

Ilkley Grammar School: Important Online Safety, Safeguarding & Wellbeing Updates for Parents during COVID-19

Everyone reacts differently to events and changes and the way that we think, feel and behave varies between different people and over time. At this unprecedented time, students, parents and carers and staff may be experiencing understandable heightened stress or anxiety. As a school we have been considering our usual policies and practices in relation to health and wellbeing, safeguarding and online safety in particular, in light of the major changes to educational provision currently, and have summarised some key information below to try to help support you and your children to deal with these unusual times, as well as listed some useful sources of support that you may find helpful.

Wellbeing

When setting work remotely for students either using email, Showbie, ClassCharts, Microsoft Teams or other online platforms, teachers will have consideration for how different and difficult this situation may be for students when setting expectations of work, whether they are at home and/or on site. Equally, staff have to take into consideration their own workload and wellbeing as they adjust to entirely new ways of working from home, where they may also be caring for their own children throughout each day.

To support parents and carers, students and staff, we all need to take into consideration the importance of the below factors:

- How to connect with and support others
- Voicing concerns
- How to handle worries and concerns and coping strategies
- Physical wellbeing
- Sleep
- Managing media and information
- Understanding the facts
- Focusing on positives and goal setting
- Keeping an active mind
- Worries about health and finance
- Routine

Where a student may be particularly struggling to cope with the changes to daily life that we are currently experiencing, their mental health may begin to suffer. This can bring about changes in a young person's behaviour or emotional state which can manifest in a range of different ways and could be an indication of an underlying problem. Staff and parents are therefore encouraged to have special consideration for changes in:

- Emotional state (fearful, withdrawn, low self-esteem);
- Behaviour (aggressive or oppositional; habitual body rocking);
- Interpersonal behaviours (indiscriminate contact or affection seeking,

overfriendliness or excessive clinginess; demonstrating excessively 'good' behaviour to prevent disapproval; failing to seek or accept appropriate comfort or affection from an appropriate person when significantly distressed; coercive controlling behaviour; or lack of ability to understand and recognise emotions).

Should either a staff member or parent/carer become concerned about any of the above or the general welfare of a child, then support should be sought from the most relevant person or agency (see below).

The contact details of the pastoral care team are:

Year 7: clare.robun@ilkleygs.co.uk

Year 8: sarah.mcmanus@ilkleygs.co.uk

Year 9: lisa.hessey@ilkleygs.co.uk

Year 10: cath.walsh@ilkleygs.co.uk

Year 11: veronica.hepworth@ilkleygs.co.uk (also Behaviour and Attendance Officer)

Year 12: janine.pickard@ilkleygs.co.uk / christine.merrall@ilkleygs.co.uk

Year 13: joshua.sykes@ilkleygs.co.uk / harriet.miller@ilkleygs.co.uk

Transition support manager from Year 6 to 7: sue.varley@ilkleygs.co.uk

IGS will also continue to have the provision of a specialist mental health support provider - **Place2Be** who can provide help if needed in the current circumstances. Our dedicated school manager is **Laraine Dawson** who can be contacted via:

laraine.dawson@ilkleygs.co.uk

Safeguarding

In line with recent government guidance in relation to Covid-19, IGS has reviewed and updated its Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy with a specific addendum '**Covid 19 Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy Annexe**' to take into account the changed educational landscape that we now find ourselves in. A copy of this can be found via the website [here](#).

Key Safeguarding Contacts:

Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Andy Calvert: andrew.calvert@ilkleygs.co.uk

Emergency Contact Number: 07837 118073

Safeguarding Deputies: Mark Rignall: mark.rignall@ilkleygs.co.uk

Sally Bishop: sally.bishop@ilkleygs.co.uk

Emergency Contact Number: 07837 118786

General enquiries: admin@ilkleygs.co.uk / 01943 608424 (Open during the school day)

Peer on peer abuse

In response to our COVID19 partial closure, we recognise that there is an increased opportunity for online peer-on-peer abuse to take place, especially on social media platforms. We **all** need to continue to remain vigilant to signs and symptoms of such abuse

taking place and ask parents and carers to do the same at home.

All students are aware who to speak to if they have a concern using the contact details above and national helplines later on in this briefing paper.

Online Safety

Many pupils will have an increased use of the internet in response to COVID19 which may put them at an increased risk.

We will continue to provide a safe online working environment for our students.

We continue to operate an appropriate firewall, filtration and monitoring system. Staff are trained and are aware of the signs and signals of cyberbullying and other online risks. We also have appointed IT support officers, who students and staff can email. Please use the school admin email address: admin@ilkleygs.co.uk and mark for the attention of **IT Support**.

Online Safety away from School

When asking our students to work online we place the child's safety at the highest priority. In response to COVID19 the majority of pupils are not now physically attending school which may increase their vulnerability and online safeguarding risk factors.

Staff will be extra vigilant during remote interactions with students and report any concerns they may have in accordance with our reporting systems and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Where necessary, concerns will be referred to appropriate agencies.

We ensure that any use of online learning tools and systems are in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Where possible, school staff and students should work from home using a school-linked remote access platform. This limits the risk to the child and reputational damage to the school and staff as activity can be monitored.

We adopt the same principles for online learning as is set out in our staff behaviour policy or code of conduct. Of course, as an iPad school this is already well established with staff and students familiar with email protocols and using technology as a learning and communication tool.

Students and families

For students, parents or carers, **IGS** adopts the same principles for online learning as set out in the Behaviour Policy. (Personal Best Policy).

IGS will maintain regular communication with parents and carers during this time to reinforce the importance of safe online learning. Advice (such as this update) will be given as appropriate, including:

- Confirmation of online tools and or sites that the school will be using
- Confirmation of what students may be asked to do online
- Confirmation as to who their child will be interacting with online
- Confirmation as to whether other students will be able to access their child via the online platform
- Allowing the parent or carer the opportunity to voice any concerns
- Monitoring the search history
- Maintaining open communication with the student about online safety
- How to report a concern
- Ensuring any face-to-face online sessions take place in an appropriate central home location

Online Apps

We have been notified that an app called House Party is proving very popular at the moment. It's from the same company that created Fortnite and prompts users to give access to their contacts, Facebook and Snapchat to increase connectivity amongst other users. **As with all live-streaming platforms, screenshots, unsolicited messages and self-generated imagery can put young people at risk.**

The specific Houseparty risks arise when links to 'rooms' can also be shared publicly – to other platforms which could see uninvited users joining. When an uninvited guest joins a room, they can easily friend others taking part in the live stream; friends of friends can then join the room without invitation.

To counter the risks that may arise from the use of this app, young people should only chat to contacts they know in real life. Rooms should be locked to prevent uninvited guests from joining; see the [safety card](#) to find out how to enable private mode.

Young people should understand the risks of all image sharing and screenshots online. As always, we need to encourage kindness and respect online, demonstrating our core IGS values at all times.

It is important that parents and carers also understand the importance of safe online procurement if wishing to engage in a supplementary online learning resource or tutor for your child. Anyone having access to your child should be vetted appropriately and should be procured through a reputable source.

Not everyone offering a service in response to COVID19 will have good intentions.

Safe Gaming

Whilst we are all searching for social distancing friendly activities to stay entertained at this time, we

encourage students to stay safe and play games for fun whilst varying their daily activities.

We recognise however, that it's more critical than ever to ensure people stay *safely* connected to one another. Online games are a great platform to connect with others, provide distraction and bring happiness, yet we are mindful that video games are designed using behavioural psychology to intentionally hook users.

The key difference between a gaming hobby and a gaming problem is the negative impact it has on someone's life. Be aware of indicators including prioritising gaming over other interests and daily activities; becoming irritable or moody when not able to play; a constant need to play more; jeopardising school work and/or relationships and a lack of sleep.

We recommend that students follow the below best practices:

- Two hours or less of gaming and not every day
- Schoolwork and exercise to be completed first
- Removing gaming devices from the bedroom and into central spaces
- Maintaining consistent boundaries
- Devices switched off at least one hour before bedtime
- Maintain other hobbies and interests
- Maintain real-life friendships

Students are able to report any concerns they have online back to the school or to external agencies using the details provided below and parents and carers are encouraged to do the same.

Help and Support

Our dedicated school email is admin@ilkleygs.co.uk and our telephone number is **01943 608424**, and any queries not specific to individual staff contacts posted above can be directed through these channels. Our website also has a wealth of information: www.ilkleygrammarschool.com

All students have been made aware how to report a concern remotely whilst in school, and we would encourage you to monitor on line activity and work as far as possible at home. If any external advice is needed the numbers and advice sources below may be helpful.

- ChildLine: 0800 1111 who are operating a 9am – Midnight service
- **Young Minds Crisis Messenger:** 85258 – free text service for 24/7 support
- **NSPCC Helpline:** Phone: 0808 800 5000 Email: help@nspcc.org.uk
- **Mind:** www.mind.org.uk
- UK Safer Internet Centre: <https://reportharmfulcontent.com/report/>

- CEOP: <https://www.ceop.police.uk/ceop-reporting/>
- [Thinkyouknow](#) (advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online)
- [Internet matters](#) (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)
- [Parent info](#) (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)
- [LGfL](#) (support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online)
- [Net-aware](#) (support from the NSPCC)

The Department for Education COVID-19 helpline:

Email: DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk

Telephone: 0800 046 8687

Lines are open Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm and weekends 10am to 4pm.

They have also produced a helpful document for parents with further contacts:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers

Many thanks,

The IGS Safeguarding and e-Safety Team