



Safeguarding briefing March 2024

At last the sun is making an appearance, coupled with the lighter evenings means we are able to get out and about. I think we are all aware that some young people find the dark winter months quite challenging, as they cannot get out as easily to see friends and take part in many external activities that are so important for their mental health and well-being. Here is a round up from the last 2 weeks of key safety messages and online briefings that I felt were pertinent to young people but useful for parents to have further insight into.

Spice vape: Warning as nine collapse in Greater Manchester

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GREATER MANCHESTER DRUG ALERTS PANEL

Chemicals tested in the liquids were found to contain the same chemicals found in Spice

Nine young people have collapsed after unwittingly using a vaping liquid containing the synthetic drug Spice, it has emerged.

Full details of this article is found following this link:

[Spice vape: Warning as nine collapse in Greater Manchester - BBC News](#)

Health agencies have warned people to avoid products sold as "THC vape juice", "THC vape pens" or "THC oil".

Greater Manchester Drug Alerts Panel said it knew of six incidents since February where people had been taken to hospital after inhaling the drug.

Greater Manchester Police is investigating.

The vaping liquid, marketed as a "natural cannabis", has also been sold as "cannabis oil" or "cannabis vape juice", the panel said.

It was sold as both a 10ml bottle and a ready-filled cartridge.

Two incidents in the Oldham area led to five school-age children collapsing and being rushed to hospital.

Michael Linnell, who coordinates Greater Manchester Drug Alerts Panel, said the liquids contained the same chemicals as found in Spice.

- [Spice 'putting pressure' on police](#)
- [Police 'helpless' against drug Spice](#)
- [Child sick after 'spice sweets' sold](#)

Mobile phone articles:

Mobile phones a "rite of passage" for children, says schools minister

[Daily Mail](#) [Herald Scotland](#) [The Independent UK](#)

Getting a mobile phone between primary and secondary school has become a "rite of passage" for nearly all children, according to the schools minister. Damian Hinds welcomed the debate on primary school pupils' access to smartphones, stating that the government does not dictate when parents should buy them. The government recently issued guidance to schools in England to restrict mobile phone use during school hours. Hinds told MPs that almost everyone gets a mobile phone between Year 6 and Year 7, and that some children receive them even earlier. The Department for Education published non-statutory guidance for headteachers on banning phone use during lessons and break times. Ofcom officials also gave evidence to MPs on the impact of screen time on children, with the director of online safety strategy delivery suggesting that social media companies' age limits should be stricter.

Parents' phone addiction hinders children's reading habits

[The Times](#)

New research has found that the number of children reading for fun has fallen to its lowest level since monitoring began 20 years ago. The research, which was undertaken by the children's insight consultancy Beano Brain, found that over half of children were put off reading by their screen-addicted parents. Just 25% said their parents relaxed by picking up a book, while 56% said their parents would rather scroll through social media than read for pleasure. The research found that adults crushed youngsters' enthusiasm by pushing them towards books they "should" be reading, instead of the books, comics and graphic novels they liked. Over a third of children said they were not allowed to choose what they want to read, while one in four children said they were encouraged to read things they simply didn't want to. One in five said they felt judged and shamed by others on their reading choices, both at school (20%) and at home (18%).

The Anxious Generation: A terrifying assessment of the digital carnage

[Daily Telegraph](#)

Jonathan Haidt's book, *The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness*, highlights the damaging effects of smartphones and social media on children's mental health. Haidt argues that smartphones have fundamentally changed the way children interact, leading to a rise in anxiety, self-harm, and sociogenic illnesses. He recommends reforms such as more unsupervised play, no smartphones before high school, no social media before 16, and phone-free schools. While Haidt's assessment is alarming, there is hope that the next generation, known as Gen Alpha, may be better equipped to navigate this digital landscape. The book serves as a wake-up call for parents and offers evidence to support the need for action.



Dreaming of a decent night's sleep? 🤔🇸🇬

Many of us *are* – and it's a particularly pervasive problem for young people. Concerningly, research has suggested that around 70% of teens get less than the recommended 8–10 hours' sleep per night. The effects of poor-quality sleep on a developing mind, of course, can be harmful over a prolonged period.

Although a significant portion of under-18s struggle for shut eye, there is still plenty we can do to support them in getting the beneficial rest they need during those formative years. Compiled in conjunction with our friends at award-winning mental health charity Minds Ahead, this week's #WakeUpWednesday guide has tips on helping children to develop healthy sleeping habits 🇸🇬

Download the guide here: [healthy-sleeping-habits.pdf](#) or find it downloaded and attached to this mailing

Article - Navigating the Nuances of Social Media

If, like me, your teenager years were a very long time ago, it can be difficult to think like a teenager. But we can probably remember the difficulty of relationships, friendships and social approval. For many young people much of this is carried out online, and for parents/professionals this can be difficult to understand, it might feel secretive, which can cause concern.

'Through their eyes' is a mantra I use all the time, particularly when talking to students young and old. In other words, understanding what they are doing online and, most importantly, why.

Linda Kaye, Associate Head of Psychology at Edge Hill University has written a great article in The Conversation which gives a really good insight into how teenagers navigate the nuances of social media, and what adults can learn from them.

You can find the article [HERE](#).

[How teenagers navigate the nuances of social media – and what adults can learn from them \(theconversation.com\)](#)

For Parents and School Staff - What is Y99 chat?

After many years of concern, earlier this year the anonymous chat website Omegle was forced off the internet. But just because Omegle has gone, there are many more sites and apps to take its place. One of these sites is Y99 and whilst I'm not hearing too much about this it's one to keep your eyes and ears open for.