



Highfield Newsletter



Headteacher's Message

Seeing all the children back, full of energy, reconnecting and smiling has been great – especially our new Reception cohort who are just starting on their Highfield journey. It is a wonderful time!

Tuesday's training day was a great opportunity for our whole staff to also reconnect after the six weeks; every member of staff attended and the new faces brought a fresh (dare I say youthful!) influence. In addition to Miss Dodsworth in Year 4 and Miss Millar in Year 5, we have two additional new staff in Miss Stone, who will be working across school and Mr Shaw who is our new Site Superintendent. I'm sure you will say hello and give them both a warm Highfield welcome.

In light of the significant developments in safeguarding and wellbeing legislation, our training day provided a valuable opportunity to ensure that all staff remained equipped to meet these responsibilities effectively. We took a close look at Benedict's Law and the allergy safety arrangements required. The evolving wider expectations around pupil welfare and safety were at the top of our agenda and we took time to discuss the evolving power of AI, social transition and recent headlines in the media regarding the identification of children at risk of future unemployment. The latter subject provoked a great deal of thoughtful comment as you can imagine. We finished by reflecting upon this:

Children who feel they belong rarely need to seek significance through poor behaviour.

We are in the privileged position of being able to make our children feel valued, safe and belong in the Highfield community. My assembly on Wednesday then followed that theme where we thought about what 'belonging' meant and what actions could help others feel they belong to our school.

Aside from this, as the children came into assembly, I played a piece of music from the Marriage of Figaro, then asked the children who they thought composed the piece and what the song was about. After discussions about Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, Bach and Rachmaninov, we finally got to the correct answer - Mozart. Clearly our remarkably cultured children have spent the summer holidays appreciating classical composition. What an impressive start!

Welcome back everyone; here's to a brilliant new Highfield year.

Mr Feeley

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about AGE-INAPPROPRIATE ¹⁸CONTENT

"Inappropriate" means different things to different people. What's acceptable for one age group, for example, may be unsuitable for a slightly younger audience. Online, young people can chance upon inappropriate content in various ways – from pop-up ads to TikTok videos. The increasingly young age at which children become active in the digital world heightens the risk of them innocently running into something that they find upsetting or frightening. Trusted adults need to be able to help children be aware of what to do if they're exposed to age-inappropriate content.

WHERE IS IT FOUND?

SOCIAL MEDIA

Age-inappropriate content is easily accessible through many social media platforms. TikTok, for instance, is hugely popular with young people but is arguably best known for clips featuring sexualised dancing or profanity. Some social media users also express hate speech or promote eating disorders and self-harm, which could cause lasting damage to a child's emotional and mental health.

GAMING

Gaming is an enjoyable source of entertainment, but many popular titles can expose children to inappropriate material such as violence, horror, gambling or sexually explicit content. Playing games unsuitable for their age risks normalising to children what they are seeing. Some games also include in-game chat, where other (usually older) online players often use language that you probably wouldn't want your child to hear or repeat.

STREAMING

The range of video streaming services available online means that users can find almost anything they want to watch on demand. Children are therefore at risk of viewing TV shows and movies which contain nudity, drug and alcohol abuse, explicit language and extreme violence. Unfortunately, these streaming platforms can't always determine that it's not an adult who's watching.

ADVERTS

Online adverts frequently include age-inappropriate content: usually gambling and nudity or partial nudity, although adverts for alcohol or e-cigarettes are also common. Some search engines also feature adverts that are responsive to your search history: so if you've recently looked up a new horror movie, shopped for lingerie or ordered alcohol online, then the ads appearing on screen could reflect this the next time your child borrows your device.

18 Advice for Parents & Carers

TALK IT THROUGH

Embarrassment or fear of getting into trouble can make it difficult for children to talk openly about age-inappropriate content they've watched. Remind your child they can always come to you if they're troubled by something they've seen online, without worrying about consequences. Before offering advice, discuss what they saw, how they felt and how they came to find the content in question.

CONNECT, DON'T CORRECT

If your child's been particularly distressed by exposure to content that wasn't suitable for their age, it's important to offer guidance to prevent them from repeating the same mistake – but it's equally vital to help them deal with the emotions that the situation has raised. You could tell them about any similar experiences you might have had at their age, and how you dealt with it.

BLOCK, REPORT, CONTROL

After discussing the problem, you and your child can take action together. This could include blocking any inappropriate sites and reporting any content which violates a platform's rules. To further safeguard your child online, set up parental controls on internet-enabled devices that they use. This will significantly reduce the chances of your child being exposed to age-inappropriate content in future.

GET SPECIALIST HELP

Age-inappropriate content can potentially have a negative impact on a child's mental health, which is sometimes displayed through changes in their behaviour. If the problem becomes more severe, you might consider reaching out to a mental health professional or an expert in this field who can provide you and your child with the proper support.

STAY CALM

Even though it is obviously difficult to stay rational in a situation where your child has been put at risk, it's essential to think before you react. Your child may well have hesitated to open up to you about watching inappropriate content for fear of the consequences, so being calm and supportive will reinforce the notion that it would be easy to talk to you about similar issues in the future.

Meet Our Expert

Carley Jorgensen is a Registered Counsellor with The Health Professions Council of South Africa, and she runs a private practice offering counselling to children, teenagers and families. Her main focus is creating awareness and educating the community well as needed.



National
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Safeguarding. For child protection concerns you can contact any of our Designated Child Protection Officers: Mr Feeley, Mrs Dalgliesh, Mr Brassil, Mrs Bowker and Mrs Calvert. There is some useful information on the LSCB website about online safety with some useful tips for parents: <http://www.leedslscb.org.uk/Parents-Carers-Wider-Family/Keeping-children-safe-online>. If you are worried that a child is at risk of harm please contact Leeds Children's Social Work Services on 0113 222 4403.