



Safeguarding newsletter

June 2024

The aim of the newsletter is to share, key related information, in an effort, to better improve communication between the Academy and you as parents / carers.

Podcast: Absenteeism in schools-NSPCC Learning

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/news/2024/april/podcast-absenteeism-schools>

Learn more about why children miss school and the potential safeguarding implications

Education is a vital part of ensuring children get the best possible start in life, and there can be safeguarding implications for children who are absent from school. If children miss school, the ability that schools have to offer them the support they need is compromised. And missing school may be an indicator of broader child protection concerns.

The number of children who are persistently absent from school has increased since the COVID-19 pandemic. In this podcast episode, experts from the NSPCC and Childline discuss the potential causes for this, and what schools can do to address the problem. You'll also hear two secondary school students share their thoughts on how the stresses and strains of school life can affect attendance.

The discussion covered:

- what school absenteeism is and how it is defined
- what the safeguarding implications could be for children who miss school
- the impact of the pandemic on absenteeism trends
- what schools can do to prevent absenteeism and support persistently absent children
- what Childline is hearing about why children miss school.

Online safety newsletter briefing

Useful information and links:

1. The following link has some great information for you as parents/carers to help support and monitor your child's use of their smartphone and to protect them online - <https://www.internetmatters.org/setupsafe/>
2. Sextortion – the NSPCC has reported a 7200% increase in cases of Sextortion in the last few years. The following video contains information on how to avoid this increasingly prevalent issue. The video is aimed at both children and parents - <https://onlinesafetypro.com/sextortion-advice-for-young-people/>
3. A recent Shifting the Dial report has found that nearly 14% of teenagers under the age of 16 experienced a form of image-based sexual abuse.
This equates to 400 000 students nationwide. In particular, there has been a worrying rise in the number of children being pressured to create sexual content – this is known as 'self-generated' child sexual abuse material. The report and its findings can be found here - <https://www.internetmatters.org/hub/research/methods-prevent-self-generated-child-sexual-abuse-11-13s/>

Reminder of Tudor Grange's phone policy:

- I would also like to take a moment just to reaffirm the Tudor Grange policy around use of phones. TGAS is proud to be a mobile phone free school and we truly believe that this is in the best interests of our students.
- This is because phones play a central role in bullying incidents and have been linked to a series of serious safeguarding incidents in schools in the borough recently. Furthermore, we believe that students benefit from having time away from devices which has been proven to be positive for student wellbeing.
- Of course, we appreciate that you may have concerns for your child's safety on the way to and from school. However, I would like to make you aware of the fact that students can contact parents/carers via Student Services during the school day and, in some circumstances, students can store their phone in Student Services to be picked up at the end of the day. To explore the possibility of this, please contact your child's college leader.

Best wishes,

Mr Richards – Internet Safety Lead



The Young carers Club has been going so well and the students have been enjoying coming along to meet other young carers and to enjoy some snacks and games.

We hope that other young carers will come along and see how amazing the club is during their lunch

It takes place every Wednesday over the lunch period in WG15

I am going to
come to this
every week it's
fun

I thought it was only
me who had a brother
like mine

Can we have
games and films

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about MYLOL

AGE RESTRICTION
13-19

MyLOL is a free social networking and dating site aimed at teens. Profiles can publicly display users' images and information, including sexual orientation and personal interests. The service bills itself as "the number one teen dating website in the world", claiming to have more than a million users globally. Despite its popularity, the MyLOL app is no longer available from Google Play or the App Store, although the site is still active. In some countries, police forces and schools have previously warned parents about "sinister predators" and "inappropriate activities" on the site.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

FLimsy AGE GATES

Although MyLOL states it is exclusively aimed at users aged between 13 and 19, there is no credible age verification system to prevent a younger child – or an older adult – from signing up to the platform. Coupled with the fact that it's impossible to establish a user's true identity on MyLOL, this raises a serious concern that the site could be used for grooming.

AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

MyLOL maintains that it monitors all uploaded images for nudity or sexual content. It also claims to be able to detect suspicious keywords. However, there have been numerous reports of explicit content being found on the platform, with users often posting provocative, semi-nude pictures of themselves and engaging in flirty or sexually explicit conversation.

POTENTIAL CYBER-BULLYING

MyLOL lets users "vote" on other people based solely on their appearance, much in the same vein as the now-defunct site Hot or Not. This feature could easily lead to distress and bullying, especially if a young person's profile pics receive an unfavourable response. Various reviews of MyLOL have noted that bullying frequently becomes an issue in the platform's chat groups and private messages.

IN-APP SPENDING

MyLOL is free to join and use, but it also offers paid-for memberships. Users who have paid money get their profile promoted at the top of the site and in search results. They can also earn additional credits for increased engagement with the platform – such as sharing, replying to messages and voting. At the time of writing, the monthly membership fee was \$9.95 (just under £8).

DATA COLLECTION

According to its privacy policy, MyLOL collects user data including email addresses, contact details and interests. While the company says it is committed to protecting users' privacy, the small print states that information may be shared externally. MyLOL claims to follow procedures to keep data secure, but does not specify what these procedures are, or whether such information is encrypted.

CONTACT FROM STRANGERS

MyLOL makes it easy to connect with strangers. In fact, the site's rewards feature encourages users to send private messages to people they don't know. There have been several media stories of adults posing as teens on MyLOL to connect with minors, which could lead to extremely dangerous situations, such as a young person meeting up with someone who has been posing under a false identity.

Advice for Parents & Carers

DISCUSS ONLINE DATING

It's vital to talk to your child about the possible dangers of platforms like MyLOL – particularly the threat of online predators. Remind them of the risks of sharing intimate images and information with strangers and emphasise that most people don't realise they're being 'catfished' until it's too late – it really isn't wise for a young person to meet up with someone they've only spoken to online.

RESTRICT IN-APP SPENDING

If your child has access to a bank card or other payment method, they may be enticed into signing up for MyLOL's premium features. Having their profile boosted and receiving more attention could be especially tempting if their friends also use the site. You could consider altering their device's settings to disable internet purchases, or at the very least keeping an eye on their online spending.

EXPLAIN PRIVACY RISKS

Before your child begins using a service such as MyLOL, it's important that they understand the potential pitfalls of giving out their personal data on this type of platform. Explain to them, for example, that they shouldn't divulge any personally identifying information to people who they don't know, as scammers can be quite convincing when attempting to steal someone's identity.

SET UP LOCATION ALERTS

If you're worried that your child may be planning to meet up with someone they've met on MyLOL, you could consider utilising GPS or WiFi location tracking technology to follow their whereabouts in real time. You can even set up a virtual boundary or 'fence' and opt to receive an alert to your phone if your child enters or exits a specified area.

Exam advice tips for Parents and Educators

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators MANAGING EXAM STRESS

At some point in their education, children are almost certain to encounter exam stress, which can cast a shadow over their mental, emotional and physical wellbeing. Mental health charity YoungMinds estimate that a staggering 87% of pupils suffer from exam stress – highlighting the urgent need to minimise its impact on children's health and happiness.

1 PRACTISE WORKLOAD WISDOM

The build up to exam season is such a busy and pressurised time in a child's education that it can be difficult for youngsters to avoid feeling overwhelmed. Encourage them to consider whether their current workload is realistic and allows them sufficient time to relax and recharge. Work with them in crafting a revision timetable that's manageable and includes breaks and occasional days off.

2 ADVISE CLEARING THE CLUTTER

A disorganised work environment is proven to negatively affect our ability to focus, as well as our emotional state. Encourage children to keep their desk, notes and revision materials tidy – creating a dedicated, well-kept study space to promote maximum focus. Foster their creativity by suggesting they incorporate vibrant colours, mind maps and even quirky drawings into their revision notes.

3 MASTER THE MATERIALS TOGETHER

Revision seems far harder when a child is uncertain where to begin or what sources to consult. Support them in confirming revision materials with their various teachers – emphasising the importance of gathering a range of resources to get a more comprehensive understanding of the subject. Feeling more prepared should nurture the child's confidence and help to dispel some of their anxiety.

4 RECOMMEND CREATIVE NOTE-TAKING

Writing out notes in full – rather than simply bullet pointing – can be a strong start to a child's revision. Reinforce this idea, encouraging the use of flashcards (featuring shorter versions of previously taken notes) for effective repetition and memorisation. Discuss the power of regularly reviewing notes to help them stay in the child's memory.

5 USE VISUAL AIDS AND MNEMONICS

Encourage the use of visual aids like videos and sticky notes to enhance learning. Some children find these resources far more useful than simply reading their notes as written. Explore creating mnemonics for a fun and effective study approach – and it's also worth noting that the strategic use of colours is a proven means of triggering recall during exams.

6 GATHER A 'TECH TOOLKIT'

Technology can be a huge advantage in exam prep. Educational YouTube channels and revision websites like BBC Bitesize can be immensely powerful resources for helping children to expand and retain their knowledge. You could also recommend the use of flashcard apps and educational podcasts for revision and reminders when young people are on the go.

7 KEEP IT FUN

Revision tends to go far more smoothly if children are having fun in the process. Injecting some humour into their notes, for instance, can make details more memorable – as can relating information to their real-life experiences. Try to encourage a variety of study methods, such as incorporating physical activity (even simply taking a walk) into their revision routine.

8 SUGGEST ACTIVE REVISION STRATEGIES

Make sure children are aware of different study techniques. You could emphasise the effectiveness of spaced repetition by reviewing material regularly over time to reinforce learning and improve retention. Discuss the benefits of active recall methods – such as self-testing or explaining a concept aloud – in identifying where their strengths and weaknesses lie.

9 ENCOURAGE A POSITIVE MINDSET

It can be easy for children's thoughts to fall into a downward spiral when they're stressed about exams. Try to foster a growth mindset by emphasising the importance of giving it all rather than aiming for complete perfection. Positive self-talk and the use of affirmations can build confidence and reduce anxiety, while visualising success and setting realistic goals can help them stay motivated and focused.

10 HELP THEM TO SEIZE THE DAY

There are lots of things children can do on the day of their exam to reduce stress and increase their focus. Talk them through some helpful exam-day strategies – such as arriving early, reading the instructions and the questions carefully, and pacing themselves during the test. Suggest some relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing or visualisation, to help them manage any nerves before and during the exam.