

Safeguarding Section

In this edition of our Safeguarding Section we would like to focus on children's mental health and the importance of sleep and the important role parents play in keeping children safe online.

This year's Mental Health Week theme was 'Know Yourself, Grow Yourself'. As children grow, they face new challenges, responsibilities and opportunities to discover who they are. The theme 'Know Yourself, Grow Yourself' encourages self-awareness and personal growth, two essential building blocks for mental health and well-being

Why self-awareness matters

Self-awareness is the ability to recognise and understand your emotions, strengths, weaknesses, and values. For children, this skill is crucial as they navigate friendships, academic pressures, and personal identity. When children are self-aware, they can:

- ✓ *Manage their emotions: recognise when they're feeling stressed, anxious, or overwhelmed and take steps to cope.*
- ✓ *Make better decisions: understand their values and priorities, which helps them avoid peer pressure.*
- ✓ *Build stronger relationships: communicate more effectively and empathise with others.*

How personal growth builds resilience and confidence

Personal growth happens when young people challenge themselves to learn, improve, and step out of their comfort zones. It's about progress, not perfection. Through personal growth, young people can:

- ✓ *Develop resilience: learn to bounce back from setbacks and see failure as a stepping stone to success.*
- ✓ *Build confidence: gain a sense of achievement by setting and reaching goals.*
- ✓ *Adopt a growth mindset: believe that abilities and intelligence can improve with effort and persistence.*

HOW CAN PARENTS AND CARERS SUPPORT THIS AT HOME?

PARENTS/CARERS PLAY A VITAL ROLE IN NURTURING SELF-AWARENESS AND PERSONAL GROWTH IN THEIR CHILDREN. HERE ARE A FEW WAYS YOU CAN HELP:



The importance of sleep in mental health

Sleep plays a vital role in your child's mental health and overall well-being. For primary-aged children, a good night's sleep is essential for emotional balance, learning, and physical health. Yet, with busy schedules, screen time, and excitement about the day ahead, many children don't get the rest they need.

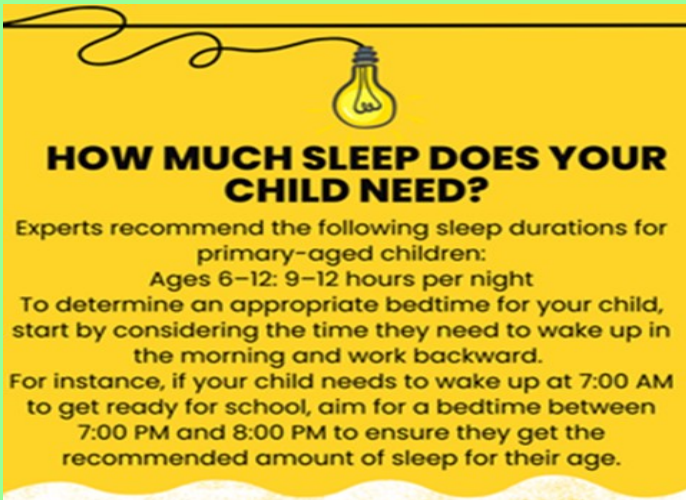
Why sleep matters for your child

Sleep isn't just about rest— it's when your child's brain and body do some of their most important work. Here's how sleep supports your child's mental health and development:

- ✓ Improves mood and emotional regulation: a well-rested child is better equipped to handle frustrations, challenges, and social interactions.
- ✓ Boosts learning and memory: sleep helps consolidate what your child has learned during the day, making it easier to retain new information.
- ✓ Reduces stress and anxiety: consistent sleep patterns can lower stress levels, helping your child feel calm and focused.
- ✓ Supports physical health: sleep strengthens the immune system and promotes healthy growth.

Signs your child might not be getting enough sleep

It's not always obvious when children are sleep deprived, but here are some common signs to watch for: difficulty waking up in the morning frequent mood swings or irritability trouble focusing or remembering things at school increased hyperactivity or impulsivity.



HOW MUCH SLEEP DOES YOUR CHILD NEED?

Experts recommend the following sleep durations for primary-aged children:

Ages 6-12: 9-12 hours per night

To determine an appropriate bedtime for your child, start by considering the time they need to wake up in the morning and work backward.

For instance, if your child needs to wake up at 7:00 AM to get ready for school, aim for a bedtime between 7:00 PM and 8:00 PM to ensure they get the recommended amount of sleep for their age.



TIPS FOR BETTER SLEEP HABITS

- 1 Set a consistent bedtime routine**
A predictable schedule helps signal to your child's brain that it's time to wind down.
- 2 Limit screen time**
Encourage your child to avoid screens at least an hour before bedtime, as blue light can interfere with sleep.
- 3 Create a calm sleep environment**
Keep your child's bedroom cool, quiet, and dark to promote restful sleep.
- 4 Encourage relaxation activities**
Reading a book, listening to soft music, or practicing deep breathing can help your child relax before bed.
- 5 Model good sleep habits**
Children learn by example, so demonstrating the value of prioritising sleep is crucial.

The Impact of Smartphones

There is a growing concern on how excessive use of smartphones can affect our children.

In addition to the effects of seeing inappropriate content online, the risk of cyberbullying and grooming, it is important that we also highlight the effects of smartphone use on our children's mental health.

If your child is using a smartphone then please try to ensure they maintain a healthy screen time limit.

According to King's College London, "two new studies of smartphone habits in teenagers have identified links between problematic smartphone use and depression, anxiety and insomnia." You can read the article by [clicking here](#).

Compass have published an article as well on what effects mobile phones have on children, [click here](#) to read.

LEGO Arcade

Are you looking for games for your child to play online? LEGO have a selection of fun games including Lego Ninjago and Lego Friends.

[Click here.](#)



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 www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about ROBLOX

PEGI RATING
7+

Roblox is one of the most popular video games on the market. By 2020, the game's makers were claiming that more than half of children in the USA play it. As a 'sandbox' title, Roblox offers a huge amount of creative freedom: it lets players create their own gaming experiences with the Roblox Studio to build custom levels and games, which can then be shared with other players online. Roblox fosters creative thinking and enjoys a robust online community of fans.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

CONTACT WITH STRANGERS

Roblox encourages players to communicate online (including a group chat facility). This could expose children to risks such as scammers, online predators, harassment, griefters and more. The in-game chat has some filters, but isn't perfect: players can still send harmful messages to others – such as general hostility – while predators can reach out to children directly.

PUBLIC SERVERS

Roblox has private or VIP servers which allow people to play exclusively with their friends, but this costs money. Most Roblox players will instead be on public servers that anyone can join. Servers can host games which focus on all kinds of aspects, including direct player interaction. Some games and servers, therefore, will put children more at risk of contact from strangers than others.

ONLINE DATERS

These are also called 'ODers' and are quite common in Roblox. An ODer is an individual who joins a game with the intention of finding someone to date online – and eventually meet in person. Such online dating is against the Roblox community guidelines, but this usually doesn't deter ODers. Some player-built Roblox game worlds have even been designed with online dating specifically in mind.

IN-APP PURCHASES

Roblox is actually free to download and play, but bear in mind that there are some hidden costs. Players are encouraged to make purchases in the game, for example, using real money. People can also buy extra Robux (the in-game currency) to spend on cosmetic items in the game, and some private or VIP servers also have a cost.

BBC News Item—Keep kids off Roblox if you're worried, its CEO tells parents

Read the full article [here](#).

If you have any concerns about your child or any other child at Robert Peel please do not hesitate to contact a Designated Safeguarding Lead who will know whom to contact for the best advice and help and are experienced in using the appropriate degree of confidentiality.

Robert Peel Primary School's Designated Safeguarding Leads are:



Miss L. Ganney
Head Teacher

Mr M. James
Deputy Head

Mrs N. Taylor
SEND Manager

Mrs D. Savage
Family Support Worker

If you have a concern about a child's safety or well-being please come and speak to one of these members of staff.

Alternatively, you can contact Central Bedfordshire Council's safeguarding team on: **0300 300 8585** or **0300 300 8123** out of hours.

Are you entitled to financial support for school lunches, daily snack, milk and school trips?

One quick phone call is all it takes, just a minute of your time to make a massive difference to you and your child.

We know that there are lots of things for your family to consider when the school starts but you could be missing out on some financial support for your child at school. Parents are able to register their child for Free School Meals which enables the school to gain additional funding to support with trips, milk and snacks. If your child is in Year 3, 4, 5 and 6 and you pay for hot lunches at the moment, by registering for Free School Meals you could save yourself nearly £400 on lunches alone.

It is a quick and easy process and all children from Nursery up are entitled to this additional funding if you as a parent are receiving one of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part IV of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The Guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit, and you're annual gross income does not exceed £16,190 as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs)
- Working Tax Credit run-on (paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)
- Universal Credit (during the initial roll-out of this benefit)

If you think you meet the free school meals eligibility criteria, please call

0300 300 8306.

When you call to apply for free school meals, please have the following information ready:

National Insurance numbers and dates of birth for you and your partner

Dates of birth for your children

If you receive support from the National Asylum Support Service, your NASS number.

Even if your child is in Reception, Year 1 or 2 and already get a free meal, do still apply as the school will receive funding to support your child in other ways.

It is so easy to apply, please call today!