



E-safety and Havering's Young People Drug and Alcohol service Newsletters end of Autumn term 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we head into the Christmas holidays, we hope that our children and their families are looking forward to lots of festive fun with friends and family. I'm sure the children will also be looking forward to enjoying time in their virtual worlds and exploring any new games that Santa brings them.

We continue to be reassured and impressed with how well our pupils understand the need to be safe in their online activities. However, we know that they don't always understand why we, as adults, worry about the risks and consider them vulnerable online so showing an interest in what they're doing and giving them the opportunity to discuss their online activities in a non-judgmental, supportive way is the best way for us adults to assess their levels of risk-awareness and to open the door for discussions about any concerns that arise.

Attached to this newsletter, you will find some Top Tips for parents posters with some very useful information and guidance regarding how to set up parental controls on new devices (for those lucky children that receive new phones or devices from Santa) and how to set boundaries around gaming (sharing this poster with older children and allowing them to discuss and negotiate the boundaries with you will give them some ownership and a mature understanding of why an agreed set of house rules are needed).

On a different but equally important theme, I have also included a parent newsletter from Havering's Young People Drug and Alcohol service that we have been asked to share with you. There is some very useful information about current substance trends and a change in the law to be aware of.

As always, if you have any concerns that you would like to receive advice for, or if you would like to be signposted to any parent forums or parent support groups, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

I hope that you and your children have a lovely and safe Christmas holiday exploring all the festive experiences you can have in the real world and the virtual world as well.

Yours sincerely

Sharyn Ailara, Deputy Head Teacher
BSc (Hons), PGCE, SENDCo Accreditation

Top Tips for SETTING UP PARENTAL CONTROLS ON NEW DEVICES

In children's eagerness to start enjoying new digital gadgets immediately, it can be easy to overlook setting up the type of parental controls that can help to protect them online. If you don't sort those out from the very start, it can be an uphill battle – technologically and psychologically – to impose such controls later. Here's our rundown of what to look for when setting up the various internet-enabled devices that might be lurking under the tree at this time of year.

IPHONE

If your child's lucky enough to be getting their own iPhone, parental controls can help avoid issues like screen addiction and unsuitable content. Go into the settings and scroll down to 'Screen Time'. From here you can customise important settings including time limits on using the device, communication restrictions and content blockers. You can also lock your changes behind a passcode.

ANDROID

With Android devices, Google's Family Link app is your friend. You'll need a Google account – and a separate one for your child, which you should use when first setting up the device. Then, in Family Link on your own device, select 'Add Child' and enter their account details. This lets you specify limits on daily usage, restrict certain apps, block particular content and more.

PLAYSTATION

You can prep for a PlayStation before it's even unwrapped. At my.account.sony.com, create an account, then go to Account Management > Family Management > Add Family Member to set up your child's account, which you'll use to sign in on the console. You can restrict the age ratings of the games they can play and who they can talk to. On the PS5, you can make exceptions for any games you think are acceptable despite their high age rating.

IPAD

iPad parental controls are identical to those on iPhones. However, if you've got a shared family iPad and want to ensure your children aren't seeing anything age-inappropriate after you hand them the device, there's a feature called Guided Access (under Settings > Accessibility > Guided Access). With this switched on, young ones can only use the app that's currently open.

XBOX

The Xbox Family Settings app helps you manage which games your child can play (and when). You'll need to set up the console with your own account and then add a child profile. Make sure your account's password is protected, so your child can't alter your choices later. You'll be walked through the functions at setup, but you can also reach them manually via Settings > Account > Family Settings.

NINTENDO SWITCH

Download the Nintendo Switch Parental Controls app on your phone, and you'll be shown how to link it to the console. Once that's done, you can limit how long your child can play each day, decide what age ratings are permitted and more. You'll also get weekly updates on how often they've used the device. These controls are accessible through the console itself, but the app is usually easier.

WINDOWS 11 PCs

On Windows 11, account management is key. Set up the device with your own account as the admin. Then go to Settings > Accounts > Family and Other Users and create your child's account (if you've already done this on a previous PC, just log in with those details). Microsoft Family Safety (either the app or the site) then lets you control screen time, what content children can view and more.

CHROMEBOOKS

Chromebooks' parental controls are managed via the Family Link app. Unlike an Android device, however, you need set up the Chromebook with your own account first, then add your child's. Go to Settings > People > Add Person and input your child's Google account details (or create a new account). Your child can then log in, and you can monitor what they're up to via Family Link.

MACS

Like iPhones, parental controls for Macs are managed via the Screen Time settings. Again, the crux here is to set yourself up as the administrator before adding any child accounts. In the settings, look for Users & Groups to create your child's account, then – while on their profile – use the screen time options to place any boundaries around apps, usage and who your child can communicate with (and vice versa).

SMART TVS

Smart TVs typically have their own individual parental controls. One of the most popular brands is Samsung – and on their TVs, you can control the content available to your child. In the Settings menu, under 'Broadcasting', you can lock channels and restrict content by its age rating. Even this isn't foolproof, however: some apps (like YouTube) might still let children access unsuitable material.

Meet Our Expert

Barry Collins is a technology journalist and editor with more than 20 years' experience of working for titles such as the Sunday Times, Which?, PC Pro and Computeractive. He's appeared regularly as a tech pundit on television and radio, including on BBC Newsnight, Radio 5 Live and the ITV News at Ten. He has two children and writes regularly on the subject of internet safety.



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Top Tips for SETTING BOUNDARIES AROUND GAMING

If your child loves video games, then you'll probably be aware that how long they spend gaming – and what they're actually playing – can occasionally become a source of concern or conflict. The UK's trade body for interactive entertainment, Ukie, has recently launched a campaign to promote safer and more responsible gaming among young people – with parents and carers helping by setting sensible and fair boundaries. Our guide has tips on key areas where you could agree some healthy ground rules for your child's gaming activity.

PROMOTE SAFER GAME CHOICES

Deciding which online games are OK – and which should be avoided – is tricky. Some titles allow children to cooperate or compete with strangers, which creates potential risks. Watching your child play online for a while could provide more insight into a particular game, while the parental controls on most consoles allow you to limit who can chat to your child or send them friend requests. Remind your child of the hazards around strangers online when you discuss this boundary with them.

ENCOURAGE REGULAR BREAKS

Help your child understand the need to take regular breaks, playing in shorter bursts rather than marathon sessions. Bear in mind that some games (such as role-playing games) require time investment from the player, while others (online team games, for example) can't be stopped or paused at a moment's notice. A quick break every hour or so is good practice, and you could suggest some things to do in these breaks, such as having a drink of water or getting some fresh air.

AGREE SPENDING LIMITS

There's no doubt that gaming can be expensive, and younger players often don't realise how much paying for digital items and subscriptions can add up to. Many young gamers love to buy new skins or upgrades for their character, so you could settle on a fixed amount that your child is allowed to spend on in-game items each week or month. This sort of boundary will not only help your child to manage their expectations but will also make you more aware of the price of these items.

DISCUSS AGE RATINGS

Children often ignore the age ratings on games – or are unaware they even exist. If you're happy with your child playing a particular game even though it's rated above their age, then establish that as a boundary: emphasise that you've made an exception, and talk about what age ratings mean and why they're important. You could add context to this boundary by browsing games' boxes together while shopping, discussing why some games might have earned certain age ratings.

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CENSORED

FACTOR IN FRIENDS

If your child is a keen video gamer, the chances are that they'll have other gamers among their social circle, too. When friends visit, do they instantly dash to their console or computer? You could put boundaries in place before their guests arrive by agreeing on a length of gaming time. Bear in mind, though, that they may try to extend this once they're together. Try coming up with activities or challenges for them during screen breaks – if they join in, they earn a little extra time on their game.

ENJOY GAMING TOGETHER

Setting time aside to play video games together can be an enjoyable bonding exercise. Undeniably, some young gamers may be less enthusiastic about a parent or carer joining in, but it can be a productive way of encouraging them to share their hobby with you. Setting goals or tasks might be useful: if they love Minecraft, choose something to build together; if Fortnite's their favourite, ask to try out some of the fun game modes, like Prop Hunt, which doesn't require high skill levels.

TALK ABOUT EMOTIONS

Help your child to monitor their emotions as they play. Discuss what is (and isn't) an acceptable level of competitiveness to show while gaming. Are they allowed to trash talk other players, for example? Can they notice when they get angry if they lose? Do they think these emotions are healthy? Some games can provoke anger, but others can bring joy, humour and the thrill of overcoming a challenge. Try to steer your child towards games that tend to produce these more positive feelings.

BE PREPARED FOR TROLLS

A frequent problem when gaming online is other players who are deliberately troublesome. Make sure your child knows how to report and block someone who makes their experience a negative one. Between you, decide if or how they should deal with these online trolls. Talk about where your child's boundaries are in terms of what they think is acceptable: what behaviour by other users is merely frustrating, and what crosses the line to become upsetting or abusive.

Meet Our Expert

Daniel Lipscombe is a writer specialising in technology, video gaming, virtual reality and Web3. He has also written 15 guidebooks for children, covering games such as Fortnite, Apex Legends, Valorant, Roblox and Minecraft. With work published by the likes of PC Gamer, Kotaku, Pocket Gamer and VG247, he has reviewed more than 50 games and products over the past year.



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Newsletter – Havering’s Young People Drug & Alcohol Service

Winter 2023

Your service provider Change Grow Live Wize-Up for all young people substance related issues

Christmas is nearly here, and as the year is coming to an end we wanted to give professionals and parents an update on the prevalent drugs we've seen in Havering in the last few months, the support we offer and how to refer.



Nitrous Oxide

As of 8th November 2023, Nitrous Oxide, or 'laughing gas', is classified as a **Class C drug**, marking a key change to how possessing this [psychoactive substance](#) is treated in law. Nitrous Oxide use is still very prevalent among young people, as the silver canisters discarded in parks and public spaces highlights. However, the use of Smartwhip or Fast Gas is becoming even more prevalent. These much larger canisters contain significantly more nitrous oxide making the amount used harder to control and extremely dangerous. Nitrous Oxide is often referred to as either NO₂, laughing gas, NOS or balloons... making it seem harmless, but it is anything but. Risks with NOS include Vitamin B12 deficiency, suffocation, paralysis and even death. **In a medical emergency with any substance always call 999 for urgent medical assistance.**



Spice

Synthetic cannabinoids or Spice – Black Mamba/ Devils Weed is a very dangerous drug that could previously be bought over counter if it said on the packet 'not for human consumption'. In 2016 the Psychoactive Substances Act made the consumption of this drug illegal. However, this did not stop the illegal drugs market and it is now at a point where the drug is so potent that it can cause serious negative effects such as:

- Psychotic episodes and lasting negative effects on mental health

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- An intense and trippy high
- Incoherency and unconsciousness
- Inability to walk or sit up
- Vomiting
- Small number of cases linked to death

Spice is popular in prisons as it is less detectable than cannabis and it is popular among homeless communities due to its 'knock out' effects. However, over the past few years we have seen this drug creep into the streets of Havering. So often young people do not want this drug, yet dealers sell spice in replace of cannabis as it is very difficult to tell the difference.

With the popularity of vaping THC now, young people are often vaping liquid spice, again, as it is nearly impossible to tell the difference. It is only once young people start smoking or vaping the substance, they can notice significant differences in the intensity of it's effects.

Please note we have seen an increase in the rise of liquid spice being vaped in Havering in the past few weeks. If you suspect a young person has taken Spice, it is very important to dial 999 and ask for an ambulance if they are having a bad reaction.



Lean

After returning from the summer holidays a key theme mentioned among young people at the college fresher's fairs was the use of the drug lean. Lean is an American cough syrup containing Codeine and Promethazine often popularised in rap culture. It is not licensed on the NHS so young people make the substance themselves where the doses are incorrect and even more dangerous, or they buy the drug online. It is often mixed with a soft drink such as Sprite and sweets to enhance the taste. Lean is a depressant drug, and the risk of overdose is high especially when mixed with other substances such as alcohol. It takes just 6 days to get addicted to lean where a young person could experience similar but milder symptoms of heroin addiction.

It is very important if you know a young person using Lean daily to not encourage them to suddenly stop. If a young person was using Lean and we were worried about dependency, we would refer to the adult service for the young person to receive medical support and to be safely weaned off the substance. Please note this also applies if the young person was using Alcohol or Benzodiazepines dependently.

What support do Wize-Up provide?

Wize Up's YP substance misuse service provides a free and confidential service for young people aged 10-18 offering:

- **Brief intervention**, a one-off education and awareness session, looking at harm reduction and consequences.
- **Structured intervention**, up to 12 weekly sessions aimed at young people who want to reduce or stop their substance misuse, developing a care plan and weekly goals.
- **Hidden harm** resilience work, up to 12 weekly sessions for children from age 5 who are affected by a family member's drug or alcohol use.
- **Small group workshops**, tailored to suit individual needs.

Training

Wize Up provides Substance Misuse training for professionals. Our most popular workshop is the New and Prevalent Drugs education and awareness training, which is great to refresh your own knowledge or learn about drugs completely from scratch and to learn about the current trends in the borough.

This training can be delivered virtually or face to face. To discuss any specific training requirements or book a session for your team, please contact me today and we can develop sessions to suit your needs.

Parent Group

We've recently trialed our Parent Group and I'm very happy to offer the next dates for this 6-week program running from Thursday 11th January until Thursday 15th February 2024. Held at The Hub in Romford from 5.45pm – 6.45pm. This is a support group for parents who have children misusing substances, offering a safe place to open up, and learn more about substances. Please see parent group poster attached and contact details to book on.

After working as a resilience worker for Wize Up for over 3 years I am delighted to introduce the new team as I stepped into the team leader role earlier this year:

Becky Wood	Team Leader
Hannah Douch	Resilience worker/ Children and families hidden harm worker
Brogan Hammond	Resilience worker based at the Youth Justice Service
Katie Adams	School liaison/ Resilience worker

Contact Details:

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Tel: 07909 097621

Refer Someone: <https://www.changegrowlive.org/content/cgl-wize-up-havering/professionals-family-referral-form>

We are open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 17.00pm and work throughout the Havering borough in schools, children's centres, the Youth Justice Service as well as in the community.

For any information on services, harm reduction advice and referrals please contact me today!

Merry Christmas from the Wize Up Team!

Becky, Hannah, Brogan & Katie 😊

