

Welcome to our first safeguarding newsletter for parents, carers and guardians. At College we spend a lot of time ensuring that our learners are aware of the dangers that they may face, know how to avoid them and what to do if they need help.

This information is shared in a number of ways;

- We produce newsletters on Safeguarding and Health and Wellbeing,
- Our Progress Tutors deliver sessions on relevant topics around staying safe
- We have mentors and trained staff available for learners to speak with if they have any concerns about themselves or people they know.

We feel it is also important to keep you up to date with the work we do to support your young person and also to raise your awareness and signpost you to key agencies.

We have a section on our website to share timely information and advice – please visit us at

<https://www.rotherham.ac.uk/support/safeguarding/>
<https://www.nnc.ac.uk/support/safeguarding/>
<https://www.dearne-coll.ac.uk/support/safeguarding/>

The advice and support we will share with you is appropriate for all age groups, however some may be targeted at specific ages – we still feel it is relevant to share the information on younger children as we appreciate our learners may have younger siblings and you want to keep the whole family safe.

Digital safety during Covid-19: safeguarding from harmful influences online

- The impact of COVID-19 means that most of us will be at home for an extended period and are likely to be spending increasing amounts of time online.
- The online world is a necessity for many learners in accessing their college work and it delivers huge benefits, not least in enabling us to stay connected to family and friends during this period.
- However, many parents may feel concerned about the content their children are accessing.
- Although rare, there is a risk that increased online activity and feelings of stress and isolation may be exploited by negative influences and online groomers of all kinds to target vulnerable children and young people directly.
- An understanding of digital safety will help parents and carers safeguard loved ones from a range of harms, whether that's child sexual exploitation, fraud, or extremist influences seeking to radicalise vulnerable people.
- Extremists may use the COVID-19 outbreak to promote hateful views, for example through conspiracy theories blaming a particular group for the virus, or through spreading misinformation regarding these groups' responses to it.

What steps can I take to keep my child safe online?

- If you have downloaded new apps or bought new technology to help stay connected at this time, remember to review and adjust privacy and safety settings if you or your child is signing up to a new online service.
- Government has encouraged Internet Service Providers to allow parents to easily filter content to put you in control of what your child can see online.
- You can switch on family friendly filters to help prevent age inappropriate content being accessed on devices in your home.
 - The UK Safer Internet Centre provides [guidance](#) on how to do this.
 - Internet Matters has also provided [step by step](#) guides on how to setup parental controls.

What are the signs that my young person is being exploited online?

Online exploitation is often hard to recognise because it is a complex issue. When it comes to being drawn into extremist ideas online, sometimes there are clear warning signs, in other cases the changes are less obvious. Although some of these traits may be quite common among teenagers, taken together they could be indicators that your child may need some help:

- Exploring new and unusual websites, chat forums and platforms. Harmful influences may push individuals towards platforms with a greater degree of anonymity.
- Joining new or secret groups since isolation.
- Speaking with new friends or being secretive about chats during online gaming or in forums.
- A strong desire to seek new meaning, identity and purpose.
- Using language you wouldn't expect them to know.
- Watching, sharing or creating films online linked to religious, political or racial hate.
- Becoming increasingly argumentative or refusing to listen to different points of view.

If you are worried that your loved one is being exploited, you can speak to a member of the Safeguarding team at college – we will listen to your concerns, offer support and discuss appropriate referrals to other agencies. Please email Safeguarding@rnngroup.ac.uk

The warning signs of radicalisation

There are signs that people can look out for indicate a person is being radicalised or is at risk. It is important to notice these signs and help to prevent the person from acting on their radicalisation:

Low self-esteem, lack of self-identity, lack of belonging, mental health issues, drugs and alcohol, upheaval in the family home.

Positive factors that can prevent someone being radicalised include:

Secure family and emotional attachment	A secure understanding of religion	
Safe places they can go to discuss radicalisation	Mental health support	A sense of belonging

If you are worried your young person is being radicalised, you can call the police on 101 to get advice or share a concern so that they can get safeguarding support. Alternatively, you can contact your local authority safeguarding team for help.

If you think someone is in immediate danger, or if you see or hear something that may be terrorist-related, trust your instincts and call 999 or the confidential Anti-Terrorist Hotline on 0800 789 321.

Have you noticed?

There has been a noted rise in the number of small silver canisters being discarded in outside areas. We know these to be nitrous oxide, otherwise known as laughing gas, a colourless gas that is most commonly found in pressurised metal canisters. People inhale this gas in order to get a 'high'. Nitrous oxide is classed as a psychoactive drug and is covered by the 2016 Psychoactive Substances Act, which means it is illegal to give away or sell.

We need our learners to know that inhaling nitrous oxide directly is very dangerous and can cause a range of worrying side effects:

- Too much leads to a risk of falling unconscious and/or suffocating from the lack of oxygen. This can be fatal.
- Dizziness, which might make people act carelessly or dangerously.
- Severe headaches.
- Short-lived, but intense feelings of paranoia.
- Heavy regular use of nitrous oxide can lead to a deficiency of vitamin B12 and to a form of anaemia.
- Regular use can stop you forming white blood cells properly.

Worried about a child?

During lockdown, there has been a reduction in referrals to social services and the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). This is unlikely to be down to a reduction in abuse and neglect and more likely that schools/ colleges and health services are not operating in the same way. You may become aware of a situation with a child that you are not comfortable with. You can report this yourself through your local MASH by googling 'worried about a child' and your local area e.g. Rotherham. You can do this anonymously, but remember to give as much detail as possible. You can always email safeguarding@rnngroup.ac.uk for advice.



Boots pharmacies are now offering a safe space for victims of domestic abuse, where support and signposting will be offered confidentially.