Safeguarding @ Wymondham College

Parent and Carer Newsletter – October 2026

Dear Parents/Carers

Welcome to our Safeguarding Newsletter.

Please do take some time to read the information contained within this newsletter. Can I draw your attention to the last section: **Support when the College is closed** on **p5-6**. Here you will find advice and guidance as well as some important phone numbers. If you have concerns or worry during the break, do make your child's Head of House aware on our return.

This Half Term we have enhanced student knowledge and understanding of key safeguarding themes:

Yr7-10: Introduction to Safeguarding at Wymondham College (SLT Assembly)
Yr8-9: The Drummer Boy (Suicide awareness and prevention)
Yt9-11: Healthy Relationships (Tutor time)

Coming up next half term:
Yr7: Smashed (Tuesday 3rd Nov) – dangers of alcohol

As ever, there is a wealth of information to share, but if there are certain issues or concerns that you would like us to cover, do let us know.

SAFEGUARDING:

Operation Encompass

Our school is part of Operation Encompass, a national initiative which ensures that schools are informed, before the start of the next school day, when a child has been present during or exposed to a domestic abuse incident.

This information allows us to provide timely, sensitive and appropriate support to children who may be affected. When we receive an Operation Encompass notification, a member of our safeguarding team may check in with the child and, where appropriate, follow up with parents or carers.

These conversations are always approached in a supportive and non-judgemental way, with the sole aim of understanding any needs and ensuring the best interests and wellbeing of the child remain at the centre of our actions.

Teenage Steroid Abuse Resources

Parents may hear teenagers talking about whether someone is "**natty**" or "**not natty**". "Natty" is short for *natural* and is used in online fitness and bodybuilding communities to describe someone who has achieved their physique without using performance-enhancing drugs such as steroids.

Some social media content linked to bodybuilding and **looksmaxxing** presents steroid use as normal or necessary to improve appearance. Unfortunately, this type of content is increasingly reaching children and young people.

The risks of steroid use are particularly significant for teenagers, whose bodies are still developing. In addition, products purchased online may be counterfeit, contaminated, or contain different ingredients or strengths than advertised.

Looksmaxxing refers to the pursuit of improving one's appearance, often with a strong focus on achieving an idealised image. While there can be positive aspects to taking care of health and wellbeing, some online communities promote unrealistic standards and encourage extreme measures to change appearance. In some cases, young people may feel pressured to prioritise appearance above their physical health, emotional wellbeing, or self-esteem.

Parents are encouraged to talk openly with their children about the content they see online, promote healthy body image messages, and remind them that social media often presents unrealistic or heavily edited versions of reality. Please see this information from Internet Matters: looksmaxxing

Online Safety:

Talking to your child about the social media ban: a conversation crib sheet for parents

From Spring 2027, children under 16 in the UK are legally banned from creating new social media accounts, and existing accounts will need to be removed. Clink on the link below to access some prompts that will help you open up an honest, two-way conversation with your child before the changes take effect

Talking-to-your-child-about-the-social-media-ban-a-conversation-crib-sheet-for-parents.pdf

WELLBEING:

Wellbeing provision at the College

The wellbeing needs of young people continue to grow, and we are excited to share that our Wellbeing Team has recently moved into a new, dedicated space within the Year 7 Day House. This more central location places the team at the heart of the College community, making support more accessible and helping us to further strengthen and develop our wellbeing provision.

Students can access support through a range of wellbeing interventions, with referrals made via House teams. To ensure that as many students as possible can benefit from this service, our interventions are time-limited and focused on providing early support and guidance where appropriate.

While we understand the challenges families face in accessing external services, including longer waiting times for CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services), it is important to note that our Wellbeing Team does not provide a crisis service. Where a student is experiencing a high level of mental health need or is in crisis, we will always advise families to seek urgent support through NHS 111 (select option 2 for mental health support) or by attending A&E if immediate assistance is required.

Our priority is always ensuring that young people receive the right support, at the right time, from the most appropriate service.

Closure of Papyrus – the suicide prevention charity

Due to the recent closure, its Hopeline24/7 is no longer operating. However, there alternatives such as:

- Samaritans: call 116 123 (free, 24/7)
- Shout: text SHOUT to 85258 (free, 24/7)
- NHS 111 for urgent mental health support
- In an emergency, call 999 or go to A&E

ATTENDANCE:

Attendance Processes

We kindly ask all Parents and Carers to take a moment each week to read our Attendance Soundbite in the weekly College newsletter. These short updates are designed to help everyone understand why regular attendance matters so much for children's learning, wellbeing, and long-term progress. By staying informed, you're helping us work together to give every child the best possible chance to thrive.

If you would like to see a copy of our **Attendance Policy**, you can find it on the website here.

Please be aware that you will receive a half termly communication from the Attendance Team regarding your child's most up-to-date attendance percentage. You can also access your child's daily attendance via MCAS.

Saturday lessons:

Students in Years 7–11 are expected to attend all Saturday lessons. These are normal teaching days and form part of our extended holiday model.

Illness:

If you believe your child may be unwell, please refer to the NHS guidance on when children should stay at home and when they can attend school with minor illnesses. NHS guidance: https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school . You may also find the UK Health Security Agency's "Should I keep my child off school?" checklist helpful: Is my child too ill for school poster

Attendance Queries:

If you have any attendance-based queries, please direct them to: c.ryder@wymcol.org

When reporting an absence by email or phone, please include your child's full name, year group and the reason for absence.

Please remember to contact us every day your child is absent:

- **Years 7-11:** attendance@wymcol.org
- **Yr12-13:** attendance6@wymcol.org

For requests for a Leave of Absence, please use the online form: Wymondham college Request for Leave form 2026/2027 – Fill out form providing as much detail as possible.

Expectations:

To support student attendance, parents/carers are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends school every day the school is open and arrives on time.
- Encourage their child to return to school as soon as possible after illness.
- Keep requests for absence to a minimum and only in exceptional circumstances.
- Understand that the school may not agree to all absence requests and will not authorise unjustified absences.
- Ensure students remain in school until the published finish date for all EXEATs, half terms, and end-of-term breaks, and return on the specified date in the College calendar.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Please find on the link, information the Department of Education and Norfolk County Council have requested be shared with parents regarding changes to the legal attendance framework which has been in place since September 2024. This sees a change to the issuing of fines in relation to absence: https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2024/02/29/fines-for-parents-for-taking-children-out-of-school-what-you-need-to-know/

Safeguarding support when the College is closed

With the break approaching, I would like to remind parents and carers of the support that is available to young people and their families whilst the College is closed.

Any **non-urgent safeguarding** concerns will be followed up by the school when it re-opens **after the break**.
If it cannot wait, please contact the **Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) on 0344 800 8020** for a child living in **Norfolk** or the local MASH team (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) for a child living outside of Norfolk. Information on regional MASH teams can be found on local County Council websites.
If you believe a child to be at risk of **immediate harm**, please call **999.**

Call **999** to contact emergency services for urgent assistance Call **101** for Police Non-emergency line	Call **111** NHS Non-emergency advice line (Option 2 for urgent mental health issues)	Safeguarding concern for a child? **Norfolk:** Call Children's Advice and Duty Service	Domestic Abuse Helpline 24 hrs: Call 0808 2000 247 **Norfolk and Suffolk:** Leeway	Childline - If you're under 19, you can talk to Childline about any concern you have. Call: 0800 1111.

		(CADS) 0345 800 8021 **Suffolk:** Customer First 0808 800 4005	Domestic Violence and Abuse Services Helpline Call: 0300 561 0077	
Papyrus - If you are (or know a young person) thinking of suicide, Papyrus offers confidential suicide prevention advice. Call: 0800 068 4141	Samaritans - If you just need to talk, any time of the day or night, these services offer confidential advice from trained volunteers. Call: 116 123	NSPCC: If you're worried about a child, even if you're unsure, contact the helpline for advice and support. Call:0808 800 5000.	Kooth - Free Online counselling and peer support for 11 - 25 year olds.	Young Minds Crisis Messenger text service provides free; 24/7 crisis support for young people who are experiencing a mental health crisis and need support. Text: YM to 85358

Further information, advice and support can be found on our College website here.