

Parent / Carer Safeguarding Newsletter

Sept - Oct
2026



Welcome back to this new school year and to our half-termly safeguarding newsletter. Keeping children safe at Handsworth Grange Community Sports College (HGCSC) is our number one priority and we know that the most effective way for us to support our young people is to work in partnership with their parents / carers.

The risks children and young people face changes all the time, we therefore thought parents may find it beneficial to have access to information and guidance on a range of topics and how to access support when needed. We will share information throughout the school year, however the contact information for the safeguarding team is also attached at the end of this letter should you need any support.

At Handsworth Grange Community Sports College, we have a highly qualified and experienced team who are available to support you with any worries you might have. We appreciate the long summer holidays can be a time of stress for some families, please do get in touch if you need to discuss anything that may have occurred for your young person over the summer break. We're always here to help!



All schools to be 'mobile phone free environments'

The updated version of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 states that all schools must operate as mobile phone free environments by default. Phones and similar smart devices must be barred from student access during lessons, breaks, and lunchtimes, starting September 1, 2026.

At HGCSC, we operate under a clear policy of '**never seen, never heard**'. This means that mobile phones, smart watches, and air pods should not be used during the school day. This includes on corridors, in lessons or at lunch time. If a device is heard or seen, it will be confiscated by staff till the end of the school day.

The Department for Education have pushed this agenda for young people in school as mobile phones in school causes major disruption to learning but also impacts young people's mental health, as well as behavioural and emotional wellbeing. Mobile phones in school increase safeguarding risks due to things such as cyber bullying or online exploitation. It is crucial you reassure your young person that you would be able to contact them in an emergency by calling school.

White Ribbon UK

White Ribbon is the leading charity in England and Wales engaging men and boys to prevent male violence against women and girls. White Ribbon prevents violence against women and girls by addressing the root causes of men's violence against women: harmful attitudes, behaviours and systems around rigid gender norms and harmful expressions of masculinity that perpetuate gender inequality and gender-based violence.

Minerva Learning Trust has been going through accreditation with White Ribbon and as a school we have been part of this process. Accreditation means as an organization we have made a formal commitment to actively prevent violence, harassment, and abuse against women and girls. As a school we want to do everything we can to promote gender equality by encouraging students and staff to become positive role models who never excuse or remain silent about abuse.

We know nationally that secondary schools are sadly dealing more and more with children abusing other children, issues such as sexual harassment and sexual violence, cyber bullying, requests for indecent images and gender discrimination. As a school we want to work as hard as we can to ensure every student who comes to our school is treated with the respect and dignity they deserve, that school is a safe place.

We will be celebrating White Ribbon Day in school on 25th November 2026, the theme being 'it takes all of us'. We will be talking to students this year about the work of White Ribbon and how they can become involved.

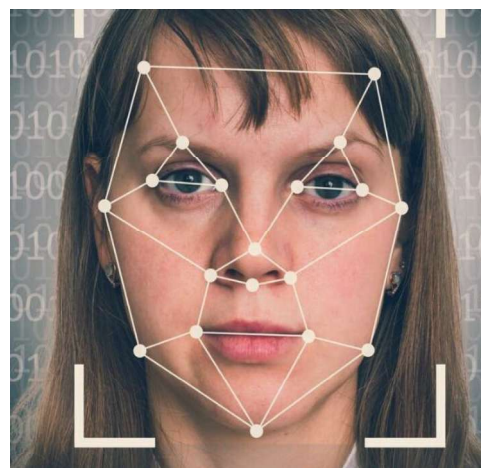


I PROMISE TO...
NEVER
USE, EXCUSE OR
REMAIN SILENT ABOUT
MEN'S VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN



What do parents need to know about deepfakes?

Current advice being given to parents and carers by police and charities such as NSPCC / Bernardo's is not to publicly post photos or videos of their children online. This is because artificial intelligence (AI) tools can harvest these innocent images to create realistic, illegal fake sexual abuse material and 'deepfakes'. Criminal networks can use standard, non-sexual photos from social media to manipulate and exploit a child's digital footprint.



What is a deepfake?

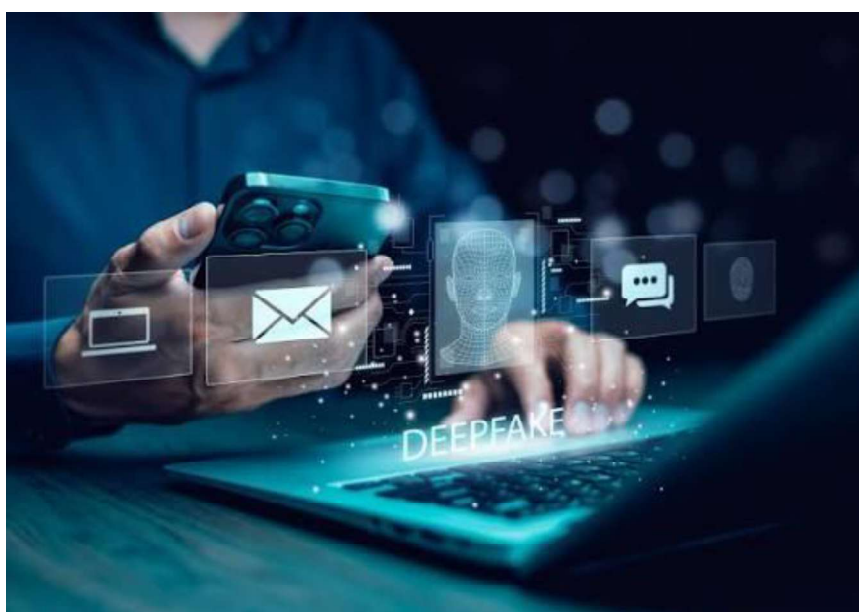
Deepfakes are videos, pictures, or audio clips made with AI to look real, however they have been manipulated to make a real person appear to say or do things they never actually did. They can be used for fun and we have found that our young people have started to use this technology in a harmless way to have a laugh with friends, but we will continue to educate our young people in school on the dangers of deepfakes.

Why are deepfakes dangerous?

Deepfakes can be used to spread disinformation (when false information is spread online to deceive people on purpose). Deepfakes can look so realistic now that they are impossible to spot, children can then be easily exploited online. It is really important as a parent / carer that you continue to monitor and supervise your child's online use to ensure they aren't being tricked or manipulated online. A common example of a deepfake being used to spread disinformation is when a deepfake shows a famous

person or politician saying something they never said. It can change how people vote or how people think.

Deepfakes can be used to make child pornography which can be circulated online or even used to blackmail young people. If this happens it is crucial you report the matter to police and can always call the safeguarding team in school who will be able to support and advise you on next steps.



Gender questioning children

If a child starts to question their identity, it can be an incredibly daunting and overwhelming time for parents and carers. The latest version of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 has made it explicit that schools and safeguarding policies operate on a 'parent-first' approach. This means that we would support you as a parent and involve you in decisions (unless there were risk-of-harm exceptions). We know that children often confide in staff in school as this can feel like an easier first step to talk to someone outside of the family, however we would not approve to change names or pronouns or support a child's social transition without involving parents.

It is normal for parents and carers to feel confused or worried, please know that you can seek out support from the inclusion team in school and reach out to your own support networks at home.

Professional guidance for parents around what to do:

Listen without judgement: allow your child to share how they feel, at their own pace, without reacting with anger or panic.

Reassure them of your love: make it clear that your support and love for them is unconditional and will not change no matter what they are going through.

Reach out to local services for support: ask school or your GP what organisations are around to support you and your child.



Barnardo's Positive Identities Service:

They work with children and families to support gender identity and sexuality. They have an online support group for children and parents called 'Gender Space' which is run by specialist workers.

The registration form can be completed by the child themselves and you can support them to do this using this link:

<https://positiveidentities.org.uk/>

Gender space workers will also be able to provide further signposting to the young person or to parent following the online group,



Handsworth Grange Safeguarding Team

Here at HGCSC, we believe in exceptional education for every student every day and as such Every Person Matters.

We all must take responsibility for looking after each other and making sure we are safe and happy.

If you are worried about something or someone then you should share it.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) at HGCSC is Ms Parks



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The Deputy Safeguarding Leads are Rochelle Roberts and Sophie Lewis



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