



SPRING TERM 2025

Pastoral and Safeguarding Newsletter

WHITBURN COFE ACADEMY

World Book Day

On **Thursday 6th March 2025**, for World Book Day, our Academy came to life as our students decorated their form room doors in the theme of a book. The effort was spectacular across the school. Students then all voted for their favourite door and took part in a quiz.



The winning 'door' was 11N – 'Welcome to Wonderland.'
Second place was 11R 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'
Third place was 12T – 'The Handmaid's Tale.'

WINNER!



11N

2nd place



11R

3rd place



12T

Dementia UK Charity Day

On Friday 28th March, students came to school in non-uniform to raise money for Dementia UK. We also held our ever-popular karaoke event over lunchtime. Students, as always, conducted themselves with maturity and the event was a huge success. Who knew we have so many talented vocalists and natural performers! We collectively raised **£1,755.60 for Dementia UK** – thank you to all who donated.



Year 7

Year 7 spent part of their Alternative Curriculum Day learning about the myths and legends of Whitburn and went on a trail around the village. They also spent some time at Whitburn Parish Church learning about the different ceremonies that take place.

Whilst out in the local community, our students behaved impeccably and were a credit to the school. Lorraine Hood from the Parish Church said "it was a pleasure and a privilege to have your students in the church"



Year 8

Newby Wiske

In March 72 Year 8 students attended Newby Wiske in North Yorkshire, accompanied by 8 staff. All students took part in activities including canoeing, vertical challenge, bushcraft, climbing, zip line and archery tag. The activities are designed to promote team work and increase confidence.

The activity staff were very complimentary of our students, their behaviour and attitude towards the activities. Our students showed resilience when being pushed out of their comfort zones.





Beamish Museum, Alternative Curriculum Day 2025

As part of Alternative Curriculum Day Year 8 visited Beamish, the Living Museum of the North. The aim of the day was to give the students a greater understanding of the history they are studying in school. They had opportunities to explore what life was like in the area for people throughout different eras. Students experienced life down the mine and a demonstration of the Davey Lamp.



Adventures Away from Home

A small number of Year 7 and 8 girls were invited for some outdoor activities with Simonside Outdoor Adventure. One group went for a walk around Peshaw Monument

and did some map reading, whilst the other group spent the morning at the climbing wall due to poor weather. Both groups had a great time.



South Tyneside Youth Parliament

Throughout the year five Year 8 students have attended a number of South Tyneside Youth Parliament Events. They have attended various venues, listened to various public speakers and looked at event focused topics such as Culture, Media and Sport. During the events our students have engaged in group discussions and expressed their views on opportunities for young children within South Tyneside. The students were so inspired by the media event on their return to school they began to discuss the idea of running their own year group podcast. The students are all keen to attend the final event of this year in July.



Year 9

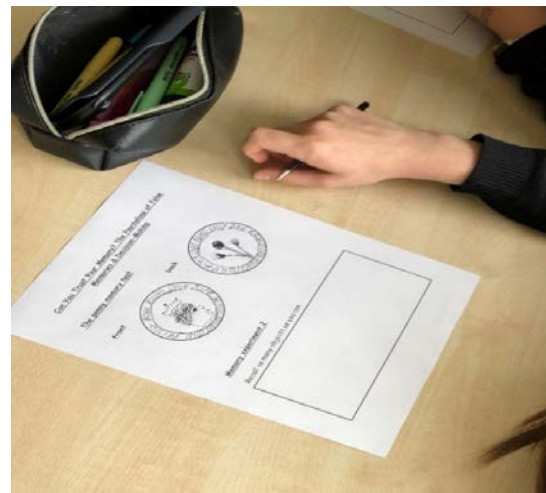
Year 9 students took part in a variety of activities during Alternative Curriculum Day, developing team skills, learning life skills and developing a deeper understanding about themselves.

Paramedics from the North East Ambulance Service attended school and led sessions with groups of students throughout the day. Feedback from the Paramedics included comments stating how stunned they were with the prior knowledge of students. Students learned about the role of a Paramedic and had the opportunity to practise first aid and life-saving skills. They were taught the basics of staunching a wound, had the opportunity to practice CPR and learned how to assist someone who is choking. Paramedics commented how enthusiastic students were and how keen some of them were to 'give it a go'. The students had fun, and learned some valuable skills too.



Wise Up Finance led a session with students, looking at how to manage their future finances; students received advice from a money expert. During this session, students explored how their finances could look when they are older and earning. They reviewed what necessities they would have to spend money on and how to budget for entertainment and emergencies based on a typical income for someone in their 20's.

Students enjoyed testing out the accuracy of their memory skills in a session entitled, 'Can you trust your memory?' This session was based on the context of being an eyewitness to a crime. Students looked at the potential of false memories being created alongside memories being reconstructed and how their perceptual errors can make them more likely to remember things incorrectly. The students were able to experience these perceptual errors through optical illusions and they took part in some memory experiments to test their selective attention and whether they were susceptible to false memories.



Students took part in a design and creativity session where they designed a trainer in collaboration for 'END. Clothing'. Students carried out research into an artist and then produced a design to present to END. Clothing. Design ideas were inspired by artists or the local area.

A further session of the day saw students take part in Team Building Activities led by PE staff. Students were involved in orienteering, working in mixed groups of

around 6 students they needed to navigate their way around the school using a map and looking for clues. Within the given time students needed to identify a letter and a number, as well as answering a riddle at each point on the map to gain the most possible points. The group with the most points overall won an Easter Egg each.



Year 10

In February, Year 10 students led a special 'Valentine's' charity event, **which raised £852.85 for Macmillan Cancer**. Students created a business plan and sold Lolly's within school.

We welcomed Northumbria Police into school this term and officers delivered educational sessions on Drugs and Alcohol. Students told us they found the sessions beneficial and officers commented on our student's wonderful conduct and enthusiasm.

Humanutopia delivered a day's workshop with students during our Alternative Curriculum Day. Students shared their own experiences and stories with the year group and the kindness and maturity all students showed was remarkable.

As the term draws to a close, students will be awarded their prefect ties. The standard of applications and effort students have made this academic year has been very impressive. As our Year 11 students prepare to begin their GCSE's, Year 10 students will now begin stepping up with Prefect Duties and responsibilities within school.



Year 11

As Year 11 approach their final few weeks at Whitburn C of E Academy, they have been working extremely hard to ensure they are making the most of the time they have left

before the examinations begin on 9th May. Their last round of mock exams took place in January and as always, the behaviour and conduct of all of the students was absolutely impeccable. We are hopeful that these students are more than ready to take on their exams in a few weeks' time and we wish them all the very best.

The Year 11's took part in their Assembly of Light at the beginning of April. This is an assembly which marks the end of their journey with us here at Whitburn C of E Academy. Each student lights their own candle to represent the light they have brought into this school community over the past four and a half years. The light also symbolises the hope for their futures and onward journey, wherever they may go.

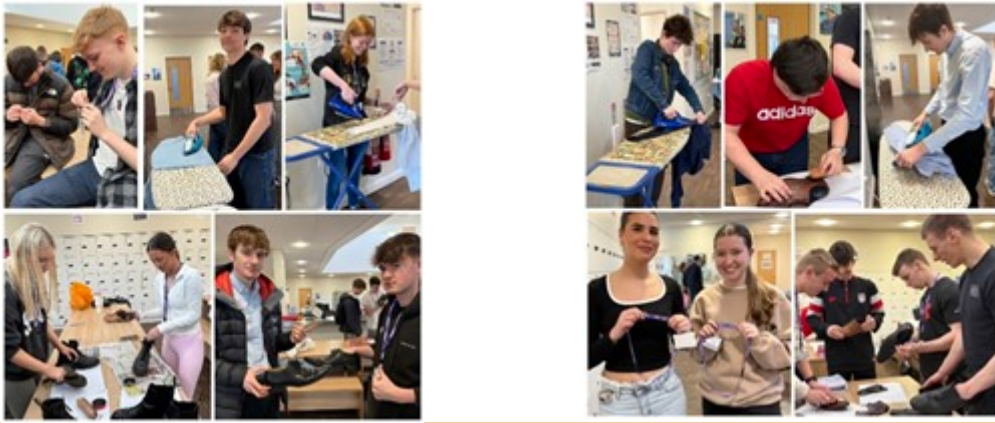


Year 12 Sunderland Uni Visit

Year 12 students visited Sunderland University's City Campus as part of their advice and guidance programme. They enjoyed a campus tour and got to see all the facilities available to students who study at this campus. Subjects taught here are mainly the Arts subjects with the medicine and health sciences subjects based over at City Campus. Students also took part in a some informative workshops looking at university life and revision sessions to help them prepare for upcoming mock exams. Even if students are not considering an application to Sunderland it was good for them to be able to compare what they have seen at Sunderland with other university facilities and campuses they may be considering next year.

Year 13: The 'Three Challenge' Challenge, Friday 28th March

During PSHE the final three Year 13 form classes competed against each other to test their skills in ironing a shirt, polishing a shoe and sewing on a button. These skills will see them all looking their best for any future interviews! These activities are available for parents to review on our website



YOUNGMINDS

Special Feature: Trauma and Mental Health

[Trauma and Mental Health | Guide For Parents | YoungMinds](#)

All children and young people have difficult experiences sometimes. When this happens, they might feel more stressed or upset. But with a bit of support from those around them, they will usually feel better. However, when a child or young person experiences trauma, it can feel too big for their normal coping strategies.

If you're worried that your child or young person is struggling with trauma, remember that you can play an incredibly important role in helping them. By providing emotional support and a loving, safe relationship, you can help them to heal with time. You can also make sure they get the right professional support if they need it.

What is trauma?

A traumatic experience usually involves a threat to our sense of physical or emotional safety. We may also feel trapped, powerless or unsupported in the face of this threat.

Trauma describes both one-off events and things that happen over months or years – for example, within a young person's family or friend relationships. It can be something a young person experiences directly, or they might witness something happening to someone else.

These are some examples of things that a child or young person could find traumatic:

- a violent event, such as an assault, car accident or natural disaster
- experiencing racism, homophobia, transphobia or other forms of discrimination
- experiencing domestic violence or abuse
- being bullied
- losing a family member or friend to suicide, or a sudden death in the family
- going through a serious physical illness or time in hospital
- being exposed to frightening or inappropriate online content

Trauma is not a mental health condition. But experiencing trauma can have long-term effects on someone's mental health. A wide range of mental health issues can be linked to trauma. This includes PTSD, anxiety, depression, OCD, eating disorders and self-harm.

Signs a child or young person is affected by trauma

Every child or young person's response to trauma will be different. They may show they're struggling straightaway. Or difficult feelings, thoughts and behaviours may emerge over time. Their reaction and how they cope might also change over time. For example, there may be times when things feel intensely difficult, and then they might feel better for a while.

This means it can be difficult to see the link between a previous traumatic experience and your child or young person's current behaviour. Sometimes they may not be aware of the link themselves.

In general, these are some of the things your child or young person may experience if they are struggling with trauma:

- having thoughts or flashback images about the event or experience
- finding it more difficult to manage their emotions, which can feel overwhelming
- acting out or having angry outbursts
- withdrawing from friends, family, school or activities they usually enjoy
- avoiding thinking about, talking about, or being in situations which are related to the experience
- seeming very sensitive or alert to what's happening around them
- seeming zoned-out or disconnected from what's going on around them
- finding it difficult to concentrate
- not being able to sleep or having nightmares
- turning to coping mechanisms such as self-harm, or using drugs or alcohol
- blaming themselves, feeling guilty or struggling with their self-esteem

Supporting your child or young person to cope

It is normal for a child or young person to feel or behave differently after a traumatic experience. Remember that healing from trauma is a process.

It's important to give them time to adjust to what's happened, and not to expect things to get better straightaway. It's also a good idea to keep an eye on how they're doing, gently check-in with them and seek further help if it's needed.

Listed below are some suggestions for things you can do as their parent or carer to make them feel safe and supported

- Offer opportunities for them to talk
- Show that their feelings are understandable
- Help them feel safe and secure
- Reassure them
- Ask about what's making them feel this way
- Spend quality time doing things they enjoy
- Think together about what helps them cope
- Seek professional support if you're worried

Young people tell us they want adults supporting them to:

- know that everyone's experience is different, and it doesn't define who I am
- recognise all of my needs and see me as a whole person
- understand my behaviour – when I'm shouting, crying, hiding, stealing, hitting out at myself or others, I'm just trying to make sense of everything I've gone through
- find a way to communicate that works for me
- include me in decisions about my life – ask me what I want to happen
- build on my strength and help me find new ways to recover

Useful helplines and websites

[Parents Helpline](#) | [Mental Health Help for Your Child](#) | [YoungMinds PMH](#) | [Support for parents facing childhood mental health issues](#)

Student Voice

Form Representatives were asked to lead discussions around the appropriate use of AI for learning. Our findings suggest that 55% of students use AI occasionally and the majority of students use it to learn or review content to help them with their learning. The majority of students had 'no concerns' regarding the use of AI at present.

This half term students have had the opportunity to discuss any issues they have regarding their year groups toilet facilities. The majority of students feel safe using the toilets and use them appropriately but have raised concerns over the maintenance of some cubicles. This information will be discussed with SMT and the caretakers and hopefully any issues can be resolved promptly.

The topic of uniform was again raised but there are currently no plans to make changes to the uniform following our recent extensive consultation on uniform

Next half term Year 9 have requested that their meeting is based around homework. I am sure this topic will generate lots of strong opinions!

We are in the process of looking at how the Academy might be involved in celebrating VE day / Remembrance Day with a local Whitburn group to make a difference in the local community. More details to follow!

Attendance

We're very proud to maintain outstanding attendance at 94%> and continue to be 1st out of all 8 borough schools according to the Department for Education. We've maintained above 90% every single day since September and our student's efforts have been recognised by the Department for Education (DfE) and Fischer Family Trust (FFT); we received National Attendance Awards for Spring 2024 and whole school year 2023-2024. We continue to strive to excellent attendance and progress, since the two go firmly hand in hand.

Attendance league

It's time to say farewell to our Year 11's and wish them lots of luck, as they leave the Attendance League and focus on their exams. Huge well done to 11H who have ploughed ahead all year to take the lead and ensure they stayed TOP OF THE PREMIERSHIP!

We've seen some big scores from all year groups this half term. The final winner's spot is being challenged by quite a few – it's all to play for after the Easter break! Everyone loves an extra prize winner's breakfast, but the rules are changing for next year – remember, every single half day counts, especially going into next year!

YR7 (pts)		YR8 (pts)		YR 9 (pts)		YR 10 (pts)		YR 11 (pts)	
W	78	W	32	W	50	W	27	W	84
H	87	H	44	H	50	H	35	H	109
I	56	I	21	I	57	I	80	I	34
T	90	T	57	T	63	T	50	T	74
B	74	B	75	B	94	B	53	B	63
U	75	U	124	U	58	U	43	U	50
R	65	R	53	R	48	R	37	R	53
N	106	N	46	N	58	N	64	N	22

HOUSE POINTS:

W H	BAMBURGH	591
I T	TYNEMOUTH	566
B U	LINDISFARNE	706
R N	DURHAM	555

Designated Safeguarding Leads Team in school

If you have any concerns about a child’s welfare or safety please speak to one of the schools safeguarding team. If you are unsure who to contact, ask any member of staff and they will put you in touch with someone who will help.

These staff include:

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)



Mrs Tennet
Assistant Head



Miss Kassapian
E&I Manager

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads



Mr Crowe
Principal



Miss Smith
DHT



Mr Shaw
DHT



Mr Craggs
Head of Sixth Form



Mrs Avary
SENCo

Additional Safeguarding Leads



Mrs Ferguson
Pastoral Lead
Year 7



Mrs Coyne
Pastoral Lead
Year 8



Mrs Fielding
Pastoral Lead
Year 9



Mrs Murray
Pastoral Lead
Year 10



Miss Elleithy
Pastoral Lead
Year 11



Mrs Henderson
Academic
Transition Lead



Miss Manning
Pastoral lead
Sixth Form



Miss McAvoy
Assistant SENCo

Support Agencies – if you have concerns about a child you can contact the following services

South Tyneside Children’s Services

0191 424 5010 Monday to Thursday - 8.30am to 5pm
Friday - 8.30am to 4.30pm
0191 456 2093 Outside of the above time

Sunderland Social Care - Together for Children

0191 561 7007 Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5.15pm and Friday, 8.30am to 4.45pm)
0191 520 5560 Outside the above times

Police – Emergency 999
Non Emergency 101

For more Information and advice free phone the NSPCC on 08088005000

Mental Health Support Contact Numbers

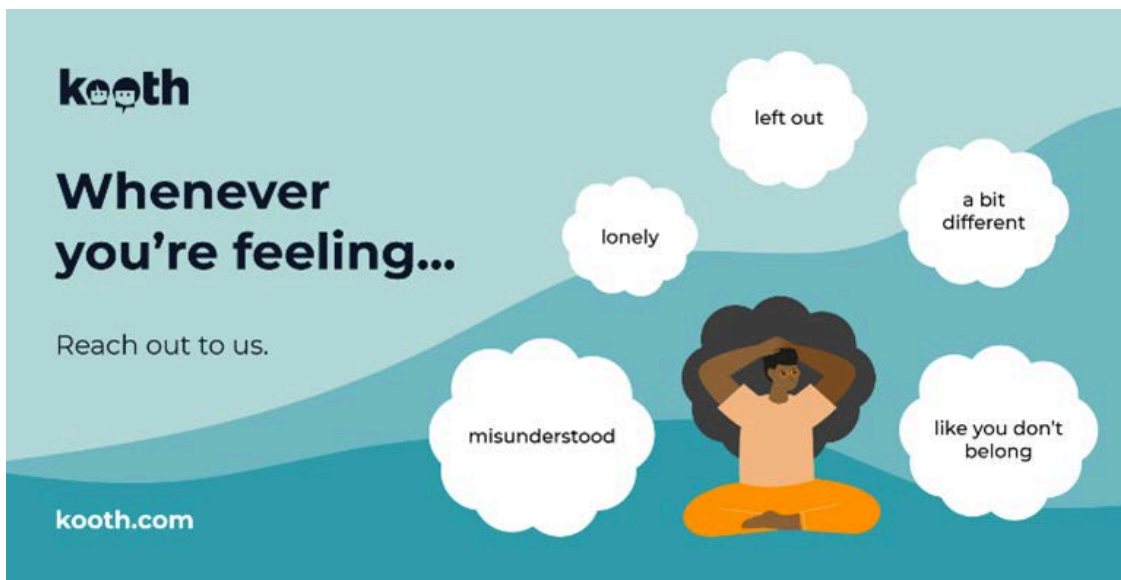
Lifecycle - free mental and emotional health support via telephone and face-to-face appointments - 0191 2832937

CYPS - free mental health support for young people who are experiencing serious mental illness or symptoms of ill mental health: 0191 5665500

ICTS (Crisis) Team - free emergency support for young people who present an immediate risk to themselves or others - 0191 5665500—then ask for the ICTS Team

youngminds.org.uk – a leading charity for children and young people’s mental health.

Kooth



New Mental Health Service available in South Tyneside via GP

School have been made aware of a new service called South Tyneside Child and Young Persons Primary Care Mental Health Service (CYP PCMHS).

The PCMHS aims to improve access to mental health support and respond to an increasing demand on services.

The service is only accessed via the young person’s GP. They must have a South Tyneside GP who can request a review from the PCN Children’s Mental Health ND LD & ARFID Service via a ‘task’ on the patient record.

The school nurses are in school every Wednesday lunch time and students can pop in to see them without an appointment to discuss anything they would like more information on. Appointments can also be made for the school nurse by speaking to Miss Kassapian or the Pastoral Lead or contacting the school nursing team via Chat Health.

The School Nursing Public Health team have been in school over lunch time and spoken to students about Healthy Eating, Emotional Health, Mindfulness and Stress. In the Summer Term the school nurses will be in school to discuss the following topics: 30th April – Testicular Cancer, 7th May - Self harm and emotional health , 4th June - sun safety and 1st July – water safety. Students can ask the nurses any questions they have on these topics.



Young Carers

We continue to have Young Carers Drop in once a month in school. Any students who are registered Young Carers or would like more information can attend the drop in. It is in Room 30. Information about activities that Young Carers can get involved with are available via the Young Carers Social Media or on the Young Carers Notice Board near the Year 9 Pastoral Office.

The next Drops In's are:

6th May

3rd June

8th July

Please see Miss Kassapian or your Pastoral Lead if you would like any more information about Young Carers.



Children's Mental Health Week

This Year for Children's Mental Health Week the them was "Know Yourself, Grow Yourself." We had visits at lunch time from a range of Professionals including Healthy Minds Team, Kooth, School Nursing Team, Bright Futures and Matrix. The Professionals were greeted by some of our Mental Health Ambassadors who helped them get set up.



Some students enjoyed watching the film “Inside Out 2” after school. The film shows how different emotions interact and portrays the new and changing emotions of a teenager.

Mental Health Week is coming up in May and the theme this year is “Community”. We will be working with the Mental Health Ambassadors to hear their ideas.



Special Feature: Drugs

A Quick Guide to Cannabis for Parents

[20233003-TUE246-A-quick-guide-Cannabis-DSM-version.pdf](#)

Cannabis is the illegal drug that young people are most likely to experience, according to NHS data. Yet it poses many problems, from misconceptions about its effects and risks, to the potential for harms, both immediate and longer-term.

What is Cannabis?

Cannabis is a plant, and the most widely used illegal drug in the UK. There are many different names and forms, with the best known probably weed/grass (usually smoked, sometimes through water using a device often referred to as a bong), skunk (similar but generally stronger), hash resin (usually used as an ingredient in edibles), and dab/shatter/cannabis oil (normally vaped). Other names commonly used for cannabis include marijuana, puff, pot, herb, ganja, bud and dope.



Because there are so many different forms of cannabis, its appearance varies, but broadly weed looks like dried herbs or buds, skunk is similar but often greener in colour and with tiny crystals throughout, and resin is often a dark brown block which may be soft or hard to touch. Edibles also come in many shapes and sizes, but the

best known are hash brownies, space cookies and gummy sweets.

Just as the look and use of cannabis products can vary, so do the effects. The most common perception is that cannabis gives a sense of being chilled out and at peace, but some people become chatty, giggly, hungry, nauseous, lethargic, unmotivated, paranoid, confused, anxious and/or drowsy. Some people may also experience hallucinations or become delusional, and struggle with concentration, learning and memory. All of these effects are attributed to tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the main psychoactive compound in cannabis, but it also contains cannabidiol (CBD) which is thought to help balance out some of the more negative effects.

What is the problem?

In the UK, cannabis has become extremely strong, with most products containing very high levels of THC and very little CBD. This increases the risk of negative effects, though – as with any drug experience – this is also influenced by other factors such as personality, mood, environment, strength, and frequency of use. Cannabis is illegal in the UK, so there are no safeguards in place relating to variables such as product quality, dosing or strength, as is the case for a medicine. It is worth remembering that when cannabis is smoked, it is often mixed with tobacco, meaning that all the risks of cigarette smoking are also present. NHS data shows cannabis to be the illegal drug that 11-15 year olds are most likely to have taken in the last year, over 40% named it as the substance they had taken the first time they took drugs, and just over a third of young people who said they had only taken one drug in the last year stated it as cannabis. There is also a significant amount of normalisation of cannabis use among young people, with the drug having the highest levels of acceptability in terms of trying and using regularly, compared to sniffing glue, using cocaine and so on. This is supported by data from drugs education charity the DSM Foundation, which surveys students aged 15-18 years ahead of workshop delivery. Of over 5,300 responses in the first two terms of the 2022-23 academic year, 73% cited smokeable cannabis and 43% cannabis edibles as main substances used by people in their year group, with only alcohol, vaping and cigarettes ranking higher.



A significant difference between smokeable and edible forms of cannabis is the onset and duration of action: when smoked, the effects are felt within a minute or two, peaking at the 10-30 minute mark and wearing off after a couple of hours. Comparatively, it can take an hour or longer to feel the effects after ingesting an edible, which is why it's much easier to overdose through this method of consumption.

This then peaks for two to four hours and lasts several hours longer before wearing off completely. However, the effects of cannabis may endure for an extended amount of time, especially after a heavy session, and a positive test can result even a month after last use.

What is the impact?

There are many risks associated with cannabis use, from the immediate effects associated with smoking (such as wheezing and shortness of breath) or the drug itself (such as vomiting, panic attacks, aggression, paranoia, hallucinations and memory loss)

to longer term impacts such as sleep disturbances, mood swings, loss of motivation and dependence. Cannabis is also widely regarded as a gateway drug, with individuals who use it more likely to progress to other substances – though of course there can be other reasons for this, such as the person's attitude towards drug use, social circles and availability of other drugs. A significant issue is the link between cannabis and mental health, with use of the drug associated with an increased risk of depression and psychotic-type conditions such as schizophrenia. This is more pronounced in teenagers because their brains are still developing. For the same reason, teenagers are more likely than adults to progress from experimentation with cannabis to addiction, and government data for England shows that 87% of young people in drug treatment services cite cannabis as a reason for being there. Studies have also shown that adolescents who use cannabis are more likely to later engage in criminal activity.

What can parents/carers do?

Parents and carers have a significant role to play in helping their children make decisions about drug use, including cannabis. Here are some tips:

Know that what you say matters

NHS data shows that teens rate parents highest when it comes to helpful information about drugs, so while it might feel like your child isn't listening, you are having more of an influence than you think.

Make it a comfortable conversation.

Talking about drugs can feel awkward, but it is important that your children feel the topic can be discussed openly and easily, so seize opportunities such as depictions of cannabis use on TV and in films, or if you smell it when out – this will pay dividends later if things get trickier.

Don't think your child is immune from being offered drugs...

Of the 11-15 year olds involved in the NHS survey, nearly a third said that they had been offered drugs, ranging from 12% of 11 year olds to around half of 15 year olds.

... but remember that most young people don't use them.

Cannabis might be the drug most commonly taken, but only 6% said they had done so in the 2021 NHS survey – emphasising that social norms are vital.

Keep an eye on their phone, have strong family digital values and strive for open conversations about the things they see and engage with on social media.

DSM Foundation survey data revealed that 15% of 13 year olds and over half 18 year olds had seen illegal drugs for sale on their social media feeds, which can lend the perception that drug taking is normal. Only 4% reported it.

Don't forget the law.

There are a lot of misconceptions about the legal status of cannabis, mainly because the laws differ across the world, but it remains illegal in the UK with no plans for change.

Useful informative websites: [Home](#) | [Tooled Up Education](#)

Must read for Parents/carers

[Talking the Tough Stuff with Teens: Making Conversations Work When It Matters](#)

[Most eBook : Spargo-Mabbs, Fiona: Amazon.co.uk: Kindle Store](#)

[I Wish I'd Known: Young People, Drugs and Decisions: A Guide for Parents and](#)

[Carers: Amazon.co.uk: Spargo-Mabbs, Fiona, Parsons, Rob: 9781529366365: Books](#)

South Tyneside FAB Inclusion Awards

Year 8 and 9 students represented the school and attended the FAB Awards! We were nominated for an Inclusion Award for the Skittles Club and Role Model Awards. We are very proud of our students and the kind, caring work they do to support each other!



Upcoming Events in Summer 2025

- GCSE and A level exams - All written exams will run between Monday 5th May (GCSE) and Monday 12th May (A Level) and Wednesday 25th June 2025; good luck to all of our 'exam candidates!'
- Year group assembly focus on: Anti-social behaviour, mental health awareness week, gambling awareness, the environment and water safety
- 'Breakfast with the Principal' will continue for students recognised for their
- commitment to the Academy, hard work ethic and excellent manners.
- Year 10 Prefects assume their duties
- 9th – 11th May - Year 7 trip to Ford Castle
- W/B 12th May – Mental Health Awareness Week
- 15th May - Year 9 trip to Edinburgh
- June/July – House captain elections
- 20th June - Year 10 trip to Alton Towers
- 25th June - Years 11 Leavers Ball at Beamish Hall
- 3rd July - PE Sports Awards
- 4th July - Head Boy and Head Girl elections
- 4th July - Year 7 and 8 trip to Flamingoland

Excellence for All

T 0191 529 3712
E office@whitburncofeacademy.org

