



Welcome to our second newsletter. We hope you find it interesting and useful.

Recent news...

Miss Earl has done some training with teachers in school around "parental conflict" and the impact that this can have on children. Conflict between parents is normal. It can be constructive and helpful. However, it can also be destructive or harmful. Children can learn from constructive conflict. It can be helpful for them to see adults resolving differences. Children can learn by seeing compromise, negotiation and resolution. Harmful conflict (frequent, intense or poorly resolved) can cause children to be at risk of poor social, emotional and educational outcomes. It can also cause children to suffer with physical, emotional and mental health issues. During the training Miss Earl talked to staff about signs and possible changes in children's behaviour to watch out for (becoming sad or withdrawn, appearing anxious or worried, becoming aggressive or acting out of character). She also asked staff to remind children of channels we have in school for them to share their worries (circle times, talking to trusted adults, using the worry boxes). If you are worried about conflict in your relationship, there is some guidance and support on the Relationship Matters website (<https://relationshipmatters.org.uk/>).



Spotlight on...County Lines

What do you know about County Lines? It is a form of criminal exploitation. Urban gangs persuade, coerce or force children and young people to store or transport drugs or money to suburban areas or coastal towns.

It is against the law and a form of child abuse. Gangs distance themselves and make the children and young people do the work and take the risk.

Gangs use phones (usually old ones) to receive orders and to instruct the young people. Phones are changed frequently to avoid detection.

Phrases young people involved in County Lines might use are: 'Running a line', 'Going OT / going out there', 'Going country' or 'Going cunch'. These all mean 'going out of town to deliver drugs or money'.

Children involved in county lines ARE NOT CRIMINALS. They are VICTIMS. Children need safeguarding support and protection.

Drugs or alcohol can be used to entice young people into gangs. Sometimes 'drug debts' force young people to stay - they have to work to pay them off. They can find it hard to leave as there can be a fear of violence as revenge for disrespecting or 'snitching'.

Children can be moved far away from where they live - this is trafficking. They can be housed in unsuitable accommodation such as holiday lets or budget hotels.

Gangs can take over the homes of vulnerable adults - this is called Cuckooing. These can then become a base to deal drugs from. Children and young people can be forced to stay at cuckooed addresses. Sometimes these can be called a 'bando' or a 'spot'.

Gangs seek out a child / young person to recruit. They might observe their vulnerabilities and find out what the child needs or wants. They can make the child believe being in the gang will give them what they want. Gangs can recruit through social media. Sometimes siblings might already be involved and gangs can use this to recruit others. They offer children and young people money, status and a sense of belonging.

Any child or young person is at risk of County Lines, but gangs can target people who are vulnerable already, for example those who are lonely, withdrawn or have disrupted home lives.

Warning signs that a child or young person has become involved in County Lines could be: going missing, travelling, getting money, accessories, mobile phones, getting lots of texts and phone calls, showing changes in personality, becoming withdrawn, or having injuries.

If you think a child is in immediate danger - call 999. If we have concerns in school, we follow school safeguarding policies and inform outside agencies as appropriate. The NSPCC can give advice - 0808 8005000. Childline can give help too - 0800 1111.

Do you know...?

Every class in school has a Worry Box - all the way from nursery to Year 6. These can be a way for children to ask for help if they are worried, upset or hurt. The youngest children use emojis - each morning they place a photo of themselves in a happy or a sad box. Staff ask the children to try and tell them the problem so they can help. Older children write their worries on slips of paper and post them into the box. Staff empty these and follow up on issues in confidential ways. Does your child know where their class Worry Box is?



Useful contacts...

Parental conflict is not the same as domestic abuse but if you are afraid of your partner or feel that they control your life then you need to ask for help. The Blue Door can help. <http://www.thebluedoor.org/what-help-is-available/>
Helpline: 0800 197 47 87 Office: 01724 847947 Email: info@thebluedoor.org