

## ICS Safeguarding Newsletter 7

### Listening, Trust, Boundaries & Balance

Over the past few weeks, our newsletters have focused on *online safety* - an essential topic in today's connected world. This week, we're taking a broader look at safeguarding and exploring what it means in everyday life, both online and offline.

Safeguarding is about far more than responding to danger; it's about creating a culture of care, respect, and trust where children feel valued and confident to seek help. Below are four short pieces to support conversations at home and strengthen our shared commitment to keeping every child safe.

#### Creating a Culture of Listening

Listening is one of the most powerful safeguarding tools we have. When children feel heard and understood, they're far more likely to open up if something is worrying them. Yet in our busy lives, genuine listening can easily be overlooked.

Children don't always announce that something is wrong; instead, they might drop small hints or show changes in mood or behaviour. That's why how we listen matters just as much as what we hear.

When your child talks, try to give them your full attention—pause what you're doing, make eye contact, and show interest without rushing to fix the problem. Phrases such as, "That sounds really hard—tell me more about what happened," or "How did that make you feel?" help children feel safe to share.

It's also okay to admit when you don't know what to say. A calm, reassuring response — "Thank you for telling me, I'm really glad you did"— goes a long way. The goal isn't to solve everything instantly, but to create a culture at home where your child knows they'll be listened to, believed, and supported.

**At school, we aim to model this too. Listening is the foundation of trust, and trust is at the heart of safeguarding.**

#### Safe Adults: Who Can My Child Talk To?

Every child deserves to have trusted adults they can turn to—both at home and beyond. These are people who make them feel comfortable, who listen without judgement, and who take their worries seriously.

## ICS Safeguarding Newsletter 7

You might talk with your child about who their *'safe adults'* are. This could include parents, grandparents, teachers, coaches, neighbours, or a school counsellor. It helps to have at least three to five trusted adults, so a child always has someone to go to even if one person isn't available.

A trusted adult is someone who:

- Listens carefully and calmly
- Believes what a child says
- Doesn't ask them to keep secrets that make them feel uncomfortable
- Takes appropriate action to help keep them safe

Encourage your child to keep their list of trusted adults somewhere visible—maybe on the fridge, in a notebook, or inside their school bag.

Reinforce the message that *no problem is too small to share*. Whether it's something that happened online, a friendship issue, or an uncomfortable situation, there are always safe people ready to help.

**At ICS, our safeguarding team and pastoral staff are part of this trusted network. We work together with families to ensure every child knows that they will be listened to, supported, and never judged for speaking up.**

### The Power of Boundaries: Teaching Respect for Self and Others

Safeguarding isn't only about preventing harm—it's also about empowering children to respect themselves and others. One of the most effective ways to do this is by teaching the importance of *boundaries*.

Boundaries are the invisible lines that help us feel safe—emotionally, physically, and socially. When children understand boundaries, they learn that they have the right to say *"no"* and that others have the right to say *"no"* too.

You can reinforce this at home in simple, everyday moments:

- Encourage your child to ask before borrowing or touching someone else's belongings.
- Support them if they say they don't want a hug, even from a family member—respecting their choice teaches autonomy and consent.

## ICS Safeguarding Newsletter 7

- Praise your child when they express their feelings calmly, such as, “*I need some space right now,*” or “*I don’t like that.*”

These moments help children internalise the message that their body and emotions belong to them—and that respecting other people’s comfort and limits is equally important.

In school, this language of respect forms part of our Personal, Social, and Emotional Education (PSED) curriculum. Together, we help children grow into confident, considerate young people who know how to protect themselves and care for others.

### The Digital World Meets the Real World: Balancing Online and Offline Safety

After several weeks of focusing on online safety, this week’s topic brings it all together—because online and offline wellbeing are deeply connected.

While technology offers incredible opportunities for learning and connection, it can also blur boundaries between the digital and real worlds. Screen time, online friendships, and social media influence how children see themselves and interact with others. Safeguarding children means helping them find balance.

Encourage your family to talk openly about *how* online activities make them feel. For example, “Do you feel happier after using this app?” or “What do you enjoy about this game?” These questions shift focus from rules to reflection.

Creating *device-free zones*—such as at the dinner table or in bedrooms—can also support healthier habits. Children notice and copy what adults do, so modelling balance matters more than perfection.

Offline activities—reading, sports, creative play, outdoor time—are not just hobbies; they are protective factors for mental health. They build resilience, social confidence, and emotional regulation.

When we treat digital wellbeing as part of overall wellbeing, we help children thrive both online and offline. The message is simple: the goal isn’t to disconnect from the digital world, but to live within it safely, wisely, and well.

### Final Thought

## ICS Safeguarding Newsletter 7

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, but it begins with connection. Whether through listening, identifying trusted adults, setting boundaries, or finding balance, these everyday actions create protective spaces where children can flourish.

Thank you for working with us to make our community one where every child feels safe, valued, and heard - every day.