

Dear Parents and Guardians,

This week is national **Child Exploitation Week** and we have been educating our students about the #LookCloser campaign through our assemblies and mentoring. Please find below useful information regarding this topic.

What is Exploitation?

Exploitation is... taking advantage of someone for your own benefit. The exploited person may feel they are consenting to this, but in fact there is a power imbalance and they are being manipulated, coerced or controlled. Exploitation of children can take many forms- for example, using a child to distribute drugs or to handle money or weapons to avoid these being found. It can also mean persuading a child to do something sexual, even if they feel that they are willingly taking part. Exploitation is a form of abuse. It can be emotional, sexual, financial or physical abuse or a combination of these. It can happen online or in person. It can be perpetrated by a single individual or by a group. Sometimes young people are exploited by other young people of a similar age but often the exploiter is older than the child.

Signs to look out for...

- Going missing; staying out late or skipping school.
- Excessive phone activity; messages from new friends or people you don't know. Being secretive about their phone. Having a second phone.
- Gifts and unexplained new items: Coming home with new items that they wouldn't normally be able to afford, tracksuits, food, technology.
- Sudden changes in behaviour: change in friendship groups, clothing, style of music, language used or school attended. Changes in mood, such as becoming aggressive or withdrawn.
- New social contact: new and unfamiliar people might start to call at the house. These new contacts can be made through social media or gaming sites.
- Physical or mental health: Unexplained injuries or bruises, they maybe unwilling to discuss what is going on.

What can you do?

If you have concern about child exploitation then [speak to us at school](#) or another professional – this could include the police.

Remain calm and remember that children are victims of exploitation and abuse. Create a safe non-judgemental space for your child to share should they feel that they can.

Key Statistics

From the national analysis of police recorded CSAE offences (VKPP, revised Dec 2025):

- **122,768 child sexual abuse and exploitation offences** were recorded by police in England & Wales in **2024** — a **6% increase** from 2023.
- **Online exploitation** now accounts for **42%** of all CSAE offences — a major rise linked to technology-enabled abuse.
- **Under reporting is severe:** only **1 in 10** CSAE offences are estimated to be reported.

National support and helplines...

There are lots of websites and support charities to access and gain advice.

- Parents Against Child Exploitation: www.paceuk.info
- NSPCC: Helpline 0808 800 5000 www.nspcc.org.uk
- The Children's Society 'Look Closer' campaign
- Crime Stoppers: www.crimestoppers-uk.org 0800 555 111
- Childline: www.childline.org.uk 0800 1111
- CEOP (On-line abuse or exploitation): www.ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre 0370 496 762
- Anti-Terrorism Hotline: 0800 789 321
- Fearless: www.fearless.org
- SPACE (Criminal Exploitation): www.bespaceaware.co.uk
- Catch22 poster hub: www.catch-22.org.uk/ spot-the-signs-poster-hub
- Police non-emergency line to report a person missing: 101 or www.police.uk/pu/contact-the-police/uk-police-forces

How You Can Help...

- **Talk:** Open conversations with your children about healthy relationships.
- **Listen:** Be a safe space for someone who may be struggling.
- **Share:** Spread awareness of support services.
- **Act:** If you suspect someone is in danger, contact the police or a support service.

Need Help Now?

If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, call 999.

For non-emergency support, please reach out to any of the services listed above. You are not alone.

Exploitation isn't a choice!

Early intervention can help prevent serious harm.

If you need any further information or to reach out to the school, please do not hesitate to contact:

**Mrs G Moody,
Vice Principal
Designated Safeguarding Lead**

**01793 846100
gmoody@ridgewayschool.co.uk**

