

WELCOME TO OUR PARENT SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER

MEET THE SAFEGUARDING TEAM



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Safeguarding links

- Catmose College Child Protection Policy - <https://www.catmosecollege.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Catmose-College-Child-Protection-September-2025-2-.pdf>
- Rutland and District Schools' Federation Safeguarding Policy - <https://www.catmosecollege.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Federation-Student-Safeguarding-Policy-September-2025-2-.pdf>

A warm welcome to Catmose College's safeguarding newsletter. We hope that you will find this information helpful and informative.

WORRIED@CATMOSE

Students at College will notice that there are various ways that they can report their worries or concerns either online or in person, a very popular option available to our students is a dedicated email address: worried@catmosecollege.com

Here children can report their concerns in confidence and be assured that the matter will be taken seriously. When a child uses this address, we endeavour to reply to their email to confirm that we have received it and then we will speak to the child in person.

Typically, children may use this email address to report:

- Worries about their friends
- Concerns about bullying
- Times when they are worried about school expectations or prep
- Worries about family members (ill-health, parental separation etc.)

For many children, just sharing the worry and having a supportive chat is enough. However, if it is felt that a student may benefit from some extra support, we will then contact parents and carers to discuss options and seek consent for any referrals to services.

You can find details of Local Authority Early Help / Family Help Teams at the end of this newsletter.



STARTING SECONDARY SCHOOL: STARTING UP WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

Moving from primary to secondary school can be a very exciting experience for some children and for others it can be a time of increased worry and nervousness. For many children the increased independence and opportunity will mean an increase in their use of technology and the implications of social media use.

Technology and social media can be enriching for children who achieve a balance in the time spent using it and where they are appropriately supervised. However, for other children it can be a less helpful experience

We frequently support children who have faced upsetting situations with social media use and instant messaging platforms. Here you can find some common issues which arise:

Group chats: multiple children are added to a group chat where the messages can quickly become upsetting and unsettling, children can feel isolated and unsure what to do when the messages take a negative turn. Many children worry about the content of the messages being shared and what will happen if they leave the group.

There have been instances of group chats where over 100 participants have been added. Such chats invariably include absolute strangers and adults posing as school aged children. Such group chats have been a host for bullying, grooming and the exchange of inappropriate messages and images.

We strongly recommend that children do not join group chats as they have a significant impact on children's health and well-being.

Screen shots and camera rolls: children's images are routinely screenshotted and stored by their friends often because messaging apps link to the camera roll on their mobile devices. Sometimes children make mistakes and send images or information that they later deeply regret and this is made worse by the lack of control over what happens next.

We would suggest that children stop and think before sending any image, gif, meme or piece of information via social media. Children can be encouraged to think:

- Would I want my family members to see this?
- Would I be able to explain why I sent or kept this?
- Could this cause someone to be upset, worried or frightened?
- Would I be happy if someone did this to me / sent this to me or kept this information about me?

Social media and mental health

Many children and young people turn to social media to explore their feelings. While it is helpful to be self-aware with thoughts and feelings and to explore things that may help, it can also mean that children can become overwhelmed by the vast amount of information they receive. So, what does this mean for children?

Information online can be contradictory which creates confusion for young people. Often the content online is designed for adults and so children do not yet have the experience to interpret what is helpful and what is not. Equally, often information presented on social media is simply opinion and so it is not fact checked, verified or tested.

Social media relies on advertising, algorithm, and on 'influencer' culture. This can mean that mental and emotional well-being is linked to wider unhelpful and pressurising ideas – buy this, achieve this, look like this, do this... algorithms will also mean that if a young person is in a negative cycle, social media will recommend and provide more and more similar content.

Immediate notifications, enabled location services, chat streaks and instant responses can lead children and young people to build unrealistic expectations about how available they should be to other people. Despite its ability to connect people it can lead to intense feelings of loneliness and pressure.

Many young people express a wish to validate their friends online but this can mean that children and young people who are already overwhelmed by social media may find it exceptionally difficult to 'step away' for fear that their friendship will be impacted. Stepping away in the real world then becomes far easier than stepping away in a virtual world of constant contact.

What can we do to help children and young people?

- Explore together with your child what social media means to them, is it fun and exciting or boring and draining?
- Take a guess at average screen times in your family. It can be interesting to explore what the equivalent would be. For example, spending 7 hours on social media is the equivalent of watching 4 football matches.
- Help children and young people understand that we all have a digital footprint, while this footprint can lead young people to develop their interests, get updates on their favourite things and follow content that they enjoy it can also have a negative impact if that footprint has contained searches, images or ideas that are distressing or worrying.
- Explore whether they would be happy with a friend, family member or teacher seeing the messages they send or the content they view.
- What are they doing on their phone? The only way to know is to ask and check.



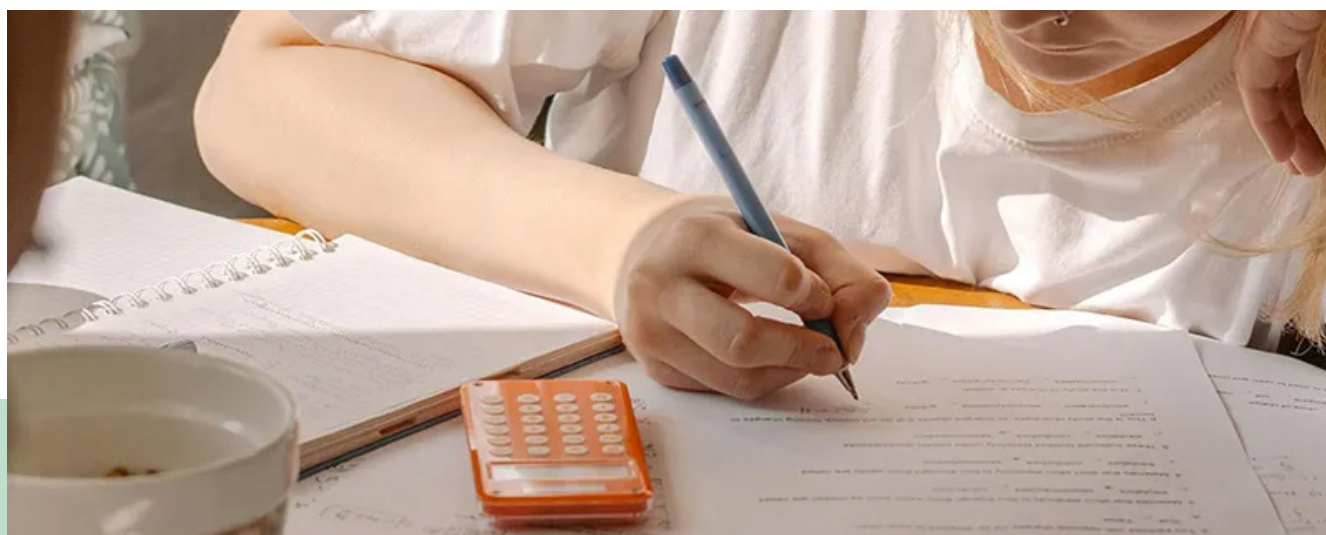
GETTING THE GRADE

For many students at College, they will be familiar with Checkpoints and Key Assessments, for students going into Year 11 they will notice that there is more emphasis on the exams that they will sit in May 2026.

While Key Assessments and Checkpoints are invaluable ways of checking progress, making predictions and understanding any barriers or challenges children may be experiencing, for some children the idea of a test or exam can be very anxiety provoking.

Here are some things that parents can implement now to support their child:

- Positive about prep: prep helps to embed learning and skills. It also helps children to feel confident about their abilities and readiness to take their next steps with subject. Asking to see completed prep is a great way to offer positive praise which leads to increase self-esteem.
- Find a revision style: some children love to talk about what they have learned, others like their own space and silence in order to revise. Be open to options and trial and error until your child finds something that works well for them. Sometimes working alongside your child for a set amount of time can be helpful.
- Encourage time to wind down: revision, rest and relaxation. Optimal learning comes when children have the time and space to relax after their revision, this means that children do not feel overstimulated and they have greater levels of satisfaction in what they have achieved. Setting aside relaxation time also means that there is more time to work through any anxieties. Anxiety tends to be worst at night-time which can create issues for night-time routines and sleep.
- Let them know that their feelings are valid and normal: sometimes we all lack motivation or self-belief but being listened to can have an enormous impact especially when we are praised for our attempts.
- Factor in 30 minutes after school: some children may benefit from staying at school for an extra 30 minutes to complete some of their prep rather than trying to do this at home. It is also a chance for children to approach teachers with any questions or worries that they may have. College staff will be happy to arrange a time to meet with your child to explore anything that they are finding challenging.



MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING:

Catmose College recognise the importance of supporting our students' mental health and addressing issues which impact upon it.

Beginning a new school year can be a time of anticipation and worry for many students as they adjust to their new routine, get to grips with College expectations and come into contact with new people and places.

More recently there has been a focus on the importance of communication and seeking help for challenging times and while this is certainly important, there are also some brilliant basics that are often overlooked:

Eat well: a steady supply of diverse foods which are nutrient rich positively impacts not only our physical body but our ability to regulate and sustain our mood. To achieve this, it is important that children eat regularly (especially breakfast) and bring a water bottle to school so that they can keep hydrated.

Sleep: changes in sleep can be one of the first indicators that our minds and bodies may be struggling so it is helpful to try and keep a sleep routine as much as possible. A sleep routine not only helps us to monitor changes but it provides our brains and bodies with important signals about rest and repair. Getting good quality sleeps helps with memory, attention, decision making and in coping with daily challenges and changes. One of the biggest factors for quality sleep is optimising a sleeping environment which is quiet, calm and free from devices.

Fresh air: whether walking to the shops or spending time at the park, getting out into fresh air and moving our bodies is central to well-being. Fresh air raises the level of oxygen to our brains and raises mood-boosting hormones such as serotonin.

Relaxation without screens: constant exposure to information, lights and sounds can lead our minds and bodies to feel overwhelmed and overstimulated. By reducing time on screens, we can reduce stress and anxiety and increase the time spent having quality time by ourselves or with the people who are most important to us.

Hobbies and interests: hobbies and interests have a huge impact on our mental health simply because we are engaging in something we find enjoyable and rewarding. Hobbies and interests can be useful distractions as well as fantastic ways to enhance our self-esteem. Catmose College provide electives on Wednesday afternoons which provides a fantastic way to try new things and potentially develop a new hobby or interest.



SOURCES OF ADDITIONAL HELP:

Whatever your experience or situation, your Local Authority is a great place to find additional help and support for your child and family. Early Help and Family Help teams in particular offer a great range of support services.

The Local Authority for your area will also have a range of services available for children aged 0-19 and their families. For more information about the Local Authority where you live, please follow the weblinks below.

Rutland County Council:

<https://www.rutland.gov.uk/rutland-information-service/send-local-offer/support-families>

Leicestershire County Council:

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs-and-disability/where-to-start-with-send/what-is-the-local-offer>

Lincolnshire County Council:

<https://www.lincsfamilydirectory.org.uk/kb5/lincs/fsd/localoffer.page?familychannel=2>

Northamptonshire County Council:

<https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/>