

# The Bulletin

Friday 13th October

Dear Parents and Carers,

It is hard to believe that we are only one week from half-term. With that in mind, students can start to become tired and with the darker mornings it can be harder to get out of bed. Please encourage your child to get in to school in good time every day. We are here to listen and support if your child is having a difficult morning.

Last week our Headteacher attended the first newly formed Brent Health Needs Panel and we welcomed several new students to the centre this week as well as some new starters at home. It is wonderful to see the school getting busier, our classes expanding and welcoming new families to Ashley College.

We want to address the current situation in the Middle East. While we understand that this is a complex and sensitive topic, it's important to stay informed and encourage open dialogue with our children.

If you or your child need emotional support at this time then please do not hesitate to reach out to us in confidence. [How to talk to your child about conflict and war](#)

Have a lovely weekend.

Louise.

Our value this half term is

## Resilience

Our vision:

- To provide a safe, enriching and nurturing environment, with wellbeing at its heart; where children and young people, can learn, gain confidence and thrive.

Our values:

To promote **resilience**, **self-confidence**, **tolerance**, and **respect**

Our aims: 'Building confidence for the future'

### Parent/Carer Support Session

You will receive messages this afternoon asking if you will be able to attend our second parent/carer support session on 18<sup>th</sup> October at 9:30am.

If you would like to join virtually please use the link below.

Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/oqx-tnoi-arb>

We will be joined by Hannah from the Wellbeing and Emotional Support Team at Brent to explain the work they are doing with young people in the locality and how you and your family might avail of their services.

## Parenting Workshops

"My daughter no longer wishes to wear traditional clothing" "My son went missing for days."  
"My daughter refuses to say where she goes when she leaves the house."

**Calling all parents and carers of young people between 11 and 17 living in Brent. We invite you to attend the Brent Early Help Autumn series of parenting workshops.**

- Workshops will support, empower and inform.
- Gain knowledge and tools to help keep your children as safe as possible.

#### Workshop 1: Gangs: Parental Awareness

When: Wednesday 13th September 2023 10.00-12.00pm. Where: Online, join via Microsoft Teams. This workshop will focus on providing parents with information about gangs and the associated risks to young people. Parents will learn about how gangs groom and exploit young people and signs to look out for.

#### Workshop 2: An Introduction to Understanding County Lines for Parents

When: Wednesday 11th October 2023 10.00-12.00pm. Where: Online, join via Microsoft Teams. A parent's guide to understanding what County Lines are, how they are formed and operate, who is targeted and how they impact the lives of young people and their families through exploitation. Parents will learn about signs to look out for.

#### Workshop 3: Social Media

When: Wednesday 25th October 2023 10.00-12.00pm. Where: Online, join via Microsoft Teams. Children and young people use many different social media apps and sites. Like most things, there can be negatives too. For children and young people there are risks that you should be aware of, to help keep your child safe on social media.

#### Workshop 4: Parenting: Your Style, Your Child (Culturally Sensitive Parenting)

When: Wednesday 15th November 2023 10.00-12.00pm. Where: Online, join via Microsoft Teams. A total of 149 different languages are spoken in the London Borough of Brent. It is the most diverse Borough in the UK. This workshop will celebrate that fact and provide parents with an opportunity to explore how their culture informs their parenting practice and style.

#### Workshop 5: Knife Crime

When: Wednesday 13th December 2023 10.00-12.00pm. Where: Online, join via Microsoft Teams. It can be extremely worrying to think that your child is involved in something as dangerous as knife crime. This workshop will help you talk to your child about the risks of carrying knives and explore how you can together, find a 'way out' of that life-style.

A successful morning routine can set a positive tone for the day ahead. To help your child establish a great morning routine, consider these tips:

- Consistency is key: Try to stick to a consistent wake-up time and bedtime to ensure your child gets enough rest. Limit screen time at least an hour before bed.
- Plan ahead: Prepare for the morning the night before by laying out clothes, packing backpacks, and discussing the day's schedule.
- A healthy breakfast: Encourage your child to start the day with a nutritious breakfast to fuel their mind and body.
- Time for self-care: Allow a few minutes for personal care tasks like brushing teeth and getting dressed.
- Positive affirmations: Start the day with positive words of encouragement, which can boost your child's confidence.
- Reduce distractions: Limit screen time in the morning to avoid rushing or unnecessary stress.
- Encourage independence: As your child grows, encourage them to take on more responsibility for their routine. E.g. using an alarm



If you would like to attend any of the Workshops please email

ParentingProgramme@brent.gov.uk (interpreters available)

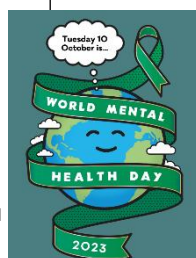


This week during assembly the students learnt about National Coming Out Day 2023, celebrated on October 11th, is a significant day for promoting acceptance, understanding, and support for the LGBTQ+ community. This day reminds us of the importance of creating a safe and inclusive environment for all our students, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. By fostering a welcoming atmosphere in our school, we can help every child feel respected, valued, and free to be their authentic selves.

World Mental Health Day was celebrated on October 10th, is a global opportunity to raise awareness about mental health issues and advocate for greater support and understanding. In our busy lives, it's easy to overlook the importance of mental health, both for ourselves and our children. Yet, mental health is just as vital as physical health.

As a medical needs PRU we know how much poor mental health can have an impact on every day life and wellbeing of young people and their families.

A reminder that there is therapeutic support available at Ashley College for all our young people. If your child is not currently receiving clinical support from CAMHS or other services please do reach out.



### Here to listen: our safeguarding team



Designated safeguarding lead (DSL): **Louise Togher**  
Contact details: **07735826382**  
**ltogher@ashleycollege.brent.sch.uk**



Deputy DSL: **Ranjna Shiyani**  
Contact details: **07900192271**



Deputy DSL: **Anne-Marie Mika**  
Contact details: **07866217122**

# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about INFLUENCERS

In today's digital age, social media influencers play an increasingly significant role in shaping the opinions, interests and behaviours of our children. While many of these individuals can have a positive effect, influencer culture can also present certain risks – such as encouraging consumerism, affecting self-esteem and blurring trustworthiness. To help ensure a safe online environment for young people, it's vital to maintain open communication, set sensible boundaries, promote a healthy self-image and teach digital media literacy. Our guide delves deeper into all of these.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### HEIGHTENED CONSUMERISM

A major way that influencers make money is through brand partnerships and sponsored content. As a result, children who follow them may be exposed to a steady stream of advertising; this can lead to materialistic attitudes, unrealistic expectations and an increased desire to have the latest products. Many influencers have built huge brand empires around their large, impressionable following.

### THE SOFT SELL

Some influencers aren't always transparent about the motivations behind their posts, blurring the lines between genuine recommendations and paid-for promotions – and young people sometimes find it difficult to distinguish authentic content from advertising. Many major social platforms have taken steps to make sponsored content and ads easier to identify, but it remains an area of concern.

### PRIVACY CONCERNS

Inspired by their favourite influencers, children may start sharing more of their own lives online – which could reveal personal information or details about their daily routine. This openness can put them at risk of cyberbullying or even predatory behaviour. This is exacerbated by live streaming, which gives young people no time to consider the potential consequences of saying too much.

### UNDERMINING SELF-ESTEEM

Many influencers share images and videos of themselves and their activities, which are often painstakingly curated and edited to present an idealised version of their life. Children who follow these influencers may develop distorted expectations about body image and the concept of beauty, which can potentially lead to negative self-esteem and even mental health issues.

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### KEEP TALKING

Chat to your child about the content they consume on social media and the influencers that they like. Encourage them to think critically about what they see and hear online, and listen to any concerns they might have. Maintaining this line of open, honest communication can help your child to make informed decisions about which individuals they follow and what content they engage with.

### SET SOME BOUNDARIES

Agree age-appropriate boundaries for your child's social media use, including time limits and privacy settings (the two major operating systems on mobile devices, Android and iOS, have these controls baked in). Try to keep an eye on your child's online activity and discuss it regularly with them – including reminding them of the potential risks that can arise from following influencers.

### SUPPORT A HEALTHY SELF-IMAGE

Reinforce your child's awareness that real life isn't usually as picture perfect as it may appear on social media – and how some content (particularly that of influencers) is often curated, staged or edited to look more glamorous. If possible, highlight examples of other influencers who share authentic, relatable material which acknowledges their imperfections and struggles as well.

### PROMOTE MEDIA LITERACY

Talk to your child about the concepts of sponsored content, advertising and potential influencer bias. Teach them to critically evaluate the information they're presented with online and to consider the possible reasons behind content creation. This can help young people develop the skills to make healthier decisions about the influencers they choose to follow and the content they consume.