- Preventing someone from having money or independence
- Physical or sexual harm

The law recognises that abuse can have a serious impact on a person's safety, freedom and well-being.

Stalking

Stalking is repeated unwanted behaviour that causes fear, distress or concern for someone's safety.

In England and Wales, stalking is a criminal offence under the **Protection from Harassment Act 1997**, with specific stalking offences introduced in 2012.

Stalking can include:

- Repeated unwanted contact
- Following someone
- Turning up at places they regularly visit
- Monitoring someone's activities
- Sending unwanted messages or gifts
- Creating a feeling of being watched or threatened

Stalking can happen both offline and online. People experiencing stalking can report it to the police and seek support.

RSHE: The Law

Rape and Sexual Offences

In England and Wales, rape and sexual offences are covered by the **Sexual Offences Act 2003**.

Rape is defined in law as intentional penetration of another person without their consent, where the person does not reasonably believe that consent is given.

The law states that:

- Consent must be freely given
 - A person must have the freedom and capacity to make a choice
 - Consent can be withdrawn at any time
 - Being in a relationship does not mean someone has automatic consent
- The Sexual Offences Act 2003 also covers other sexual offences, including sexual assault and offences involving exploitation or abuse.

Sexual Harassment and Sexual Harm

Sexual harassment includes unwanted sexual behaviour that violates someone's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

This can include:

- Unwanted comments or sexual remarks
 - Sexual jokes or behaviour
 - Sharing sexual content without permission
 - Pressure or unwanted attention
- Everyone has the right to feel safe and respected.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a practice where parts of the female genitalia are deliberately altered or removed for non-medical reasons.

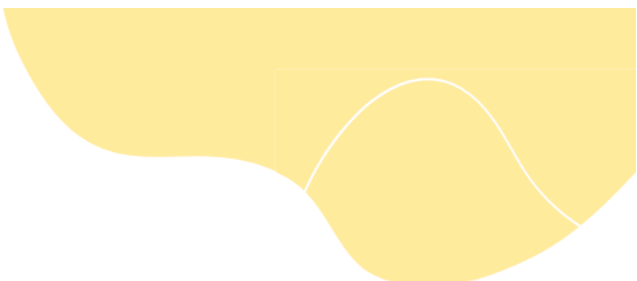
FGM is illegal in the UK under the **Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003** (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) and the **Female Genital Mutilation (Scotland) Act 2005**.

It is illegal to:

- Carry out FGM
- Help arrange FGM
- Take someone overseas for FGM

The law provides protection for those at risk, including **FGM Protection Orders**, which can help prevent someone being taken abroad or subjected to FGM.

RSHE: The Law



Virginity Testing

Virginity testing is a practice that attempts to determine whether someone has had sexual intercourse by examining their body.

In England and Wales, virginity testing is illegal under the **Health and Care Act 2022**.

The law makes it an offence to:

- Carry out a virginity examination
- Offer to carry out a virginity examination

Virginity testing has no scientific basis and can cause emotional and physical harm.

Hymenoplasty

Hymenoplasty is a procedure intended to reconstruct the hymen.

In England and Wales, arranging, offering or performing hymenoplasty for the purpose of creating the false impression that someone is a virgin is illegal under the **Health and Care Act 2022**.

The law recognises that practices connected to “proving” virginity can cause pressure, harm and violate a person’s rights.

Age of criminal responsibility

In England, the age of criminal responsibility is 10 years old. Children between the ages of 10 and 17 can be arrested, charged, and tried in court. Although children below these ages cannot be arrested or charged with a crime, in some areas of England they may be subject to measures such as a Child Safety Order or Local Child Curfew. The 18 May 2026—Ministry of Justice plans for parents/carers to face greater responsibility for children who commit crime or cause anti-social behaviour.

Alcohol, smoking, vaping and nicotine products and illicit drug use

UK laws strictly regulate alcohol, tobacco, and vaping based on age. The legal purchase age for these products is 18, and possessing or supplying illicit drugs is heavily penalised. Regulations are enforced through age-verification, smokefree spaces, and criminal classifications.

Alcohol—Illegal to sell alcohol to anyone under 18. The UK has strict drink driving limits enforceable by law. Children under 5 can legally drink alcohol in the home and young people aged 16 or 17 can drink (but not buy) beer, wine, or cider with a meal when dining out with an adult, although under the age of 18 drinking can cause damage to brain development.

Smoking and Vaping—you must be 18 or older to purchase cigarettes, e-cigarettes, or related nicotine products. Under the Tobacco and Vapes Act, it is completely illegal to sell tobacco products to anyone born on or after 1 January 2009. Smoking in all enclosed public spaces is illegal and legislation has expanded to enable restrictions on vaping and smoking in specific outdoor places like children's playgrounds, outside schools and hospitals.

Illicit Drug Use—controlled substances are categorised under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 into three main categories reflecting their harm:

Class A: Cocaine, heroin, ecstasy, LSD

Class B: Cannabis, ketamine, amphetamines

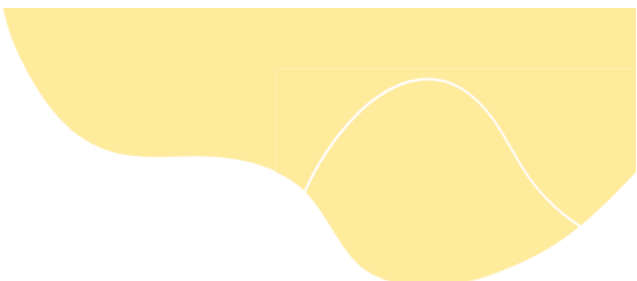
Class C: Steroids, tranquilisers

Possession of illegal drugs can lead to an unlimited fine or a prison sentence, which can scale up to life imprisonment for dealing or supplying. It is an offence to drive with certain illegal drugs above specified limits or if your driving is impaired.

Carrying knives and weapons

It is illegal to use any knives or weapon in a threatening way. It is also illegal to carry most knives in public without a 'good reason' or to sell most knives to anyone under 18. The exception are folding pocketknives that have a cutting edge no longer than 3 inches and are not lock knives. The maximum penalty for an adult carrying a knife illegally is either 4 years in prison, an unlimited fine or both. Under plans in the new Youth Justice White Paper, every child caught carrying a knife will be given a mandatory specialised plan to stop them reoffending.

RSHE: The Law



Consent

Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, consent is defined as someone agreeing by choice, possessing the freedom and capacity to make that choice, and having the ability to communicate it. Any sexual activity without clear, freely given consent is illegal and constitutes a sexual offense. This includes specifics such as agreeing to one type of sexual activity does not automatically mean agreeing to another. It also does not imply consent to safety conditions like condom use being ignored.

Extremism/radicalisation

In the UK, the law treats extremism and radicalisation primarily through safeguarding and counter-terrorism frameworks. The approach is governed by legislation like the **Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015**, which mandates the 'Prevent' duty. This legally requires public bodies to actively stop people from being drawn into terrorism. The 2015 Act outline a statutory, multi-agency programme called **Channel**. It operates to safeguard vulnerable individuals susceptible to radicalisation by providing tailored early support, such as mentoring, psychological assistance, or ideological de-radicalisation.

Gambling

You must be 18 or older to gamble legally in the UK. The only exception is the National Lottery, where the minimum age is 16. It is an offence to allow minors to gamble.

Grooming/exploiting children into criminal activity

In the UK, exploiting children (under 18) into criminal activity—such as dealing drugs, carrying weapons, or theft—is classified as a form of child abuse. The UK legal framework treats these children primarily as victims in need of safeguarding. Criminal exploitation is legally prosecuted under human trafficking and modern slavery laws under the **Modern Slavery Act 2015**. Under this act, exploited children are protected from being prosecuted for crimes they were compelled to commit and they receive specialised support and official recognition as a victim. The legislation **'Crime and Policing Act 2016'** introduced a standalone Child Criminal Exploitation offence specifically targeting adults who groom or manipulate children into criminal gangs or organised crime (such as county lines). It also introduced specific criminal offences for 'cuckooing' (taking over a vulnerable person's home for illegal purpose) and coerced internal concealment.

Hate crime

A hate crime is any criminal offence or incident motivated by hostility, prejudice, or hatred based on a person's actual or perceived race, religion, sexual orientation, disability, or transgender identity. Hate crimes can face lengthy prison sentences.

Marriage

The legal age for marriage is 18 across the UK. You must be single, widowed, divorced, or have a previous civil partnership dissolved. You cannot marry close family members. Same-sex couples can legally marry. You must formally declare your intention to marry at your local register office at least 29 days before the ceremony. The ceremony must then take place within 12 months. Once married, couples gain significant rights such as certain tax allowances and exemptions for Inheritance Tax. The legal right to make medical decisions for an incapacitated spouse and to inherit automatically if a spouse dies without a will.

Medical consent, Gillick competence and parental responsibility

Medical consent is governed by common law, which presumes that young people aged 16 and 17 have the capacity to make their own medical decisions. Children under 16 can also consent to treatment on their own (without parental knowledge or agreement) if they possess sufficient intelligence and understanding to fully comprehend what the proposed treatment involves, a legal standard known as **Gillick competence**. Fraser guidelines is a specialised, stricter subset of Gillick competence applied specifically to young people under 16 seeking confidential contraceptive or sexual health advice without parental consent or knowledge. If a child under 16 is not Gillick competent, anyone with parental responsibility can provide medical consent on their behalf. Only one parent's consent is required to proceed.

RSHE: The Law

Online Safety Act

The **Online Safety Act 2023** is a comprehensive UK law designed to protect children and adults from illegal and harmful content online. It places strict legal obligations on social media platforms, search engines, and pornographic websites, and grants Ofcom enforcement powers including heavy fines for non-compliance. Platforms likely to be accessed by children must prevent them from encountering age-inappropriate content, pornography, and harmful material like self-harm or bullying.

Online behaviours

Sharing Images and Information Online

Young people have a right to privacy and safety online. Sharing personal information, images or videos without permission can cause harm and may be against the law.

The law protects people from:

- Sharing private information without consent
- Sharing images or videos intended to cause harm or distress
- Using someone's personal information to threaten, intimidate or exploit them

The **Data Protection Act 2018** and the **UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)** provide protections around the use of personal information.

Young people should understand:

- They should ask permission before sharing images of others
- They should think carefully before posting content
- Once something is shared online, control over it may be lost
- Respecting privacy is part of healthy relationships

Sexual Imagery, Nudes and Youth-Produced Sexual Imagery

In the UK, it is illegal to create, possess or share sexual images of anyone under 18.

This is covered by laws including the **Protection of Children Act 1978** and the **Criminal Justice Act 1988**.

This means that:

- A sexual image of someone under 18 is legally treated as child sexual abuse material, even if the person created the image themselves
- Sharing or forwarding sexual images of young people can be a criminal offence
- Pressuring someone to create or send sexual images is harmful and may be illegal

Young people should understand that:

- Being pressured to send images is not acceptable
- Consent must be respected

RSHE: The Law

AI-Generated Sexual Images and Deepfakes

Artificial intelligence can now create realistic-looking images, videos and audio. Creating or sharing fake sexual images of a person without their consent can cause serious harm.

AI-generated sexual imagery and deepfakes may involve:

- Creating fake sexual images of someone
- Editing someone's face onto sexual content
- Sharing fake images to embarrass, threaten or control someone

Depending on the circumstances, this behaviour may fall under laws relating to:

- Harassment
- Sexual offences
- Communications offences
- Image-based abuse

Young people should understand:

- Creating fake sexual content of another person is not a joke
- Deepfakes can cause emotional harm and damage reputations
- Consent and respect apply online as well as offline

Online Sexual Harassment

Online sexual harassment involves unwanted sexual behaviour using digital technology.

This may include:

- Sending unwanted sexual messages
- Making sexual comments online
- Sharing sexual content without permission
- Pressuring someone for sexual images
- Targeting someone with sexual remarks or behaviour

The **Online Safety Act 2023** places duties on online platforms to protect users from harmful content and illegal activity.

Sexual harassment can happen through:

- Social media
- Messaging apps
- Gaming platforms
- Group chats

Everyone has the right to feel safe and respected online.

RSHE: The Law

Online Sexual Abuse and Grooming

Grooming is when someone builds a relationship with a child or young person to gain trust and exploit them.

The **Sexual Offences Act 2003** makes it illegal for an adult to communicate with a child for the purpose of committing a sexual offence.

Grooming can involve:

- Pretending to be someone else online
- Building trust and creating secrecy
- Giving gifts or attention to gain control
- Encouraging a young person to share private information or images
- Moving conversations into private spaces

Young people should remember:

- Not everyone online is who they claim to be
- Feeling uncomfortable is a reason to stop and seek help
- Trusted adults can help without judgement

Sextortion

Sextortion is a form of online abuse where someone threatens to share intimate images, videos or information unless demands are met.

This may involve:

- Threats to share images
 - Pressure for money or further images
 - Attempts to control or frighten someone
- Sextortion can involve criminal offences including:

- Blackmail
- Harassment
- Threatening behaviour
- Sexual offences

Young people should know:

- Threats are not their fault
 - They should not respond to pressure or threats alone
- They should tell a trusted adult and seek support

Pornography

Viewing and possessing legal adult pornography in private is generally lawful for adults, but production, distribution and age access to this content are strictly regulated. Recent legislation has strengthened age verification and expanded criminal offences regarding 'extreme' and harmful content. All websites and apps that host pornography must use highly effective age verification methods to prevent children (those under 18) from accessing explicit content. Under the Crime and Policing Bill, viewing, sharing, or publishing material showing 'choking' is a criminal offence.

Protected Characteristics

A protected characteristic is a personal trait that is legally shielded from discrimination. Harassment and victimisation under the Equality Act 2010. Treating someone less favourably because of these traits is generally unlawful in employment, education, housing, and public services. There are nine protected characteristics which are: Age; Disability; Gender Reassignment; Marriage and Civil Partnership; Pregnancy and Maternity; Race; Religion or Belief; Sex; Sexual Orientation.



HELP AND SUPPORT

Your wellbeing matters.
Your feelings matter.
You matter.

You are not alone



CORFE HILLS SCHOOL
INTEGRITY • COMPASSION
• PERSEVERANCE

If you are worried about anything – no matter how big or small – there is someone who can help.



MENTAL WELLBEING

- Feeling worried, low, stressed
- Anxiety, panic, self-esteem
- Body image, loneliness
- Self-harm or not wanting to be here

TALK TO

- A trusted adult in school (Tutor, Head of Year, Pastoral Team)
- Student Support Manager
- Kooth – online support for young people www.kooth.com



RELATIONSHIPS & DOMESTIC ABUSE

- Relationships, break ups
- Controlling behaviour
- Domestic abuse
- Advice for you or a friend

GET SUPPORT

- Dorset Domestic Abuse Support Service (DDASS) 01202 308855 www.ddass.org.uk
- Free, confidential support for young people



SEXUAL HEALTH & RELATIONSHIPS

- Contraception and STI testing
- Pregnancy options
- Consent and boundaries
- Sexual health questions

VISIT OR CONTACT

- The Maple Centre (Bournemouth) 01202 436660 www.pdsw.org.uk
- Young people's sexual health service – confidential support and advice



ONLINE SAFETY & DIGITAL WORRIES

- Upsetting content
- Online harassment, bullying
- Image sharing or nudes
- Sextortion or grooming
- Deepfakes and AI images

GET HELP

- The Mix – online safety and emotional support www.themix.org.uk
- Report harmful content to the platform and talk to a trusted adult



SAFETY & PERSONAL BOUNDARIES

- Feeling unsafe
- Stalking or harassment
- FGM, virginity testing
- Travelling or risk taking
- Need help making a decision?

TELL SOMEONE

- A trusted adult
- Childline 0800 1111 www.childline.org.uk
- You can talk about anything, day or night.



SEXUAL ABUSE & EXPLOITATION

- Being pressured
- Grooming or exploitation
- Sexual violence or assault
- Need to talk?

GET SUPPORT

- Dorset Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) 01202 552056 (24/7) www.dorset.police.uk/sarc
- Confidential support and medical care



IN AN EMERGENCY OR IN IMMEDIATE DANGER

Call 999

or go to a safe place and ask for help

LOCAL & NATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

Childline 0800 1111 www.childline.org.uk
Talk about anything, anytime.

Samaritans 116 123 www.samaritans.org
24/7 emotional support.

THE MIX 0808 808 4994 www.themix.org.uk
Support for under 25s about anything.

kooth www.kooth.com
Free, safe and anonymous online support.

Young Minds www.youngminds.org.uk
Support for mental health and wellbeing.

Mind 0300 123 3393 www.mind.org.uk
Support for anyone experiencing a mental health problem.

Respect (Men's Advice Line) 0808 801 0327 www.respectphoneline.org.uk
Support for healthy relationships and abuse.

NSPCC 0808 800 5000 www.nspcc.org.uk
Help and advice for children and families.

Dorset Council 01305 221000 www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
Information on local services and support.

REMEMBER

You have the right to be safe and respected.
It's okay to talk about how you feel.

Asking for help is a sign of strength.

There are people who care and want to help.



Be kind. Be respectful. Look out for your friends. Together, we can support each other. You are important. You are enough.

