

Safeguarding Newsletter 3 – February

The Talk pants Guide for Parents can be found through the NSPCC:

Talking PANTS teaches children important messages, like their body belongs to them and they should tell an adult if they're upset or worried. With the help of our friendly dinosaur Pantosaurus, Talk PANTS is a simple conversation to help keep your child safe from sexual abuse.

The key messages for children are:

P – Privates are privates.

A – Always remember your body belongs to you.

N – No means no.

T – Talk about secrets that upset you.

S – Speak up, someone can help.



Mental Health

We know that being a parent or carer isn't always easy. Although it's often amazing and rewarding to watch your children or young people grow up, it can also be really hard work. Things might feel especially difficult if your child or young person is struggling with their mental health at the moment. Or if their mood and behaviour seem different, and you're not sure why or what you can do to help. But you are not alone.

Giving our children and young people opportunities to open up is one of the biggest things we can do as parents and carers to support their wellbeing. It can be easy to forget the simple power of sharing what we're going through and feeling heard. But even though you can't fix everything when your child is struggling, you can make them feel seen and understood – and this in itself can make them feel more able to cope.

If you need more support

A General Practitioner (GP) is the doctor who provides overall care for your child's physical and mental health. GPs are usually the first place to go to access mental health support through the NHS. They can explore what's going on for your child, and suggest things that might help. They can also make referrals to specialist NHS and other local service such as

[Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service - CAMHS > Glos Health & Care NHS Foundation Trust \(ghc.nhs.uk\)](#)

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/> - Parents helpline call free on 0808 802 5544 Mon-Fri 9.30-4.00.

The Law on smacking

It is unlawful for a parent or carer to smack their child, except where this amounts to 'reasonable punishment'. This defence is laid down in section 58 of the children act 2004.

- It is against the law for a parent to use physical punishment on their child that causes marks
- It is illegal to use an implement to hit a child
- Parents who cause deliberate harm to their child could face criminal prosecution

Smacking

It can be tempting to think a smack sorts out incidents like disobedience and biting. However, it does nothing to teach your child how you want him or her to behave.

Instead it:

- gives a bad example of how to handle strong emotions;
- may lead children to hit or bully others;
- may encourage children to lie or hide feelings to avoid smacking;
- can make defiant behaviour worse, so discipline gets even harder;
- leads to a resentful and angry child, and damages family relationships if it continues for a long time.

How to Discipline without smacking

- Give love and warmth as much as possible
- Have clear simple rules and limits
- Be a good role model
- Praise good behaviour so it will increase
- Ignore behaviour you don't want repeated
- Criticise behaviours, not your child
- Reward good behaviour with hugs and kisses
- Distract young children or use humour
- Allow children some control; joint decisions, choices
- If a punishment is necessary, the removal of privileges, 'time out' or natural consequences are better.

Mobile Phones

A recent study has shown that almost a quarter of children aged 4 – 7 have smartphones.

A reminder that there are some dangers with Smartphones to be aware of:

- Access to unsuitable content
- Cyberbullying
- Eye strain
- Decreased attention span
- Fatigue, headaches

You may wish to consider the following before giving your child access to a phone

- Do your children *need* a phone to stay in touch for safety reasons?
- Will your child understand the concept of limited minutes or in-app purchases? Will they understand the need to charge their phone and maintain battery life?
- Is your child mature enough to use their phone responsibly? Such as not using their phone at all times or instead of sleeping?
- Is your child at an age where they understand most phones are water resistant? And not waterproof?

Boundaries

There may well be times when children will test your limits. We set 'boundaries' about what we expect of our children and family. If these boundaries are too loose and parents are inconsistent, children can become confused. If they are too harsh, then children do not develop their own sense of responsibility.

Think about the rules in your house and explain these to your children. Give them a chance to discuss the rules and to know when things might change. For instance, during school days you may expect a fixed bedtime but at weekends this could be later or negotiated.

Diversity

The rich cultural diversity in our community is reflected in the way families bring up their children. Approaches to being a parent can vary within families, ethnic groups and communities.

British society acknowledges and affirms cultural diversity but children, whatever their cultural background have a right to be protected. Anything that causes harm to a child, whether part of a cultural or faith tradition, is never accepted. Some practices that may be culturally accepted in some countries are banned by law in the United Kingdom.