

Rothbury First School Safeguarding Newsletter July 2024



WHO TO CONTACT IF YOU HAVE A CONCERN ABOUT A CHILD

If you are worried about a child's safety please do not hesitate to contact the Designated Safeguarding Leads straight away.

The following members of staff are Designated Safeguarding Leads at Rothbury First School
Mrs C Auld
Mrs H Duffield

Our safeguarding governor is Diane Pringle

They can be contacted on 01669 620283 or via email

For further information on safeguarding at our school, please look on the safeguarding page on the school website.

[RFS Safeguarding](#)

CHILD TO ADULT VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

Child to Adult Abuse can take many forms including physical, verbal, economic, emotional, digital, coercion and control. Many parents will experience this form of Domestic Abuse. Child to adult abuse increased significantly during the lockdowns of the Covid pandemic in 2020. It is also known that holiday periods can cause additional strain on relationships between children/adolescents resulting in an increase in the frequency and severity of behaviours.

What is Child to adult violence?

Children and adolescents being abusive and violent towards parents and family members is a serious issue and evidence suggests it is increasing. The abuse and/or violence can be carried out by sons and daughters against mothers, fathers, grandparents, siblings and carers.



Information taken from Northumberland County Council website

It is easy for parents/caregivers to feel guilty and ashamed when children are abusive and violent. However recent research shows that Child to Adult Violence is common - about 20% of teenagers are violent to their parents and about 10% seriously so. Sometimes peer groups, wider society, media or a violent or absent parent will have been much more influential than you. Rather than focussing on and worrying how you are part of the problem, it is much more productive to think about how you can become part of the solution. Sometimes there is no apparent reason why it happens. It can be hard to find ways to keep everyone safe, including the child or adolescent whose behaviour is posing a risk to positive family relationships and safety. It can be difficult to know how to make things better.

Violence is not the same as anger.

Anger is an emotion.

Violence is about Power and Control

Violence and abuse is any behaviour used by the young person towards any family member, with the aim of controlling, dominating, threatening or coercing them (persuading someone to do something using force or threats).



How do I know if it is happening?

Listen to your own warning bells. You know when things are not right so go with your "gut" feelings and thoughts. You may have experienced child or adolescent violence:

- You feel afraid of upsetting your child and you change your behaviour to avoid it
- You overcompensate because you want to protect them
- You are 'walking on eggshells' trying to predict your child's wants and needs
- Your child punches, pushes, hits, throws things, damages yours or other family members possessions or hurts you or their siblings
- Your child threatens to hurt you, themselves or others (such as children, family, friends, pets) if you do not meet his or her demands
- Your child ridicules or tries to humiliate or embarrass you and your family or friends
- Your child threatens you that he or she will leave home if you do not do what they want
- Your child blames you for his or her behaviour

Despair and isolation You may feel:

- Totally alone and isolated
- Unsupported and solely responsible for your situation
- You have 'hit the wall' and that nothing can help
- Hopeless and helpless because you cannot bring the situation under control
- Totally unsupported by a lack of services or information
- Despair at not having a harmonious family life
- You cannot talk or think about anything else except your child
- Your child's behaviour seems to be a replica of your abusive partner's (current or former) violence towards you

Fear You may feel:

- Like you are living in fear, both in the present and of what might happen in future when your child is bigger and stronger than you
- 'Unsafe' in your own home

Shame and humiliation You may feel:

- Like a failure and experience a great deal of shame
- Confused about where you went wrong and questioning your parenting abilities
- You are entirely responsible for your child's violent behaviour
- You are to blame and are a 'bad' parent

Loss You may feel:

- Heartbroken and a huge sense of loss because the child you used to know, love and enjoy, seems to be driving a wedge in the relationship
- Grief if your child has had to leave home
- The loss of friends and family who do not want or know how to assist you
- Worried your child will leave home and sever the relationship entirely

Relationship stress You may feel:

- Child or adolescent violence often leads to arguments between adults in the home, as to how the behaviour should be dealt with. You may have different ideas on what helps or on what caused the violence. This can place enormous stress on family and partner relationships
- You may hate it when people give you solutions, as they do not know what you are going through
- You may feel undermined by your child's other parent / caregiver who may take your child's side (particularly if you are a sole parent)

Sibling concern You may feel:

- Other children may be affected by their sibling's violence. Many children or adolescents who are violent to parents are also violent to their siblings. Siblings may be unsafe because of the violence
- You may not have the time or energy to give to other siblings because you are dealing with the violent child or young person
- Your child may also use drugs or alcohol or engage in illegal activities. This may mean that their siblings are unsafe or at risk of harm

Health issues You may feel:

- You may be depressed or anxious and this may impact on your health and well-being
- You may experience insomnia, physical illness and fatigue

What can you do if your child or adolescent is being violent?

- Talk about the violence with someone you trust
- Contact services for help and advice.
- Consider making a safety plan if you feel this will help you and your family feel safe
- If you are in fear for your own or another person's safety – call the Police
- You may feel that calling the police is totally unacceptable. No parent/caregiver likes to consider this possibility Explaining to your child that you are considering calling the Police can indicate to them that you will not put up with their violence and abuse. While the police will ultimately make their decisions based on the risks, they should listen to you, support you, offer an authoritative response to your child and avoid criminalising them where possible.

Useful strategies

It is best to start making changes when you are feeling strong and if possible, supported by others. A good place to start is with actions, expectations and consequences.

ACTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

- Be clear in your own mind about what behaviour is reasonable and unreasonable. Write this down to remind yourself.
- Use 'I' statements – 'I expect' 'I need you to' 'I will/will not'
- Give clear boundaries and stick to them – be consistent
- Your child will try to negotiate on their terms and wear you down. Be aware that children know which of your buttons to push in order to get a reaction. Try to recognise when they are doing this and to avoid escalating arguments, move away from the situation
- Explain to your child that you love them but will not tolerate being abused.

CONSEQUENCES

- Consequences must be relevant and important to your child
- Decide how and when you can use these consequences
- Explain to your child that if they do not meet your expectations you will put the stated consequences into action and ensure you follow this through
- Consequences will be very specific to each individual child or adolescent
- Consequences should be manageable and act as a deterrent to the child or adolescent so that over a period of time they stop their unreasonable behaviours
- Consequences should help build respect. They can include: repairing damage they have caused, withdrawing privileges, curfews, talking about their actions and the effect it has had upon others, requesting they take responsibility for their actions
- Ensure the consequences are appropriate to the behaviour (that they are neither too strict or too soft and that they are for an appropriate period of time)
- Your words lose all impact if the child does not believe you will follow through
- Choose your battles – decide what behaviours you are willing to accept and stick to your decision.

WHO SHOULD I CONTACT?

If you have any concerns about what is happening in your family, there are services who will treat you with respect, ensure confidentiality and provide advice and support to talk things through with you.

If you are worried about a child or adults welfare who lives in Northumberland contact

Onecall 01670 536 400 (24/7) or email onecall@northumbria.nhs.uk

ALWAYS FOLLOW THE WATER SAFETY CODE



Whenever you are around water:

STOP AND THINK

Take time to assess your surroundings.

Look for the dangers and always research local signs and advice.



STAY TOGETHER

When around water always go with friends or family.

Swim at a lifeguarded venue.



In an emergency:

CALL 999

Ask for the Fire and Rescue Service when inland and the Coastguard if at the coast.

Don't enter the water to rescue.



FLOAT

Fall in or become tired - stay calm, float on your back and call for help.

Throw something that floats to somebody that has fallen in.



CEOP EDUCATION #SaferSummerTogether

From 15th July, CEOP Education will be launching #SaferSummerTogether on social media. Six weeks of tips and activities helping parents and carers to keep their children safer online this summer and beyond.

Look out for our **Tip Tuesday** and **Family Friday** posts focused on these weekly themes:

- Week 1: online gaming
- Week 2: socialising online
- Week 3: sharing pictures and videos
- Week 4: protecting personal privacy
- Week 5: harmful content online
- Week 6: getting help

- Following us on Facebook (CEOP Education) and X (@CEOPEducation)
- Following #SaferSummerTogether
- Sharing #SaferSummerTogether posts with parents and carers

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.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about ONLINE TROLLING

The term "Trolling" refers to sending hurtful or provocative comments – often done anonymously online – to provoke a reaction or cause emotional distress. Anonymity can embolden people into saying things they wouldn't dare say in person. Euro 2024 and other tournaments tend to put an emphasis on this, with the abuse of both players and fans often increasing during such events.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

ESCALATION
Many trolls begin with silly, banal comments before moving on to a broader pattern of offensive messages and posts. They can also turn their attention very quickly to a new target if they grow bored with an existing one, which makes engaging with one fruitless at best – and potentially dangerous at worst.

HIDEING BEHIND A SCREEN
Because trolls tend to use anonymous profiles, they enjoy a lack of accountability. This also means they'll often have multiple profiles, potentially switching between them regularly or posting across several of them at the same time, making a target feel as though there's no escape. After all, once you block one account, what's to stop them reappearing elsewhere?

24/7 CONTACT
The internet has given us the ability to remain in contact at any time, from almost anywhere in the world. A troll having the ability to reach you whenever they want can leave you feeling like their abuse is unavoidable. While they don't see you in real life, they can message you at any time, reach out to your peers online and even try to discover your personal information to scare you.

HATE SPEECH
Sadly, many trolls resort to spewing racial slurs, homophobic attacks and awful stereotypes, as these often stand the best chance of causing emotional harm. This can add a hefty degree of weight to their attacks, moving from what might charitably be described as "teasing" into a genuine hate crime. After Euro 2020, three England footballers were racially abused, resulting in several prison sentences.

IMPACT ON VICTIMS
It's not uncommon for the victims of trolls to shut down their accounts, disappear from public life, and try to stay out of the crosshairs for a time – with some even leaving social media forever. This can have a severe impact on children and young people's connections to friends and the world at large, and may not even actually stop the troll. The victims' families, for example, may have online profiles that trolls can still access.

NORMALISATION OF TROLLING
It is, regrettably, inevitable that some people will go too far in their criticisms or comments, both online and in the real world. This can lead to many people seeing trolls and their abuse as part and parcel of social media – an inherent risk of interacting with others online. This doesn't mean, however, that it should be considered "normal" or even tolerated.

Advice for Parents & Educators


USE PARENTAL CONTROLS
While social media platforms (where most trolling tends to happen) aren't always helpful when responding to abusive behaviour, parents can set up screen time limits, so children only get to use certain apps at certain times. There's always the potential for trolling to occur anyway – such as friends showing screenshots to one another – but this would minimise the likelihood of children seeing it.

DON'T ENGAGE WITH ABUSE
A well-known adage on social media is "don't feed the trolls". Fundamentally, if a child identifies a potential troll online, it's best not to engage with that individual directly. Instead, consider setting up a log to gather evidence for reporting them later on, including screenshots and quotes where possible.

ENCOURAGE EMPATHY
While every professional athlete aspires to maintain high standards, it's important to separate the player from the person. A player's performance doesn't make them worthy of abuse, and that can often be forgotten by younger children who simply see the colour of the shirt without considering the person wearing it. For all the rivalries between teams, it's essential children understand that players are still human beings, with families and lives outside of sport.

BLOCK AND REPORT
While anonymous accounts make it difficult to block trolls permanently – or even for very long – it's still good practice to help children learn to control who can engage with them online. It's not worth "feeding the trolls", and it's more helpful to block them, report them, and try to move on. Blocking and reporting is an anonymous process, too, so there'll be no indication of who specifically blew the whistle.

Meet Our Expert
Lloyd Coombes is the Editor in Chief of GGRecon, and has been working in the gaming and tech industry for five years. A long-time fan of Arsenal, he's a parent who understands the importance of online safety. He's also a tech and fitness writer whose work has been published on sites including IGN, TechRadar and many more.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

Source: See full reference list on guide page at nationalcollege.com/guides/online-trolling

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