

This week, our ASPIRE sessions have focused on the King's Coronation: the reasons for a Coronation; what to expect from a Coronation and celebrations this weekend. We hope that however you are spending this extra Bank Holiday that our families and friends enjoy the Coronation. Next week, we are focusing on mental health in our Aspire lessons.

After the inspiration of watching Grease at the theatre, our performers' rehearsals have taken on a new intensity as we get closer to our summer production of Grease. Snippets of well-known songs have been heard in the corridors, toes are tapping out dance moves and glimpses of costumes are appearing from Mrs Harris' prop cupboard! We also have a number of students that get involved in Performing Arts outside of school.



Earlier in the year, one of our Year 9 students had the lead role Bugsy with the Birtley Community Theatre junior production and last week Jorja from Year 7 was in the theatre production of Shrek which was performed at the Empire Theatre, Consett. It's fabulous to see our students enjoying the stage in and out of the Academy.

During the last five months a team of year 12 students have been working in partnership with the recycling & energy recovery Company Suez, conducting an environmental engineering project in return for an Industrial Cadet Gold Award. Students were challenged by Suez to design a sustainable solution to cleansing pond water at their Industrial site in Teesside. In January, the team attended a 2-day residential at Newcastle University to bolster their research, conduct practical investigations and build a model of their proposed solution. Since then, the team has submitted a written report and yesterday they reached another milestone when they presented their solution to a panel of external judges. Verbal presenting is not an easy task, yet such an important workplace skill to develop. Congratulations go to Luke B, Caitlin K and Mollie B on their project efforts so far.

Transition events are well under way at the Academy as we look ahead to welcoming our new cohort of Year 6s in September. Year 6 students have been visiting the Academy for STEM, Art and Technology extra-curricular activities. The students have been meeting our staff and experiencing our specialised classrooms and resources. Year 6 have been busy creating fruit kebabs, clay faces and 3D shapes. We would like to take this opportunity to wish all Year 6 students in our feeder primary schools all the best of luck in the SAT exams next week. We know they are going to be amazing. Good Luck Year 6!



In a change to published calendar dates, can Year 10 parents and carers please note that Parents Evening is on Monday 12th June. More information will be shared about the organisation of the event nearer the time.

You may have noticed that we are sharing, on a weekly basis, internet and online advice via our social media platforms. Keep an eye out for Web Safety Wednesdays – and useful advice for parents – this week’s topic is on managing device stress and anxiety.

# Helping children and young people with MANAGING DEVICE STRESS AND ANXIETY

The internet and advances in the capability of digital devices have afforded us arguably the fastest period of technological and social evolution in living memory: creating opportunities for us to interact with people anywhere in the world, 24 hours a day. It’s also, however, blurred safety boundaries and added new stresses for young people, who are often less aware of the hidden hazards. With almost half of 10–15-year-olds experiencing bullying online and algorithms pushing content in front of our children every day, it’s important to know how to address some of these challenges.

### WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

The internet is awash with sophisticated algorithms that learn from our online behaviour and try to predict our wants and needs. That’s very helpful in some respects, but it can make the online world difficult for children and young people to negotiate. Content can be brought to them at any time – it may not always be appropriate, and children may not have the ability or the support to deal with it.

### DIGITAL DEPENDENCY

As devices allow access to immediate external help in challenging situations, it’s a concern that children may not be developing the inner confidence to work things out for themselves. Likewise, group membership is hugely important to young people – both in digital and ‘real’ life – and being excluded from online conversations can cause damaging feelings of loneliness and isolation.

### LIVING ONLINE

Content is also directed at us through notifications from our apps: letting us know we have a new message or social post to read, for example. While that’s useful in some circumstances, it conditions us to keep going back online (and is designed to do so) and can be a near-constant demand on your child’s attention. As such alerts become more common, are we experiencing an ‘attack of the pings’?

### DISGUISED DISTRESS

Children often haven’t yet developed the emotional resources to deal with many of the setbacks of everyday life, so identifying when it’s specifically something online that’s worried them can be tricky. A certain level of stress is a normal response to a problem: it spurs us into action to keep ourselves safe. If the stress is excessive, though, it can feel overwhelming and potentially lead to anxiety or depression.

### PUSHY NOTIFICATIONS

There are now so many ways we can communicate online in real time (like instant messaging apps) or with a delay (such as on social media) that it’s possible to be constantly in conversation. Young people often prefer quickfire exchanges of text – but using fewer words can cause distressing miscommunications through the lack of non-verbal cues like facial expressions or tone of voice.

### ANTI-SOCIAL SOCIALS

Social media can bring people together in hugely positive ways. Sadly, it does also have a darker side, including ‘flame war’ arguments which can escalate quickly and have hurtful consequences. With so many people looking on, ‘group shaming’ situations are also common – while there are continual opportunities for young people to compare themselves negatively with other social media users.

### BLURRED BOUNDARIES

Notifications to our phones and tablets can be helpful, but they sometimes make one wonder who’s really in charge: the person or the device? Checking our phone as soon as it goes off is an easy habit to fall into – especially for young people. Try switching off non-essential alerts on your devices and encourage your child to do the same: you should both feel less triggered and more in control.

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### LEARN THE BASICS

It’s impossible to keep up with every online change or every new app. The best option is to make yourself aware of the fundamentals of how the internet operates, so you can help your child to grasp how – and why – content reaches them. Devices and the digital world can be confusing, so learning to understand them better will give you the confidence to talk to your child about them.

### PUSH DISTRACTIONS AWAY

This is tricky – and may depend on the child’s age – but any sudden change in behaviour is worth looking out for. If your child seems to be checking their phone or tablet more, doesn’t want to be parted from them, or appears unusually secretive, anxious or withdrawn, it could be a sign that something is amiss in relation to their device – and, possibly, that they’re in need of extra support.

### KEEP CHECKING IN

Healthy emotional regulation balances three systems: threat, drive and grounding. Down the various rabbit holes of the Internet, however, that balance can easily slip away – so it’s important to help your child manage their emotions when they’re online. Check in with them regularly when they’re on their device, and remember that ‘distraction’ and ‘relaxation’ aren’t always the same thing.

### TALK IT OUT

This is tricky – and may depend on the child’s age – but any sudden change in behaviour is worth looking out for. If your child seems to be checking their phone or tablet more, doesn’t want to be parted from them, or appears unusually secretive, anxious or withdrawn, it could be a sign that something is amiss in relation to their device – and, possibly, that they’re in need of extra support.

### LOOK FOR THE SIGNS

Be kind to yourselves as parents and carers. Remember that we’re all in the same boat, trying to safely guide our children through this complex, fast-moving digital environment. Getting into the habit of having natural, relaxed conversations with your child about their online life (and yours) can level the playing field and make it far easier for them to open up to you about any concerns.

### BE KIND: UNWIND

Be kind to yourselves as parents and carers. Remember that we’re all in the same boat, trying to safely guide our children through this complex, fast-moving digital environment. Getting into the habit of having natural, relaxed conversations with your child about their online life (and yours) can level the playing field and make it far easier for them to open up to you about any concerns.

### Meet Our Expert

Dr Carole Francis-Smith is an experienced counselling psychologist who specialises in promoting safe and ethical online communications. She consults with and offers bespoke training to businesses and organisations, supporting positive and effective online communications – often by considering some of the more hidden aspects of the various mediums.





**National Online Safety**  
#WakeUpWednesday

Source: <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/report/the-big-ask-big-answers/>  
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/childrensonlinebehaviourinenglandandwales/year-ending-march-2020>

 @natonlinesafety
  /NationalOnlineSafety
  @nationalonlinesafety
  @national\_online\_safety

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 29.03.2023

All students of the Academy have access to thousands of free e-books and audio books. Just download the free eplatform app and browse from thousands of different titles to choose for your listening enjoyment. A reminder that all students should have a reading book with them every day as part of their equipment. They can visit Mrs Horth in the library at break and lunchtimes for support in choosing a book.



ePlatform

1. Download the free ePlatform app (**IOS, Android, Windows**)
2. Search for **Consett Academy**
3. Log in using your Academy email and password
4. Borrow e-books and audiobooks for free!

*Free e-book  
& audiobook  
library!*



Consett Academy  
Access our eLibrary anywhere, anytime, on multiple devices.

Start Browsing or get the ePlatform app

Popular Titles

- Dear Evan Hansen by Neil Armbrust
- The Diary of a Young Girl by Anne Frank
- Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets by J.K. Rowling
- Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban by J.K. Rowling
- Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief by Rick Riordan
- Wonder by R.J. Palacio



**INCLUSION**

**PROGRESSION**

**EXCELLENCE**