

Parent / Carer Safeguarding Newsletter

Jan - Feb
2026



Welcome back to this half term's 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 change all the time, we therefore thought parents may find it beneficial to have access to information and guidance on a range of topics and highlight 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 HGCSC, we have a highly qualified and experienced team who are available to support you with any worries you might have. We have had some recent changes to staffing as our previous Deputy Headteacher / DSL, Gemma Hirst, is now the Director of Inclusion for Minerva Learning Trust. We wanted to welcome our new Deputy Headteacher / DSL:

Rachel Parks
Deputy Headteacher for Inclusion
Designated Safeguarding Lead
Designated Teacher for Children Looked After
Online Safety Coordinator



Bereavement support

There is a specialist team at St Luke's Hospice who offer bereavement support to adults living with life limiting illness.

They also support family members who have experienced a bereavement within the last 3 years, and this support is also extended to children.

How to refer?

To make an enquiry or discuss a referral or request a referral form, speak to:

Adult bereavement support for adult referrals on **01268 524973**

Children and young persons' bereavement support for children and younger people referrals on **01375 648175** or email lukes.counsellingservice@nhs.net



Vaping information for parents and carers

E-cigarettes / vapes are battery powered devices that heat liquid, releasing a flavoured vapour which is then inhaled. It is illegal for any child under the age of 18 to buy a vape, or for any adult to provide / sell a vape to a child.

Vaping can have extra appeal for children because:

They come in sweet smelling flavours and bright colours

Most children and parents see vapes as harmless

Vapes are more discreet than smoking, the smoke doesn't last as long and vapes can be easily hidden

Most promotion for vapes is found on Tik Tok which is widely used by teenagers

NICOTINE IS HIGHLY ADDICTIVE

Nicotine affects brain development, especially in young people

Nicotine raises heart rate, blood pressure and adrenaline

Nicotine puts the body into 'fight or flight' mode

All of this will have a significant impact on a child's behaviour in school and ability to learn.

Illicit substances and vapes

It is becoming more apparent from research and hospital admissions that children are more likely to use illegal vapes (vapes that do not comply with safety standards, often posing significant health risks).

As children cannot buy legal vapes from shops, often children will buy illegal vapes and often these contain harmful chemicals, heavy metals or illicit substances such as THC and synthetic cannabinoids 'spice'.

Often, we do not know that a child has overdosed on illicit substances until it is too late, even the child themselves can't monitor how much of the substance they have inhaled and the doses in vapes can be deadly. Research published earlier this year, which tested vapes confiscated in a number of schools across England, found 16.6% contained spice.

What can you do as a parent?

Talk to your child about the health implications of legal and illegal vapes.

Ensure your child is not bringing a vape to school as this is a prohibited item.

There are support services in Sheffield (The Corner and Smokefree Sheffield) who can provide confidential support to children trying to quit vaping. You can ask school for details.



Edibles: what do parents / carers need to know?

Edibles, or often referred to as 'gummies', are food products that may contain cannabis or other illicit substances. There is a concern locally about the use of edibles which has resulted in some individuals requiring urgent medical assistance. Edibles come in many different forms (sweets and lollipops) and can appear completely innocent to the untrained eye.

THC is the psychoactive compound in cannabis and can make people feel a range of effects, any product containing THC is illegal in the UK. Edibles are widely available on the internet and via social media and may be easily accessed by young people. The packaging is often deliberately targeted to attract young people. There is NO quality control of these products.

The amount of cannabis in these products can vary greatly and sometimes other harmful drugs are added too. The effects of consuming edibles are unpredictable and it can be very easy to accidentally take a larger dose. Edibles take between 1-3 hours to have an effect because food is absorbed into the bloodstream through the liver. Because it takes longer, the person taking them may end up consuming larger amounts of the drug while thinking the drug isn't working. As edibles may look like other products, there is also the risk someone may ingest them without realising they contain drugs – this could include other children in the home.

What can you do?

We recommend monitoring food packaging / wrappers, look for wording such as CBD or THC suggesting the items are cannabis oil infused. Please be mindful of the medical needs should your child present with symptoms, or if you suspect they have consumed a drug-laced substance. In a medical emergency call 999.

If you are made aware of any social media accounts advertising these items, we ask you to report this information to the police, school or Crime Stoppers.

If you would like more tailored support as a parent, please access the parent space on The Corner's website:

<https://www.changegrowlive.org/young-people/friends-family/supporting-young-person>



Children's mental health week 9th – 15th February 2026

Our amazing Mental Health Champions completed the school assembly on this year's theme for children's mental health week – *'this is my place'*. A big thank you to Isela Fairclough, Noah Lodge, Poppy Shaw, Patsy Ward, Inaaya Chowdhury, and Owen Answer. Thank you for all that you do in raising the profile of children's mental health and providing a sense of belonging to children in school.

**Words that help calm a child's emotional brain.
When feeling's take over, calm words help the brain to feel safe again.**

Safety and connection:

'I'm right here with you'
'You are safe with me'
'I'll stay until this feels easier'

Understanding:

'I can see this is really hard for you'
'Your body is having big feelings right now'

Reducing overwhelm:

'Your body is reacting strongly right now'
'We can slow this down together'
'You do not need to do anything right now'

Helping the body settle:

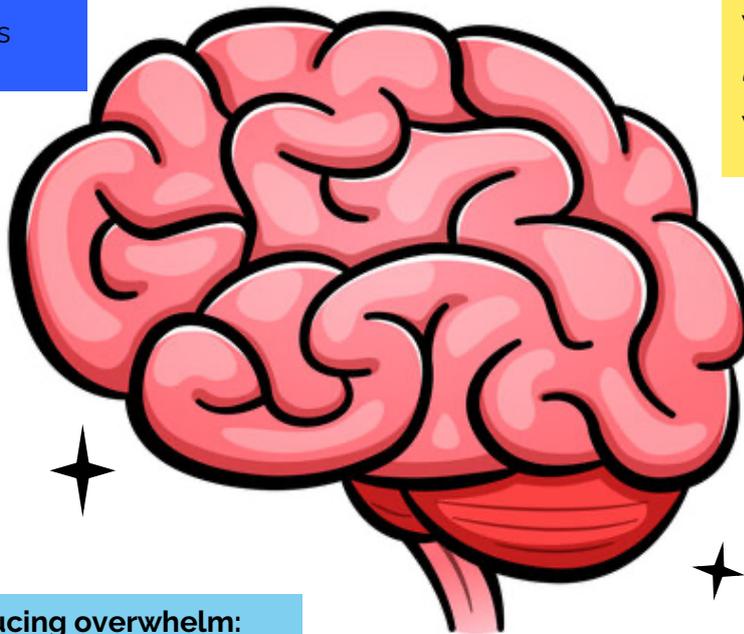
'Let's take a slow breath together'
'Put your feet on the floor with me'
'Feel the chair holding you'

Support and reassurance:

'I will help you with this'
'We can work it out together'
'This feeling will pass'

After the peak:

'Thank you for telling me'
'That was lot for you'
'You did really well getting through that'
'I'm proud of you'





Handsworth Grange Safeguarding Team

Here at HGSC, 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 HGSC is Ms Parks



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The Deputy Safeguarding Leads are Chloe Reeves, Rochelle Roberts and Sophie Lewis



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