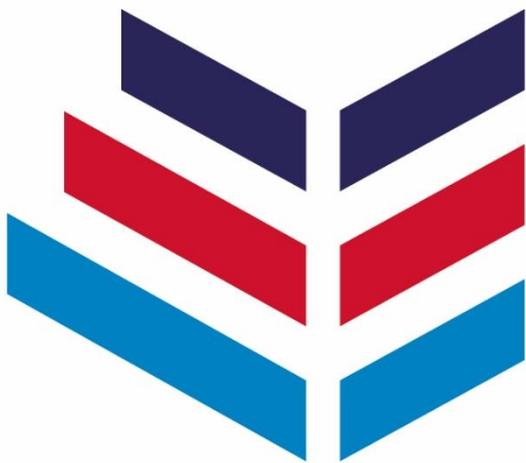


# Safeguarding

is everyone's responsibility



**FORTIS**  
Academy

**SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER - December 2020**

# Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

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In this first issue we will be highlighting concerns that are current for us in the media and as a school. With the Christmas holidays approaching and time away from school, we are concerned that this may bring an additional online risk. We hope the concerns we are raising resonate with you and value your feedback for future issues. Safeguarding is a real strength for us at Fortis Academy as highlighted in our most recent Ofsted (November 2019).



# Internet Safety and Online Risk

Although the benefits of the internet far outweigh the potential dangers, as teachers, parents and carers we must be aware of the very real risks children may be exposed to online.

## What is e-safety?

E-safety is a term used to promote the protection of young people from the unwanted consequences of using electronic media including the internet, mobile phones and social networks.

## Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is the misuse of digital technologies or communications to bully a person or a group, typically through messages or actions that are threatening and/or intended to cause offence, anxiety or humiliation. It comes in many different forms, and is particularly damaging as the abuse is inescapable - it follows the target everywhere, even into their bedroom.

## Privacy and information sharing

Most social media sites allow young users to host a public profile, which presents many concerns regarding their privacy. If privacy settings are not applied, the content they publish on their profiles will be accessible to millions of people worldwide. This information can potentially include;

- personal contact details;
- photographs or videos of themselves and their friends;
- the names and addresses of the schools and clubs they attend;
- their exact locations at any given time through the use of location tagging features.

# Digital footprints

Cyberspace is not the 'real world' although children may think that it's real. This can be a damaging notion, as it often leads children to act with less caution when using the internet. Behaviour can include:

- involvement in visible, public arguments;
- the expressing of - opinions that can be interpreted as offensive;
- participation in bullying through commenting on or sharing malicious content

The internet is like a giant USB drive that saves all the things that we publish online. The collective history of this activity is often referred to as a digital footprint and can be accessed by anyone through a simple online search.



Even if your child uses privacy settings on social media platforms, they will not be able to stop their connections from passing the content they post to others. If their activity is offensive, they may find themselves in trouble with peers, the school or even the police. Universities and employers now regularly check the online profiles of applications, so negative activity can also affect someone's educational and professional opportunities later on in life. It is therefore extremely important that young people understand that the cyber world is the real world, with very real consequences.

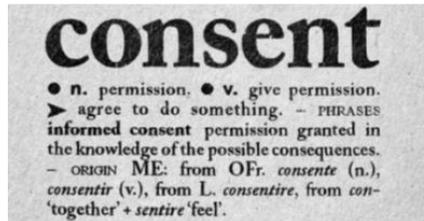
## Grooming and Sexual Abuse

Online grooming is the action of an adult befriending a child with the intent to prepare them for sexual abuse. It is not a one off event but a process of engaging with them, tapping into their hobbies and vulnerabilities and building a falsely perceived connection. Social media, interactive gaming and chat rooms can be the first point of contact. Abusers are able to hide behind false online identities and talk to young people with greater ease, out of the direct observation of others. If your child has been receiving inappropriate communications from an adult, you should report this on the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre website. Look out for this logo.

We have had some serious concerns about an online chat room called 'Omegle' which promotes chatting with strangers.

# Consent

As the holidays approach, the party season will start. For many young people they will be attending events for the first time, this should be an exciting time but some of these parties may be unsupervised by adults. Alcohol maybe around, and perhaps street drugs like cannabis, these will impair judgement. It is into this mix that an awareness of consent and risk is really important.



At parties where there are mixed age students, the legality of sexual behaviour is even more relevant. Although the age of sexual consent in the UK is 16, whether straight, gay or bisexual; 16 and 17 year olds are also protected from sexual exploitation, including sexual activity with people in a position of trust.

Best practice in this field when discussing consent, it should be noted that these messages refer to any sexual activity/experience, this may also include online relationships and sexual activity.

If you want a good way in to talking this subject through with your child, take a look at the clip 'tea and consent' on Youtube made by Thames Valley Police:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZwvrxVavnQ&safe=active>

It's a really useful way to make sure children realising the importance of saying no and could make a massive difference to their understanding about consent. We have shared it with some of our older pupils in form time this year, as well as having Assemblies from Police on gang culture, drug abuse and knife crime. We need to be frank and open when talking to children about the risks that they may face.



# Exposure to pornographic or violent material

Inappropriate content doesn't have to be intentionally sourced. Often children will stumble across it by chance; disguised under seemingly innocent URLs, attachments, or even circulated on leading social media sites. The most concerning material includes:

- extreme or abusive pornography;
- excessive violence or explicit physical attacks;
- hateful material expressing racist, sexist, homophobic or transphobic opinion;
- Harmful advice encouraging eating disorders, self harm or suicide.

## Sexualisation

Young people can feel under pressure to display sexual behaviour online, such as sharing personal information or images. This pressure can come directly from peers or partners, or indirectly through the commercialisation of sex in mainstream media and marketing industries. When using the internet, this can motivate young people to:

- post private images of themselves on social media;
- perform sexual acts over webcam, send sexually explicit photographs to another person or pressurise others into doing so;
- search for pornographic images and videos.

Please contact school if you have concerns regarding the issues we have raised here. Either speak to your child's form tutor or Head of Year if you want reassurance from someone you already know, that often helps when discussing sensitive matters.

We want you to feel confident in our ability to deal with all forms of Safeguarding referrals. Every member of staff at Fortis Academy has completed their Level 2 Child Protection training, further evidence to our claim that Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Our Safeguarding team led by our Designated Safeguarding Lead (Mrs Finlay) are always there to help in anyway that they can.

# Supporting Children With Medical Conditions

We have a robust policy in place to support children with medical conditions that is compliant with the Equality Act (2010) and the Children and Families Act (2014). It ensures that a child is safe and fully included within the whole school with additional planning for medical needs. All our staff are upskilled to support everyone but we are reliant upon information being shared with us. A few questions to consider as parents and carers;

- ◆ Have you told us about all the medical conditions your child has?
- ◆ Have you given us up to date information about any medication that is being taken?
- ◆ Does their condition affect your child during the school day?
- ◆ Are there additional measures we could be taking to support your child?

Some children need an Individual Health Care Plan to support their medical condition, an IHCP. This is not to be confused with an EHCP for children with a diagnosed Special Educational Need. These IHCPs are drawn up by our Medical Officer (Ms Smith) and reviewed regularly by Safeguarding. If you have any concerns in this area, or want to query whether we have your child's up to date details then please contact us in the New Year.

Year 7: Mrs Astle

Year 8: Miss Raza

Year 9: Mrs Williams

Year 10: Mr Beale

Year 11: Mrs Shingles



# Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

Growing up in the 21st Century brings with it many challenges. At Fortis Academy we believe that Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. As teachers and parents, working together with young people, we all hope that we can support sensible and informed decision-making that help us all take care of each other.

As Designated Safeguarding Lead for the school, I firmly believe that communication between home and school is the number one way to keep everyone safe and more importantly everyone in the loop about what we do as a school to safeguard your children.

This is our first Safeguarding Newsletter, I hope it contains information that you will find useful in supporting us with our work.

**SAFEGUARDING**

*Fortis Academy is committed to the safety and well being of our children and staff*

**Creating a Safe and Inclusive Environment**

If you don't feel safe or you're worried about the safety of another student our Safeguarding team is here to help.  
Come and find us at any time!

  
Mrs Finlay  
Campus Designated Safeguarding Lead—  
Deputy Headteacher

  
Mrs Garvey  
Deputy DSL—Deputy  
Headteacher

  
Miss Painter  
Deputy DSL—  
Assistant Headteacher

  
Mrs Roper  
Deputy DSL— SEND

  
Miss Beech  
Deputy DSL Senior

  
Mrs Price  
Deputy DSL Foundation

  
Mrs Gough  
Deputy DSL, Admin  
& Early Help

  
Mrs Smith  
Medical Officer



# From Birmingham with Love



We've all been through a tough time with Covid-19 and repeated lockdowns. For many families it can get harder over Winter, which is why we're here to help. Here are some of our partners' most used services and support, which might make life a little bit easier...



1. **Online parenting course.** We've pre-paid for every parent in Birmingham to access a [parenting course](#). Just enter the access code "COMMUNITY" at the top of the page to claim. There are courses for parents, carers and grandparents of children from bump to 19. Learn about how your child develops, and get tips to manage their behaviour.



2. **Mental health support.** In these difficult times we have to look after our mental health. For young people aged 11-25 there are forums, guides and counselling available at [Kooth](#). If your child 0-25 needs support, get in touch with Pause by calling 0207 841 4470 or [email](#). Adults can get support from [MIND](#) by calling 0121 262 3555. Or for urgent help call [Forward Thinking Birmingham](#) on 0300 300 0099.



3. **Financial help.** If you've lost your job, or are struggling for food or rent there are services that can help. [Local welfare provision](#) can make a big difference if you are in a crisis and need food, fuel or basic white goods. [Discretionary Housing Payments](#) may be able to help with rent. And there are [food banks](#) across Birmingham that are here to help.



4. **Domestic abuse.** For women and children affected by domestic abuse please see [guidance](#) or confidentially contact [Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid](#). For Men, please contact [Respect](#).



5. **Problems with drugs or alcohol.** A new, discrete app called Staying Free is available on Android or Apple. Use the code "birmingham11" for pre-paid access. To speak to someone call [Change Grow Live](#).



6. **Bereavement support.** It's a terrible time to lose a loved one — you can get help by calling 0121 687 8010 or from [Cruse](#).



7. **Early help for families.** If anyone in your family needs more help, from public services or community groups, then please contact our [voluntary sector local leads](#). We have ten areas which can connect you to support across the city.

If you are worried about a child, please call Birmingham's Children's Advice and Support Service on 0121 303 1888. In an emergency, including child abuse, contact the Police on 999. You can also [chat](#) to the Police.



# Kids eat free in Asda Cafes throughout December



Asda has today stepped up its support for families across the UK by offering children the chance to eat for free in its cafes throughout December.

All 216 of the supermarket's cafes are taking part and will provide children under the age of 16 with a meal completely free of any charge when accompanied by an adult. There are no minimum spend requirements or restrictions on the number of children in a family or group that can take advantage of this offer.

Asda expects to serve around 215,000 free meals to children from its cafes during December and is offering hot and cold menu choices such as fish fingers, chicken nuggets or sandwiches – all served with a drink and a piece of fruit.

Asda cafes located in areas with Tier 3 Covid restrictions will still provide this offer to local children via a takeaway service. The offer will run from December 1<sup>st</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> December except Christmas Day when stores are closed.

The free meals for children is part of Asda's Christmas kindness campaign, which aims to support local communities during difficult and unprecedented times.