



Every Student Thriving

6 February 2026

Dear Parent/Carer,

As indicated last week I thought a few musings on young people and phones may be worth pondering. The DFE are clearly sending out a more direct message to schools re: phones in school. This is welcome as it has become an issue that needs a national steer and although initially giving schools autonomy around the issue was sensible we are now in different territory. But 'schools' cover everything from nursery to 6th form and as young people move through the system they do become more independent as a result phones are used for bus passes, payments in shops and medical apps are utilised to gauge health issues.

It is also worth noting that it is hard to find articles, research, or studies that include the voice of our young people. I would not advocate the use of mobile phones in school at all and at John Colet we are clear that they cannot be seen, heard or used but the bigger picture sits beyond our walls and is embedded in society as a whole. There is a disconnect between how adults perceive the use of mobile technology and how young people view and use it. This TOOLED UP article may be of some use in considering the wider picture . You can find it [HERE](#).

RESET WEEK: With poor weather conditions, Christmas now well behind us and continued dingy evenings comes more challenging conditions in the school environment regarding basic behaviours. This has led to some slippage in key standards from a minority of students. As a result next week will be a RESET week. All activities during tutorial time will be suspended for the week and instead tutors will be checking the basics : Uniform, phones in bags, PE kit on a PE day, equipment et al. Sweating the small stuff is vital in a school environment.

We have also noted a small number of students talking under or over the teacher during lessons. This will be a key focus in lessons next week and I will be asking staff to warn, wait and if this is not impactful to issue a CI for talking out of turn. We will then examine next week's data to identify students who are prone to this disruptive and disrespectful habit.

STASH CANS : On a safeguarding note I need to inform you about STASH CANS. There are notionally some students who are potentially concealing contraband such as vapes in 'stash cans'. Stash cans are real branded deodorant (or drinks) cans (Lynx and Impulse being two popular versions) that have false bottoms in which to store things - in some cases they even spray a bit of deodorant when tested. Be aware.

YEAR 11 SIXTH FORM APPLICATIONS: whether you are one of the many who have already expressed interest or if you are yet to apply, formal applications are now welcome to join our JCS Sixth Form in September. Option blocks are available to view and courses can be selected and confirmed on the Applicaa portal. The deadline is 6pm on **Friday 27 February**.

Finally one of our sixth form students would like parents/carers to engage with a very short survey for her EPQ project that explores the theme of gender in religion. You can find the survey [HERE](#).

Take Care - Ian Brierly

Ready - Respectful - Responsible - Kind - Authentic



Every Student Thriving

REMINDERS & NOTICES

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Year 10 Exams Start	25.02.26
Year 11 Consultation Meeting	26.02.26
Sixth form application deadline	27.02.26

SAFEGUARDING LEADS & INFORMATION

If parents have any concerns about this practice or, believe that any young person at John Colet School might be at risk, then please do contact one of the members of our Safeguarding Team via - safeguarding@johncolet.co.uk

The DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) is Mr B Crawford

VACANCIES

- Casual Invigilators are required, full details are on our vacancies page.
- We are also looking to recruit a Governance Professional.
- If there are other roles not currently advertised please register your interest via MyNewTerm (linked on our website)

Please check our website for further details [here](#).

Post 16 SEND Opportunities Showcase

Thursday 26 February 2026
3.30pm - 6pm
The Gateway, Gatehouse Road
Aylesbury HP19 8FF

Buckinghamshire Children & Young People's Partnership
Working together to reach our goals

Come along to find out more about the different programmes offered by a range of Post 16 Specialist Providers for young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

Around 14 providers will be showcasing in a calm and spacious environment with a wide range of opportunities on offer including:

- A range of vocational pathways and qualifications
- Personal development and individualised therapeutic programmes
- Supported internships and employability programmes

Suitable for young people from year 9 upwards with an active EHCP.

No need to register – young people, parents/carers and professionals all welcome to drop by and chat to the providers.

Free parking available onsite.

Buckinghamshire Children & Young People's Partnership
Working together to reach our goals

Every Student Thriving

PARENT SUPPORT : Click [HERE](#) for Higher Res PDF

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about MENTAL HEALTH MISINFORMATION ONLINE

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

A research study by Ofcom revealed that children aged 9-15 increasingly use online platforms like TikTok for mental health advice, with 50% relying on social media for information. Unverified medical content online is concerning, with the potential to cause confusion, anxiety, or incorrect self-diagnoses. This guide provides expert strategies to help parents and educators tackle misinformation effectively and ensure safer digital experiences for young people.

POPULAR ONLINE SOURCES

Platforms like TikTok and Instagram are two of the main sources of young people's mental health content. Videos and posts frequently feature unqualified influencers, contributing to misinformation, myths, and oversimplifications. While appealing to young audiences, this unverified content can distort perceptions, and create unrealistic expectations and misunderstandings about mental health conditions.

RISK OF SELF-DIAGNOSIS

Social media's misleading content encourages young people to self-diagnose complex mental health conditions inaccurately. Misdiagnosis can exacerbate anxiety, cause unnecessary worry, or delay essential professional intervention. This has the potential to escalate manageable conditions into more significant mental health issues requiring comprehensive clinical support.

LACK OF FILTERS

Social media platforms struggle to filter misinformation effectively, allowing false content to spread widely and quickly. Without proper guidance, young viewers may not discern fact from fiction, potentially internalising inaccurate beliefs about mental health. This can negatively influence their decisions about seeking professional help or managing mental wellbeing.

IMPACTFUL PAST TRENDS

Historically, online mental health misinformation has led to harmful trends, including inappropriate coping strategies or sensationalised symptoms. For example, past TikTok trends on self-harm or anxiety 'hacks' have spread damaging advice, underscoring the risk when misinformation is not promptly addressed or corrected by knowledgeable adults.

MISLEADING CLINICAL TERMS

Online trends often include the misuse of clinical terms, such as 'trauma' or 'OCD', making serious conditions seem trivial or inaccurately understood. Such misinformation can diminish empathy, and lead young people to misunderstand mental health complexities, potentially preventing them from identifying real mental health issues in themselves or others.

REPLACING PROFESSIONAL HELP

Frequent reliance on digital content can deter young people from seeking professional mental health care, substituting expert support with unverified online advice. This substitution can prolong issues, complicate recovery, and reduce the effectiveness of future professional interventions, ultimately impacting overall mental health and wellbeing negatively.

Advice for Parents & Educators

MONITOR ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

Regularly review and discuss a young person's online activity, providing appropriate guidance on discerning accurate content. Tools such as parental controls or co-viewing content can help mediate exposure to harmful misinformation, facilitating safer digital habits and informed critical thinking about mental health.

SCHOOL-HOME COLLABORATION

Strengthen collaboration with educators to integrate digital literacy into the school curriculum, emphasising misinformation awareness. Jointly delivered education sessions on identifying and responding to misinformation can significantly improve pupils' ability to critically assess mental health content, supporting their mental wellbeing effectively both online and offline.

IDENTIFY RELIABLE SOURCES

Teach young people to critically evaluate mental health content by checking credentials, source authenticity, and evidence-based information. Encourage them to refer to trusted medical or educational platforms and to consult healthcare professionals for clarification. This reduces young people's reliance on potentially harmful or misleading online sources.

ENCOURAGE OPEN DIALOGUE

Foster a non-judgemental environment where young people feel comfortable discussing online content. Regularly talking about their online experiences and perceived mental health concerns helps clarify misunderstandings, mitigates misinformation, and builds trust, thereby enhancing their resilience and digital literacy. Model situations where you have sought advice from accurate sources and not solely relied on social media for health advice.

Meet Our Expert

Anna Bateman is Director of Halcyon Education Ltd, Director for Wellbeing and Family Services at Leigh Trust, and lead expert for mental health at The National College. Anna specialises in strategic mental health solutions for schools, supporting educators and families to improve resilience, emotional literacy, and overall wellbeing for children across the UK.



The National College®



Every Student Thriving

TOOLED UP



Digital parenting can feel like one of the toughest parts of raising children today.

The online world is moving fast and is not always designed with children's wellbeing in mind. So how do we **digitally upskill** and keep young people safe while still empowering them to learn, connect and thrive? And how do we **set healthy boundaries** that **protect** them **from digital harms**, especially in an online environment increasingly shaped by algorithms that influence what children see, think and engage with?

Tooled Up has a range of practical resources to help parents navigate this complex and ever-changing landscape with confidence.

For parents of younger children, one of the biggest decisions is when and how to introduce smartphones. This is not a small step and it deserves careful thought. Our resource [Phones and Devices](#) is designed for busy parents who want clear **guidance on setting boundaries**, rules and expectations around digital technology, helping families establish healthy online habits from the start.

As children grow and spend more time online, another important and often invisible influence comes into play: algorithms. Algorithms are not designed for people but for use on people, learning from what we watch, like and click on. They shape what children see online, the choices presented to them, and can influence how they think and behave. [Developing Algorithmic Literacy](#) shares some of the best evidence-based resources designed to **help young people navigate and understand online algorithms.**

For a balanced update on both the digital risks and benefits young people are now exposed to, **watch** our webinar [Digital Risks and Harms Affecting Teens: Tips for Parents](#) where forensic psychologist Dr Aiman El Asam explores the emerging challenges.

Ready - Respectful - Responsible - Kind - Authentic



Every Student Thriving

COMMUNITY SUPPORT



FRIDAYS

AYLESBURY

CLASS TIMES AND YEAR GROUPS:

17:00 - 18:00	RECEPTION TO YEAR 4
18:00 - 19:00	YEAR 5 TO YEAR 10

VENUE: JOHN COLET SCHOOL, WHARF RD, WENDOVER, AYLESBURY, HP22 6HF

- ✓ 1000+ children attending our development centres on a weekly basis
- ✓ Tailored coaching programmes designed by ex and current professional academy coaches
- ✓ Matches against pro clubs for selected players
- ✓ Over 75 children signed to pro clubs

Surface - 4G Astro

Must wear plastic moulded football boots

CONTACT US NOW TO BOOK A FREE TRIAL +44 7498 608268



Free Parenting Programmes

Our parenting programmes will help you develop new and existing parenting skills, offer advice and build your confidence as a parent.

Proud to be part of

Family Hub Network

Buckinghamshire



Scan me

LITTLE TALKERS

18 months to 3 years old

- Focuses on children's speech, language and communication skills and how parents can promote them
- Designed by Buckinghamshire Speech and Language Therapy

PARENT PUZZLE

0 to 5 years old

- Understand challenges and how to address them
- How to support your child's growth for calmer parenting

TALKING TEENS

11 to 18 years old

- Focuses on relationships within the family, communication, negotiating, decision-making and strategies to reduce conflict
- Learn more about teenagers and their needs

THE NURTURING PROGRAMME

3 to 11 years old

- Help deal with the challenges that come with parenting
- Think about what we do, why we do it and how it makes us feel

BALANCEABILITY

2.5 to 5 years old

- Accredited learn to cycle programme
- Develops confidence, spatial awareness, dynamic balance, and how to ride without stabilisers

KEEPING YOUR CHILD IN MIND

All ages

- Work together in ways that support growing children and a calmer family life
- Explore the conflict between parents/carers both in a current or previous relationship

01296 383293

familyinfo@buckinghamshire.gov.uk