



Co-op Academy
Swinton

Safeguarding, Mental health and Well-being Bulletin



Edition Two | June 2022

Introduction

Welcome to this, our second safeguarding and well-being bulletin for June 2022.

At Co-op Academy Swinton we firmly believe that safeguarding, mental health and well-being is more than ever a collective responsibility between the academy, students, parents and carers. In that spirit we will be sharing a range of safeguarding, mental health and well-being information, assistance and updates with you monthly from now on.

We appreciate that some of the content may be sensitive and at times may not be pleasant, however our children are facing more issues of an increasingly serious nature by the day and we firmly believe that the more that we, collectively as educationalists and parents and carers, know and understand, the better we can protect those in our care.

Issues with food

In times of uncertainty many of us struggle to keep our equilibrium and turn to control as a way of feeling less uncertain. Some students find that they are working to control food intake. This is not something that should go without support. We are seeing increasing amounts of boys and girls taking control through their food intake.

Spotting the first signs of symptoms of an eating disorder is extremely important when encouraging individuals to get the help and support they need as quickly as possible. If you're worried someone you care about is showing the signs of an eating disorder, the first step is to talk to them and encourage them to seek help from their GP.

The poster to the right is from the BEAT charity. Many tips and resources can be found on their website:

<https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/get-information-and-support/about-eating-disorders/types/>

Eating disorders. Know the first signs?



Lips

Are they obsessive about food?



Flips

Is their behaviour changing?



Hips

Do they have distorted beliefs about their body size?



Kips

Are they often tired or struggling to concentrate?



Nips

Do they disappear to the toilet after meals?



Skips

Have they started exercising excessively?

If you're worried someone you care about is showing any signs of an eating disorder – even if they're not on our list – act quickly and get in touch. We can give you the answers and support you need to help them on the road to recovery as soon as possible.

Don't delay. Visit [beateatingdisorders.org.uk/tips](https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/tips)



Self harm

- Do you worry your child might be hurting themselves?
- Does your child always wear long sleeves even in the warmest of weather?
- Have you seen marks on the skin that can't be explained? Such as scars, scratches, cuts or bruises?
- Do you know that your child is self harming and think if they cared about you they'd stop?



Your child may self harm to help themselves feel more in control or get an immediate relief from high levels of stress or distress. It is important to remember self harm is not attempted suicide but something that people do in order to survive and stay alive. Sometimes people also harm themselves because of self hate or because they want to punish themselves for something.

You may not realise your child is experiencing these difficulties; a common theme amongst individuals who self harm is that it is very often hidden from the rest of the world. Individuals can become withdrawn and isolated, and secretive about their feelings and self harm.

If you are worried your child may be self harming, here are some things to look out for:

- Unexplained cuts, burns, bite marks, bruises or bald patches
- Keeping themselves covered, for example wearing long sleeves or trousers even during hot weather, not wanting to change clothes around others or avoiding activities like swimming
- Bloody tissues in waste bins
- Blaming themselves for problems or expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or hopelessness
- Outbursts of anger or argumentativeness

We have recommended the Young Minds website, Kooth (as previously mentioned last month) and this video is a useful round up of how to respond to self harm <https://youtu.be/W6MOqZ0xhuE>

Attendance is an important part of safeguarding your child



One of the key ways that we as a school assist you as parents and carers in safeguarding your children is through our focus on attendance. We do this in a number of ways:

- Our attendance officer monitors attendance and looks for any significant changes or patterns in a child's attendance. Where she notices these, she acts quickly by contacting yourselves to check on any emerging issues. We believe that constant communication between home and school is vital.
- Where there are attendance concerns, the child is involved in the conversations as well as their parents and carers; this is important, they have to fully understand the benefits of being in school.
- We will contact you via our text messaging service, SIMS Parent App, if we do not hear from you as to a reason whilst your child is absent to ensure that your child is safe.
- Our Attendance Officer or Safeguarding Team will conduct home visits where we are concerned about a child's welfare and absenteeism.

- All students from Year 7-11 have to sign in and out of the site. If a student has an appointment then we know that they are safe if they have signed out after parental permission.

How can you help?

- Ensure that your child attends everyday
- Make medical appointments (where possible) after school and not during the school day
- If your child feels ill during the day then they need to see their Year Manager or Pupil Progress Coordinator, not contact you directly as this is not school policy
- Ensure that you do not book a holiday during term time as we do not authorise holidays taken during term time.

If you would like any further information or to discuss any attendance concerns please contact our Attendance Officer, Miss Clayton via our main school office.

Social Media and Online Safety

There are lots of benefits for children and young people when using social media. This includes staying connected with friends and family, enabling innovative ways of learning and creating new ways for them to express themselves but there are also potential risks as well, that you need to be aware of, but there are also risks that you need to be aware of.

Online risks

- Children may be exposed to upsetting or inappropriate content online, particularly if the platform you're using doesn't have robust privacy and security settings or if you're not checking posts. This content might be sexually explicit or it might be harmful in other ways, such as radicalisation, bullying, or content that's upsetting.
- Children may be at risk of being groomed if they have an online profile that means they can be contacted privately.
- Children's posts or profile information may expose personal information and put them at risk. For example, they may talk about their home life, feelings, or thoughts they've been having. There may be information that makes them identifiable such as locations of events they are taking part in or visual clues in photographs. Perpetrators may use this information to groom, abuse or exploit children.
- Perpetrators of abuse may create fake profiles to try to contact children and young people through the platform you're using, for example an adult posing as a child. They may also create anonymous accounts and engage in cyberbullying or trolling. People known to a child can also perpetrate abuse.
- On many platforms, children can be contacted anywhere and at any time through private messaging or notification alerts. This means it's harder for them to escape from abusive messages or upsetting content that they are tagged in.

Top tips for parents/carers to help keep your child safe online

Tips to help keep your child safe online

Helpful tools and advice you can use to keep your child safe when they use the internet at home, at a friend's house or at school.

The internet is great for learning, sharing, connecting and creating. So try and balance how you guide your child on online safety with an understanding of why they want to use it. You don't want your child to feel they can't come to you if they encounter a problem online.

Set rules and agree boundaries as a family

- ✓ Set boundaries for how long your child can spend online and what they can do.
- ✓ Agree this as a family so that access to devices can be shared fairly.
- ✓ Remember there are tools that can help you manage and monitor access and use across all devices.

Talk about online safety and get involved

- ✓ Have conversations about online safety little and often and build it into other conversations.
- ✓ Ask questions about what they do online, such as what sites they visit and who they talk to.
- ✓ Make the use of the internet a family activity.
- ✓ Remember to share these rules with babysitters, childminders and other family members.
- ✓ Talk to other parents about internet use, such as what they do and don't allow.



NSPCC
Cruelty to children must stop. FULL STOP.

Know who they are talking to

- ✓ Tell your child that strangers can pop up anywhere online: email, instant messenger, social networking sites or online games.
- ✓ Your child may feel they know someone well, even if they've only played a game with them online. So remember to talk to them about what they share with people they've only met online.
- ✓ Discuss boundaries and say you'd like to be friends on social networks, initially.
- ✓ Understand the games they play.
- ✓ Ensure your child knows what to do if someone they don't know contacts them, eg ask you for advice.
- ✓ Show your child how to report abuse and how to block people on the websites they use.

Check content is age-appropriate

- ✓ Check age ratings of **games**, online movies and websites.

Use parental and privacy controls

- ✓ Check the privacy settings on social media and websites.
- ✓ Adjust parental controls to suit your child's age and maturity.
- ✓ Make sure you always logout of your online accounts.



NSPCC
Cruelty to children must stop. FULL STOP.

For more help and advice visit www.nspcc.org.uk/onlinesafety or contact the NSPCC **helpline** on **0808 800 5000** to discuss any concerns

© 2014 NSPCC. All rights reserved. Registered charity number 244607.

If you have any questions or require any support, please feel free to contact Mrs Hinton or our Safeguarding Team via our main school office.