

The Bulletin

Friday 20th October

Dear Parents and Carers,

We're delighted to report that the past half term has been incredibly busy and wonderfully productive. Our students have shown dedication and enthusiasm, making us immensely proud of their achievements. To end our celebrations of Black History Month we enjoyed a student-led assembly this week where we learnt about important poets, musicians and artists.

This week we hosted another parent/carer support session, providing the much-needed safe space for parents to openly discuss their children's needs. The inclusion of our guest speakers from WEST added a valuable dimension, offering expert insights and practical advice. It was encouraging to witness the sense of camaraderie among parents/carers, making this session a testament to the shared commitment within our school community, all centred around the well-being of our children. We extend another open invite to all parents/carers of our centre and home students to our next session on 8th December at 9:30am.

In a remarkable journey of resilience and determination, the SLT shared a news article this week of a young student who attended a Pupil Referral Unit similar to ours. Despite facing adversity, he harnessed his potential to secure a place at the prestigious Cambridge University, shattering stereotypes and proving that every child's potential is boundless. George's story is a powerful reminder that with hard work, attendance to school, guidance, and the right support, dreams can be transformed into reality, regardless of starting point. [News Article](#)

We wish everyone a restful and safe break. We have encouraged our students to spend time with loved ones, recharge, and come back ready for the next half-term!

Thank you for being an integral part of our school community.

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'

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 lifestyle.

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

ParentingProgramme@brent.gov.uk (interpreters available)

Calling all parents/carers of ADHD/autistic children in North West London.

As a parent of two autistic young people and 20+ years of navigating support, I know how difficult getting the right help can seem at times.

I have been asked by NHS North West London to find out what ADHD/autistic young people and their parents/carers really think about services in your local area.

The information gathered will be used to decide what services are offered in future, so taking part is genuinely worth your time.



Use the link below or the QR Code in the yellow circle.
<https://nwlscooping.typeform.com/Parents>



Ask your child / young person to complete a survey too. They can use the link below or the QR Code in the blue circle.
<https://nwlscooping.typeform.com/NWLCYP>

The eight NorthWest London boroughs are:
Brent, Ealing, Harrow, Hammersmith & Fulham, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster.

During HALF-TERM – Mental Health Support

If you are looking for urgent mental health support please contact your GP, call NHS 111 or, in an emergency, visit your local A&E department or call 999. Further information on who you can contact for mental health support can be found on the NHS urgent mental health support webpages [NHS page](#) and via the local NHS Mental Health Helpline [Helpline](#)

You can also contact the Brent Out of Hours Family Support Helpline [Barnardos](#) or by calling 0800 158 2358. This service provides families in Brent with access to a Barnardo's family support worker during evenings and weekends. The service is part of Brent's Family Wellbeing Centres.

You can also contact The AFC Crisis Messenger text service, which is a free, confidential, 24/7 text message support service for anyone who is feeling overwhelmed or is struggling to cope. The service is staffed by trained volunteers who will work with you to take your next steps towards feeling better. They can help with issues such as anxiety, worry, panic attacks, bullying and depression and are here to talk at any time of day or night. If you need support, you can text AFC to 85258. [Anna Freud](#)

Here to listen: our safeguarding team



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



Deputy DSL: **Ranjna Shiyani**
Contact details: [07900192271](tel:07900192271)



Deputy DSL: **Anne-Marie Mika**
Contact details: [07866217122](tel:07866217122)

The schools safeguarding email address and mobile number remain **OPEN** over half-term for our pupils, parent/carers if they have concerns and need support.

Safeguarding@ashleycollege.brent.sch.uk or [07735826382](tel:07735826382)

[Child Mental Health & Wellbeing - 10 Top Tips for Parents](#)

[Parents' Mental Health & Wellbeing - 10 Top Tips for Parents](#)

At National Online Safety, we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one of many games which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit nationalcollage.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about EA SPORTS FC 24

After two decades of holding the official FIFA licence, EA Sports' phenomenally successful football video game series has embarked on a solo run at goal. This season's iteration marks the debut appearance of a new name and branding, but don't let those fool you – EA Sports FC 24 is still a very similar proposition to last year's FIFA 23. Popular features such as Ultimate Team remain a big focus, meaning that potentially costly in-game spending is still among the line-up of risks that parents and carers should be aware of.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?



RECURRING RELEASES

EA Sports FC 24 effectively picks up the FIFA template – meaning that after a year, we can expect EA Sports FC 25 to hit the shelves. Updates between versions of the FIFA franchise tend to be minor, but young fans of the game are almost certain to want the new edition in around 12 months' time, so they can keep playing with updated team kits, players and squad lists.

OFFENSIVE VOICE CHAT

FIFA 23 introduced cross-platform play, and EA Sports FC 24 goes a step further with Clubs, Seasons and Ultimate Team cooperative modes across PlayStation 5, Xbox Series X and S, and PC. That's exciting news for youngsters who love to play with friends online – but connecting a much wider audience does potentially open lines of communication between children and far older online gamers.

IN-GAME PURCHASES

In FIFA, Ultimate Team proved to be a profitable innovation for developers Electronic Arts (EA), and is now found in many of their other titles. Players spend in-game currency to recruit better footballers for their team, but this process can take a frustratingly long time – so young fans may be tempted to skip the grind by paying real-world cash to unlock that coveted star midfielder.

ULTIMATE TEAM SCAMMERS

Since the mode was introduced, Ultimate Team has been a target of scammers who attempt to coax players into buying or selling outside the terms of service from EA and console manufacturers. This shady practice can lead to accounts being banned and in-game items being lost. In some cases, young gamers have also been hoodwinked into handing over their payment details to the fraudsters.

POTENTIAL FOR ADDICTION

Just like real-life football, EA Sports FC 24 offers a thrilling, dynamic blend of tactical awareness and skill that fans find absolutely engrossing. Among younger players in particular, this could lead to identifiers of a gaming disorder as they plead for "just one more game" before bedtime or spend practically all weekend playing more matches to earn additional Ultimate Team packs.

Advice for Parents & Carers

CONTROL SPENDING

If your child enjoys Ultimate Team mode, check that your payment details aren't linked to their account. Bundles of FC Points (the game's currency) start at just £1, so multiple payments can easily slip under the radar. You could consider setting your child an in-game allowance, perhaps through a prepaid card, which will help them to realise that online spending has a real-world effect.

DEFEND AGAINST SCAMMERS

EA does contact players via email (although not to ask for usernames or passwords, so watch out for that scam tactic), but never through the game itself – so be wary of incoming messages and consider blocking and reporting suspected spam. Your child should avoid buying coins (the in-game currency) from external sites: it could end with them losing their money and being banned from the game.

AVOID EXTRA TIME

Many parents of young football-oriented gamers worry about their child playing too much EA Sports FC. There's now also a companion mobile app, which can also often provide another indicator that a child is struggling to disengage from the game. You could initiate discussions around set hours of play – or take stronger action by utilising the parental controls on their console or phone.

SHOW TOXIC CHAT THE RED CARD

Playing EA Sports FC 24 with friends is highly enjoyable, but if competitive types start to turn toxic online, it can ruin everyone's fun. You could occasionally listen in on the voice chat of your child's game for any warning signs that things may be about to boil over. This goes double when playing online with strangers; voice contact with unknown players can be turned off in the game's settings.

CELEBRATE THE VARIETY

Ultimate Team may be the game's 'star player', but there's plenty more to do in EA Sports FC 24 – including modes which allow access to all of football's big names without needing to spend money on packs to unlock them. This new version of the game includes even more women's teams, marking another step forward in representation: an important subject to discuss and celebrate with children.

Meet Our Expert

Lloyd Coombes is Editor in Chief of gaming and esports site GGRecon and has worked in the gaming media for around four years. Always eager to test out the latest apps, games and online trends, he's also a parent who understands the importance of online safety. Writing mainly about tech and fitness, his articles have been published on influential sites including IGN and TechRadar.

