



If you have any concerns about the safety or welfare of a child or a family, please

contact us:

OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR SAFEGUARDING & DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD

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We live to love, learn and respect and follow Jesus who says, “Love one another as I have loved you.”

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to the July Safeguarding newsletter.

SPOTLIGHT ON SAFEGUARDING

Working together to keep our young people safe

Helping children understand loss

At some point in life, most children experience the death of someone they know—whether it's a grandparent, a family friend, a beloved pet or another important figure in their life.

Bereavement can be confusing, sad and sometimes frightening for children, especially if they don't fully understand what's happening. As parents and carers, your support can make all the difference in helping your child feel safe, heard and comforted during this difficult time.

Understanding how children grieve

Grief in children can look very different from grief in adults. Young children may move in and out of sadness quickly- one minute playing happily, the next asking a difficult question about death.

Here are some common ways children might react:

- asking the same questions repeatedly
- showing changes in behaviour (clinginess, anger, quietness)
- worrying about others dying too
- having trouble sleeping or concentrating
- acting out emotions through play.

Practical ways to support your child

- **Keep routines going** – children feel safer with predictable routines such as school, mealtimes and bedtime.
- **Create space to remember** – light a candle, draw pictures, make a memory box or photo album together.
- **Give choices**– if there's a funeral or memorial, ask your child if they'd like to attend or do something else to say goodbye.
- **Use stories**– reading books about loss can help children talk about their own feelings.

In this issue:

- **Supporting your child with a bereavement**
- **Using WhatsApp safely**
- **Nintendo Switch 2**
- **Staying safe around water**

TALKING ABOUT DEATH HONESTLY AND GENTLY

It's natural to want to protect children from pain - but being open and honest is actually one of the kindest things we can do.

Use simple, clear language

Avoid confusing phrases like 'gone to sleep' or 'passed away'. Try gentle but clear words such as:

"When someone dies, it means their body has stopped working. They don't feel pain anymore."

Answer questions honestly

It's okay to say 'I don't know' or 'That's a really good question' if you're unsure. Children often ask the same questions repeatedly - this helps them make sense of the loss.

Talk about feelings

Talk about feelings. Let your child know it's okay to feel sad, angry, confused, or even nothing at all. You might say: "Everyone feels different when someone dies. However you feel is okay."

Model healthy grief

It's okay to let your child see you cry. This shows them that sadness is natural and it's safe to express emotion.

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Using WhatsApp safely

As children begin exploring ways to connect with friends online, many are using apps such as WhatsApp to message and share with others. While these platforms can offer positive social interaction, they also come with risks that children may not yet fully understand.

WhatsApp's age rating is 13+, so if your primary-aged child is using it, they'll need close parental support and clear guidance. It is important to note that age 13 does not reflect the content children may be able to view on WhatsApp; it does not have moderators previewing what users send to each other and therefore, the content may not be appropriate for a child.

Keeping your child safe on WhatsApp

Here are some key steps you can take to help your child use WhatsApp responsibly and safely:

1. Set strong privacy settings

- **Last seen, Profile photo, About Info:** set these to 'My Contacts' or 'Nobody' to prevent strangers from seeing their information.
- **Status updates:** limit who can see their status to trusted contacts.
- **Blocked contacts:** encourage your child to block anyone who makes them feel uncomfortable or is unkind.
- **Read receipts:** you can turn off read receipts (blue ticks) to help reduce pressure to respond immediately.

2. Turn off disappearing messages

WhatsApp allows users to send messages that vanish after a set time, which can hide evidence of bullying or inappropriate content.

- **To check this setting:** Open a chat → Tap the person or group's name → Tap 'Disappearing Messages' → Set to 'Off'.
- **Talk to your child** about why it's important to keep a record of conversations and why messages shouldn't 'disappear'.

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3. Encourage kind and respectful messaging

Digital communication can sometimes feel less personal, which makes it easier to say things we wouldn't say face to face. Help your child develop empathy and kindness in their messages:

- **Think before you send:** encourage your child to pause and ask, "Would I say this in person?"
- **Use kind words:** compliments, encouragement, and friendly emojis can make a big difference.
- **Avoid teasing or excluding:** group chats can become a place where some children feel left out- talk about how to make everyone feel included.
- **Don't forward hurtful messages or images:** even sharing something as a 'joke' can really upset someone else.

4. Know how to report and block

- Show your child how to **block contacts**, **report** harmful messages, and **leave group chats** if they feel uncomfortable.

Nintendo Switch 2

The Nintendo Switch 2 was released last month and has a new communication feature that you should be aware of.



GameChat – NEW

GameChat is included within a Nintendo Switch Online membership and allows up to 12 people to chat while playing games. Players can share their screen, even if they are playing different games, chat with the built-in microphone and as the Nintendo Switch 2 allows cameras to be connected (sold separately), even video chat. If your child is using this feature, then ensure they know how to report other users.

You can find out more on:

<https://www.nintendo.com/en-gb/Hardware/Nintendo-Switch-2/GameChat/Nintendo-Switch-2-GameChat-2785625.html>

Parental Controls

There is a free Nintendo Switch Parental Controls app that can be linked with your Nintendo Switch to monitor what your child is playing. The app creates a report so you can see which video games your child is playing and for how long. It also allows you to set which games your child can play, based on the PEGI age rating and restricts your child from sending or receiving messages from other users. GameChat settings can also be adjusted. Children under the age of 15 can only use GameChat if allowed by you through the app. They can then only use GameChat with people that you approve. Find out more here: <https://www.nintendo.com/en-gb/Support/Nintendo-Switch-2/How-to-Set-Up-Adjust-or-Remove-Parental-Controls-on-Nintendo-Switch-2-2843839.html>

Check age ratings

PEGI provides age classifications for video games. PEGI considers the age suitability of a game, not the level of difficulty. It is important to note that PEGI do not take into consideration user generated content within games (such as on Roblox) and chat facilities within games. <https://pegi.info/>

Further information <https://www.ceopeducation.co.uk/parents/articles/gaming/>

Is your child moving to Secondary school?

Is your child moving to Secondary school this September? Internet Matters have outlined a number of tools and resources, including a Transition Parent Guide to help support you:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/moving-to-secondary-schoolonline-safety-guide/>

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At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

STAYING SAFE AROUND WATER

Enjoying time in, on, and around water plays a vital role in a young person's overall development, offering a healthy and exhilarating way to have fun. This guide outlines essential safety advice, based on the Royal Life Saving Society UK's Water Safety Code, to help ensure children can enjoy swimming and similar activities safely and responsibly.

1 STICK TO LIFEGUARDED AREAS

It's never advisable to enter unsupervised bodies of water, especially alone. Instead, it's considered best practice to accompany children to places with lifeguards, as they will be trained to respond swiftly in emergencies and provide first aid when needed.



2 LEARN SIGNS AND FLAGS

When going to a new environment, it's important to research the local area and make children aware of safety signage before entering the water. If visiting the seaside, make sure children are always supervised by an adult and that they know what different beach flags mean, so they're knowledgeable of where and when they can enter the sea.



3 STOP AND THINK

Young people should be cautious before entering water, as it's difficult to know what hazards could be underneath. Use the Water Safety Code and encourage children to ask themselves questions such as, "Is the water too deep or too shallow? Are there currents, tides, or underwater objects?" Make sure children know never to enter water from a height, as what lurks below could cause serious injuries.



4 CONSIDER WATER TEMPERATURE

Even on hot days, water can be deceptively cold. Tragedies strike when young people experience cold water shock. Never let children enter water quickly; instead, ensure that they enter slowly and carefully to allow their bodies to adjust to the temperature or exit easily if needed.



5 INFLATABLE SAFETY

Although inflatables may seem like a fun idea when visiting locations like the beach, they can float further out from shore and into more dangerous water. It's advisable only to use inflatables in spaces like appropriately managed swimming pools, where they're used in more controlled and supervised environments.



6 SUPERVISION IS KEY



For young children, and particularly those under the age of five, it's important for them to be supervised at home, outside and at the pool at all times. It's essential for parents and educators to understand that young children can drown quickly and silently; therefore, anyone supervising them must maintain constant watch in case they get into difficulty.

7 DON'T GO TOO FAR



When swimming, especially in open water, it's best to teach children to stay within a safe depth. Share advice with them such as only entering water up to a standing depth, and in the case of visiting the beach, swim parallel to shorelines. This will allow a child to stay in control and get out of the water easily.

8 KEEP POOLS AND TUBS DRAINED



For parents of young children, a simple way to protect them at home is to keep outdoor spaces and bathrooms tidy after playtime. This includes removing water from paddling pools after use and turning them over, returning lids to hot tubs and taking toys out of baths, so all water can be fully drained from the tub.

9 FLOAT AND CALL 999



If a child gets into difficulty in the water, they should try to float on their back, stay calm, and call for help. If a young person sees someone else in trouble, they should dial 999 or 112 immediately, then shout to reassure their friend, encouraging them to float on their back, and letting them know that help is on the way. Children should never enter the water to attempt a rescue or retrieve belongings.

10 TEACH WATER SAFETY



Beyond swimming lessons, children should be educated in school on water safety. Use RLSS UK's accredited programme, 'Water Smart Schools', which offers free lesson plans and resources on how to be safe on, near and around water by following the Water Safety Code.

Meet Our Expert

The Royal Life Saving Society UK (RLSS UK) is a national water safety charity that gives children the chance to enjoy a lifetime of fun in the water, safely. Water safety education provided in schools is vital and, in some instances, could be a child's only opportunity to learn about the water.



The National College