

Welcome to the new term. We hope all our students and families have had a positive start to the academic year. At Brooklands Academy, the safety and wellbeing of our young people is at the heart of everything we do. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and the strongest safeguarding culture is created when school, families and young people work together. This issue we are focusing on three important areas: consent and healthy relationships, anti-bullying, and mental health and wellbeing.

1 | Consent and Healthy Relationships

Talking to young people about relationships and consent can feel awkward, but regular, open conversations at home can help them understand what healthy relationships look like, recognise when something is not right and know when to ask for help.

Starting the conversation

You do not need one big conversation. Little and often works best. Try a relaxed moment, perhaps while walking, travelling in the car or spending some quiet time together. TV, films, social media or something discussed at school can provide a natural starting point. Try asking: "What do you think about that?", "Do you think that is a healthy relationship? Why?" or "What would you do if a friend told you this was happening to them?" Most importantly, listen without judgement.

A healthy relationship should make a young person feel safe, valued and respected.

- be themselves and maintain their own friendships
- communicate openly and respect boundaries
- feel that there is an equal balance of power
- understand that consent must be freely given and can be withdrawn
- say no without feeling pressured or frightened

Be mindful of significant changes such as isolation from friends or family, another person monitoring a phone or social media, controlling where a young person goes or what a young person wears, or pressure to do things that feel uncomfortable.

Talk. Listen. Don't judge.

Consent is about boundaries, respect and choice. Regular conversations help young people recognise healthy relationships and know there is always someone they can turn to.

2 | Anti-Bullying: Everyone Has the Right to Feel Safe

At Brooklands Academy, we want every student to feel safe, respected and that they belong. Bullying is not tolerated, whether it happens face-to-face or online. Bullying can include verbal or physical behaviour, deliberate exclusion, spreading rumours, prejudice-based bullying, or repeated behaviour intended to intimidate or upset someone.

The Year 7 anti-bullying assembly took place on Monday to launch our Anti-bullying Ambassador programme. Students accepted onto the ABA programme will attend an Anti-Bullying Ambassador Conference before the end of this half term.

Planned activities include working with local poet Maureen Onwunali on an anti-bullying poem for National Poetry Day; an inclusion art project with the Pride Group; helping to decorate our planned Wellbeing Garden; a Trust-wide video/media competition in the summer term; Year 6 transition support and the Year 7 Colour Run.

Online behaviour can also affect young people beyond the school day through social media, messaging and gaming. Regular conversations can help you understand what is happening in your young person's friendships.

Questions that can help include:

- "How are things with your friends at the moment?"
- "Is there anyone making school difficult for you?"
- "What happens in your group chats?"
- "Is there anything happening online that is worrying you?"

Changes in friendships, behaviour, sleep, attendance or use of devices can sometimes indicate that a young person needs additional support. If your young person experiences upsetting online behaviour, encourage them not to respond or retaliate. Where appropriate, keep evidence such as screenshots and use platform reporting and blocking tools.

Most importantly, tell us. Sharing information allows school and home to work together to understand what is happening and provide the right support.

See it. Hear it. Report it.

Doing what's right isn't always easy, but it's always right. Telling someone is not “snitching” or “grassing”. It is asking for help. Listen, reassure and remind your young person that speaking up is the right thing to do.

3 | Mental Health and Wellbeing at Brooklands

We all have mental health, just as we all have physical health. Mental health is about how we think, feel and cope with experiences and challenges. For young people, mental health can change over time. When someone is struggling, families or school may notice changes in mood or behaviour, concentration, friendships, sleep, physical wellbeing or willingness to attend school.

How do we support students?

At Brooklands Academy, supporting positive mental health is a partnership between the young person, home, school and, where appropriate, external professionals. Our Mental Health Lead works collaboratively with students, families, staff and external services to provide a student-centred, wraparound approach.

- individual or group-based interventions
- person-centred and solution-focused approaches
- strategies that can be used consistently at school and at home
- working closely with parents and carers
- referrals to specialist services when additional support is required

Parents and carers are a crucial part of this support. Sharing information and working together can help us identify the right support at the right time.

Our whole-school approach includes Mental Health Awareness assemblies, staff mental health training and wellbeing, our Peer Mentoring Wellbeing Programme championed by Post-16 students, Exam Stress Busters and parent workshops. We also work with services including MHST, CAMHS, NXG, MIND, The Lowdown, Service Six, YoungMinds and CHUMS.

It is OK to ask for help.

You do not need to wait until things become overwhelming. If you notice a change in your young person's behaviour or wellbeing, or simply feel something is not quite right, please talk to us.

Further Support

CHUMS Milton Keynes Young Carers Service: Support for children and young people with caring responsibilities. [Find out more](#)

NHS Mental Health Services: Information about NHS mental health services and support. [Find out more](#)

Service Six Milton Keynes: Support for children, young people and families. [Find out more](#)

Mental Health Support Teams: Mental health and emotional wellbeing support working in partnership with schools. [Find out more](#)

Worried About a Young Person?

You do not need to be certain that something is wrong before contacting us. We would always rather you share a concern.

If you are concerned about your child's safety, wellbeing, relationships, experiences of bullying, online activity or mental health, please contact the Brooklands Academy Safeguarding Team: safeguarding@bla5d.com

Working together to keep our young people safe | By talking, listening, noticing changes and sharing concerns early, we can help every young person at Brooklands feel safe, supported and able to thrive.