

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/2026/09/Catmose-College-Child-Protection-September-2026.pdf>
- Rutland and District Schools' Federation Safeguarding Policy - <https://www.rutlandfederation.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/Federation-Student-Safeguarding-Policy-September-2026.pdf>

A very warm welcome to all our students and families as we begin a new school year.

We hope that everyone has enjoyed a restful summer break and everyone had the opportunity to spend quality time with family and friends. Whether your summer was filled with adventures, holidays, hobbies or simply a chance to recharge, we are delighted to welcome you back for another exciting year of learning and new opportunities.

A special welcome to our new Year 7 students and their families as they join our College community. Starting secondary College is a significant milestone, bringing new opportunities, new friendships and new experiences. It is natural to feel a mixture of excitement and nerves, but we are committed to ensuring that every student feels safe, supported and valued as they settle into school life.

Safeguarding remains at the heart of everything we do. Our aim is to work in partnership with parents and carers to help young people thrive, stay safe and develop the confidence to make positive choices both in and out of College.

In this edition of our safeguarding newsletter, we share information and guidance on some key areas affecting young people today, including consent, healthy relationships, online safety, outdoor safety, parties and supervision. We hope you find the information useful and that it provides opportunities for meaningful conversations at home.

We look forward to a successful year ahead and thank you for your ongoing support.



START OF YEAR REMINDERS

As we begin a new academic year, we would like to ask all parents and carers to help us ensure that our records are accurate and up to date. Having the correct information enables us to communicate effectively and respond quickly if your child requires support.

Contact Details

Please ensure that the College has:

- Current home address details.
- Up-to-date telephone numbers.
- Email addresses for parents and carers.
- Emergency contact information.

If any of your details have changed over the summer, please notify the College as soon as possible via email office@catmosecollege.com

Medical Information

Please let us know if there have been any changes to your child's:

- Medical conditions.
- Allergies.
- Medication requirements.
- Healthcare plans.

Up-to-date medical information is essential to help us keep students safe whilst in College.

Changes in Family Circumstances

If there have been any significant changes to family circumstances, living arrangements or court orders, please inform the College.

We recognise that many of our students live across more than one household. Unless the College has been informed of legal restrictions, we will seek to share relevant information with all parents who hold parental responsibility. Keeping us informed of any changes helps us ensure that communication is accurate, appropriate and in the best interests of your child.

Attendance and Punctuality

Good attendance is closely linked to wellbeing, progress and achievement. We encourage all students to start the year positively by attending College regularly and arriving on time each day.

Students should pass through the turnstiles before 8:40am, please ensure that your child brings their College ID card every day. Absences should be reported to studentabsence@catmosecollege.com

Mobile Phones

From September 2026, students in Year 7 will not be permitted to bring a smartphone onto site. Year 7 students may bring a simple phone only. This approach will apply to all future cohorts annually until the College is smartphone free.

During the College day, any mobile phone must be switched off, stored inside the blazer pocket and remain unseen on the College site. Exceptions may be made for substantial medical reasons and must be agreed in advance. A parent whose child may need to access a mobile phone should contact Client Services to agree the parameters of use.

Mobile phones used or seen on the College site will be confiscated immediately and will require parent collection.

Working Together

We value the strong partnerships we have with our families and recognise the important role parents and carers play in supporting their children's education, wellbeing and safety. If you have any questions, concerns or information you feel the College should be aware of, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

CONSENT AND HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Understanding consent is one of the most important aspects of keeping young people safe.

At its core, consent is about recognising that every person has the right to make decisions about their own life, choices, feelings, possessions, information, time, relationships and body. It is about respecting the fact that other people may have different preferences, boundaries and opinions, and that these should be acknowledged and valued.

Commonly we hear of consent in the context of health, privacy and relationships, however children encounter consent every day and in a multitude of ways. For example:

- Choosing whether to share personal information.
- Deciding if a photograph can be taken or shared.
- Lending belongings to others.
- Spending time with particular friends.
- Choosing whether to participate in activities.
- Setting boundaries in friendships and relationships.
- Determining what happens to their own body and personal space.

Teaching consent helps young people understand both their own rights and the rights of others. It encourages empathy, respect, responsibility and effective communication.

Consent is often described as saying "yes" or "no", but in reality, many people find it difficult to communicate so directly. Young people should understand that consent is not simply the absence of a "no". It is about whether someone is freely and willingly agreeing.

What Young People Need to Understand:

Consent means that a person:

- Has a genuine choice.
- Feels able to freely communicate
- Is listened to and respected.
- Can change their mind at any point.
- Should never be pressured, manipulated or forced into agreeing.
- Statements such as: "Whatever", "if you want to", "later", "I don't mind" etc. is not consent.
- Silence is not consent.
- Laughter and smiling are not consent.

Golden rules for Consent:

Freely Given

- A person should never feel pressured, manipulated, threatened, guilt-tripped or coerced into agreeing to something.

Enthusiastic

Consent should be an active and willing "yes", not a reluctant agreement.

Statements such as:

- "I'm not sure..."
- "If you want to."
- "I don't really mind." should not be treated as consent. If someone appears uncertain, uncomfortable or hesitant, it is important to stop and check in.

Informed

- People should understand what they are agreeing to and any potential consequences of their decision.

Specific

- Agreeing to one thing does not automatically mean agreeing to something else.

Ongoing

- Consent is not a one-time event. People can change their minds at any point, even if they previously agreed.

Respectful

- When someone sets a boundary or expresses discomfort, that choice should be respected without challenge, criticism or pressure.
- The question should not be, "Did they say no?" The question should be, "Did they genuinely want to?"

Teaching children and young people to look for enthusiasm, comfort and willingness helps them develop respectful relationships, understand boundaries and recognise when someone may not feel able to express their true feelings.

What Does Enthusiastic Consent Look Like?

Enthusiastic consent is when somebody clearly and willingly wants to take part. There is no pressure, persuasion or uncertainty involved.

Examples might include:

- "Yes, I'd love to."
- "That sounds great."
- "I'd like to do that."
- "I'm happy with that."
- "Absolutely!"
- Someone actively engaging and appearing comfortable, confident and interested.

A child's ability to understand consent often develops through everyday experiences. Conversations about respecting opinions, accepting disappointment, listening to others, understanding boundaries and handling rejection all help young people develop a healthy understanding of consent and respectful relationships.

Here are some examples of conversation starters:

- Have you ever agreed to something because you didn't want to disappoint someone?
- How can you tell if somebody genuinely wants to do something?
- How do good friends respond when someone says they don't want to do something?
- What would you do if your friends wanted you to join in with something that didn't feel right?
- Should you ask before posting a photograph of someone online? Why?
- How would you feel if somebody shared something about you without asking?
- What should happen if someone changes their mind?

Helpful links:

Brook: Brook provides high-quality information for young people and parents around relationships, consent, communication, respect and healthy decision-making. Their resources encourage young people to think critically about boundaries and mutual respect. <https://www.brook.org.uk>

Childline: A valuable resource that many young people feel comfortable accessing independently. Includes information about relationships, consent, peer pressure and how to seek support. Parents may find it useful to explore some of the content alongside their child. <https://www.childline.org.uk>

NSPCC: Healthy Relationships: Practical advice for parents on discussing relationships, respect, boundaries and consent with young people. Includes conversation starters and guidance on recognising healthy and unhealthy relationships. <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/advice-for-families/healthy-relationships/>

PARTIES, ALCOHOL AND SUPERVISION

As children get older, social gatherings and parties become increasingly common. While many events are enjoyable and well-managed, risks can increase significantly when young people gather without appropriate adult knowledge or supervision.

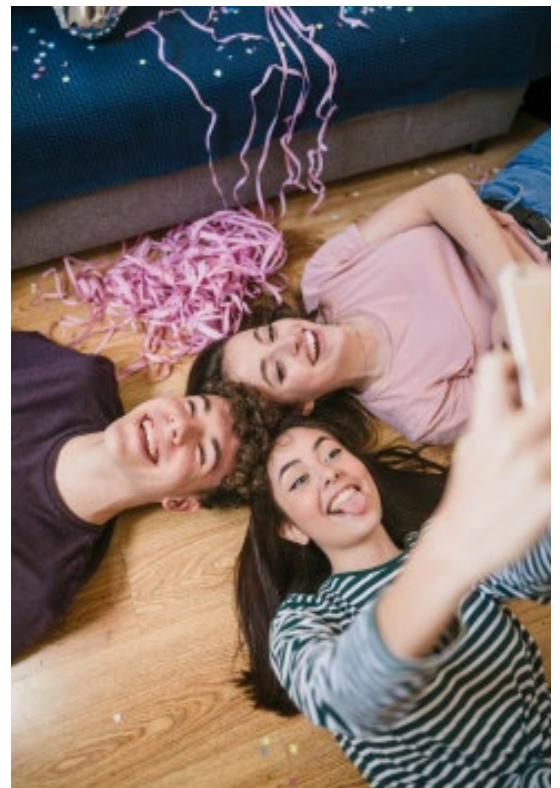
Alcohol, in particular, can impair judgement and increase vulnerability, leading young people to make decisions they would not normally make.

Potential concerns include:

- Conflict between young people.
- Risk taking and impulsive behaviour
- Unsafe situations developing quickly.
- Non-consensual touch
- Social Media concerns
- Children becoming vulnerable when away from trusted adults.
- Peer pressure
- Difficulties accessing support when problems arise.

Before your child attends a gathering, always know:

- Who is hosting the event?
- Where is the event?
- Will responsible adults be present? Who are they?
- Do the host's parents know about the gathering?
- How many young people are expected?
- What time does the event finish?
- What are the expectations for people attending?



- How can they contact you if they need help?
- Consider agreeing on a code word or text message your child can use if they want collecting without having to explain the situation in front of their peers.
- Young people should know they can always contact home if they feel unsafe, uncomfortable or worried, without fear of being judged.

We ask that parents exercise high levels of caution in relation to alcohol at gatherings for young people. Across the UK, if someone is under 18 it's against the law:

- For someone to sell them alcohol
- To buy or try to buy alcohol
- For an adult to buy or try to buy alcohol for them
- To drink alcohol in licensed premises, like a pub or restaurant (although there is a limited exception for 16 and 17 year olds).
- Anyone supplying alcohol to someone under 18 could face a criminal record and could have to pay a substantial fine. This applies to people running or working in a pub or shop, a parent or guardian, or anyone else.
- Under 18s caught drinking alcohol in public can be stopped, fined or arrested by police. The police can confiscate alcohol from someone, no matter what their age, if they believe it has been, or will be drunk by someone under 18 in a public place.
- Parents and guardians can also be held responsible by the courts if their child repeatedly gets into trouble through alcohol possession or use.



STAYING SAFE OUTDOORS:

Following the exceptionally warm summer, many young people have spent more time outdoors enjoying the independence of meeting friends in local parks, fields, wooded areas and dog-walking routes. As we move into the new school year, these locations often continue to be popular meeting places after College and at weekends.

Our Community Safety partners have recently highlighted concerns regarding groups of young people gathering in secluded outdoor locations, including reports of camps being created and fires being lit.

Many young people see these spaces as somewhere to socialise, relax and enjoy a sense of adventure. However, without appropriate planning and supervision, these activities can present significant risks:

- Fires spread quickly, particularly in dry conditions. Burns and injuries are more likely to occur.
- Accidents in remote or difficult-to-access areas reduces help in an emergency.
- Pressure to engage in unsafe or risky behaviour.
- Increased vulnerability when spending time in isolated locations.

How Parents Can Help

As children become more independent, it is important that they develop the skills to assess risk and make safe decisions. Young people often respond best when conversations focus on safety and responsibility rather than simply being told where they can and cannot go.

Parents and carers may wish to be mindful if their child:

- Is reluctant to say where they are going or who they are meeting.
- Regularly spends long periods in secluded locations.
- Returns home significantly later than agreed.
- Is evasive when asked about their plans.
- Appears to be associating with much older young people.
- Frequently leaves home with large bags, camping equipment or materials that could be used to start fires.
- Appears secretive about social media messages or group chats linked to outdoor gatherings.
- Is more likely to take risks when with certain friendship groups.
- Dismisses safety concerns or describes dangerous activities as “just a laugh” or “everyone does it”.

These signs do not necessarily mean that a young person is in danger. However, they can provide an opportunity for a calm and supportive conversation about safety, responsibility and decision-making.

As children move through secondary school, they need increasing independence, but they also need clear boundaries. Boundaries help young people understand expectations, develop responsibility and stay safe while exploring greater freedom.

Every family is different, but it can be helpful to agree some basic expectations around meeting friends outdoors.

- Whether certain locations are out of bounds without adult supervision.
- What time they should return home.
- How often they should check in.
- What to do if plans change.
- How they will get home safely.
- Who they should contact in an emergency.

Create a “No Questions Asked” Safety Plan

Many young people make better choices when they know they can seek help without fear of an immediate punishment or lecture.

Consider agreeing:

“If you ever feel unsafe, worried, stranded or uncomfortable, call me and I will come and get you. We can talk about what happened later.”

This approach encourages young people to prioritise their safety rather than avoiding contact because they fear getting into trouble.

