

18th September 2025

Mr A Dryden, Principal

Address: West Denton Way, Newcastle upon Tyne NE5 2SZ

Tel: 0191 4813710

Email: studiowest.enquiries@northernleaderstrust.org

Dear Parents and Carers

Safeguarding Update – Working Together to Keep Children Safe

As we begin a new school year, we want to take a moment to share how we work to keep all our students safe and how you, as parents and carers, can reach out for support or raise concerns.

How to Report a Concern or Seek Support

If you are ever worried about a child's safety or wellbeing, there are several ways you can contact us:

- Speak directly to our **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Laura Bell**
- Visit **reception** to request a safeguarding concern form
- Use the **email address** listed on the 'Safeguarding' page of our school website
- Contact **Children's Social Services** directly: 0191 2772500

Children can also speak to any member of staff, as all staff receive annual safeguarding training. If they prefer, they can ask to speak to the DSL or our **Deputy Safeguarding Leads: Mr Bouleau and Ms Keegan**. We also provide paper forms and email options for students who may find it difficult to speak in person.

Understanding Local Safeguarding Risks

We regularly assess safeguarding risks in our local area and educate staff and students on how to recognise and respond to them. We want to keep you informed too, so you can support your child at home.

The key concerns we're currently focusing on are:

- **Substance misuse and County Lines exploitation**
- **Poor attendance**
- **Domestic violence**
- **Anti-social behaviour**

Substance Misuse & County Lines

County Lines refers to criminal networks that exploit children to move and sell drugs. These gangs often use intimidation and social media to recruit young people.

We are particularly concerned about **vaping**, which is illegal for under-18s. Some vapes contain illegal substances, and students may be pressured into holding or distributing them for older individuals. This can be a gateway into County Lines involvement.

Signs to look out for:

- New or older friends
- Expensive or unexplained possessions
- Multiple or changing phones (especially cheap 'burner' phones)
- Obsession with messages or calls
- Changes in mood, behaviour, or school progress
- Self-harm or going missing
- Vaping

What you can do:

If you're worried about your child, please speak to a member of staff. We're here to help.

Attendance Matters

Regular attendance is vital for your child's wellbeing and education. If we don't see children, we can't support them.

Signs that concern us:

- Repeated or unexplained absences
- Poor punctuality
- Sudden changes in attendance patterns
- No contact from home

What you can do:

Let us know if you're struggling to get your child into school. We'll work with you to find solutions.

What we'll do:

We'll listen and support you. If attendance doesn't improve, it may result in a fine, but our priority is always to help first.

Domestic Violence

We understand how difficult it can be to talk about issues at home. If you're experiencing domestic violence, please know that we're here to support you and your child.

Signs we may notice:

- Behaviour changes
- Strong reactions to being challenged
- Discomfort around male staff
- Frequent absences
- Difficulty staying in lessons

What you can do:

Reach out to us. We can offer support, including referrals to Early Help services.

Anti-Social Behaviour

We want our students to be respectful members of both the school and wider community.

Signs we monitor:

- Reports of shoplifting, vandalism, or poor behaviour in public
- Disruptive behaviour in school (e.g. graffiti, swearing, discriminatory language)

What you can do:

Let us know if you're seeing issues at home. We'll work with you to set boundaries and support positive behaviour.

Social Media Advice: Snapchat

Children under 13 should not be using Snapchat. It can lead to friendship issues and exposure to inappropriate content. We'll be sharing monthly advice from the **National College** to help you manage social media use at home.

If you'd like to talk about any of the issues mentioned, please don't hesitate to contact us. We're here to support you and your child every step of the way.

Warm regards



Mrs Laura Bell
Designated Safeguarding Lead
Senior Vice Principal