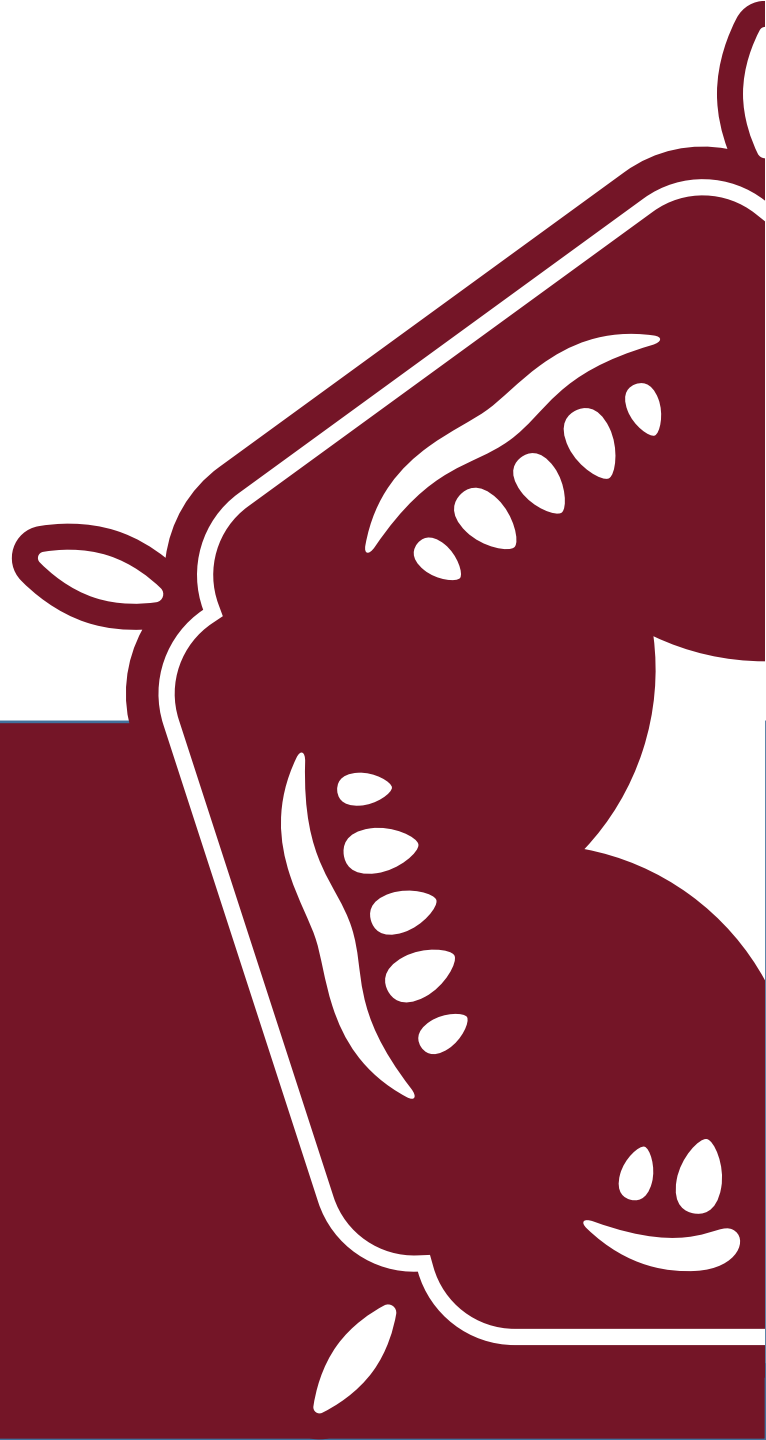
THE BRITTONS ACADEMY

Safeguarding & Wellbeing Newsletter

October 2026



EMPOWER LEARNING ACADEMY TRUST

Teenage Steroid Abuse Resources

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- Staff in secondary schools and parents/carers may hear pupils / children talk about whether someone is "natty" or "not natty". It means natural, or using steroids. Online content about looksmaxxing and bodybuilding often presents steroid use as normal, and some of it reaches children.
- The risks are greater for teenagers. Their bodies are still developing. Products bought online can be fake, the wrong strength or contaminated. Doctors report that misuse often starts in adolescence.
- There is support available and please contact your child's year team, if you have concerns.
- What is looksmaxxing? Guidance for parents | Internet Matters

Keeping Children Safe Online – Understanding AI

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Artificial intelligence (AI) is becoming part of everyday life – it helps us with route planning, shopping suggestions, and even grammar checks. Generative AI tools such as ChatGPT, Google Gemini and Grammarly can create realistic text, images, and even videos from a simple prompt. While these tools can be exciting and useful, they also come with risks.

What are the safeguarding risks?

AI can be misused in ways that may put children and young people at risk, including:

Hacking and scams – AI can generate convincing messages designed to steal information.

Sexual exploitation – AI tools can be misused to create explicit or altered images of children.

'Deepfakes' – technology can insert a child's face into pornographic or humiliating videos.

Catfishing and 'sextortion' – criminals may use AI-generated photos to trick children into sharing personal information or images.

Fake news and misinformation – realistic but false images or stories can be created to mislead.

AI chatbot relationships – some tools allow children to form intense, unhealthy attachments to AI 'friends.

Signs to look out for

If your child may be experiencing online risks, you might notice they:

Spend significantly more (or less) time online

Stay up late at night using devices and seem unusually tired

Receive a high volume of messages or notifications

Show sudden changes in mood after going online

Become secretive about what they're doing on devices

What can you do at home?

Talk openly about AI – both its benefits and its dangers.

Stay aware of their online activity – use parental controls where available.

Listen without judgment if your child shares a concern – reassure them they won't be blamed.

At school, we teach students about the risks and responsibilities of using AI, but these conversations are always more effective when reinforced at home.

HAF sport activities during half term

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Dagenham Dynamos – free sessions to support wellbeing

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DAGENHAM DYNAMOS

Free Flag Football + Wellbeing Workshops

Term time only

Old Dagenham Park

Build confidence. Get active. Be part of a team.

Who is it for?

For young people in Barking & Dagenham
Ages 11–16
Weekly flag football sessions
Wellbeing workshops and support

What could it do?

Boost confidence
Build friendships
Improve wellbeing
Encourage teamwork
Promote fun in a safe, non-contact sport

Schools or parents can refer young people who may benefit from extra support with wellbeing, confidence, attendance, social isolation or access to positive activities.

DAGENHAM DYNAMOS

Free Flag Football + Wellbeing Workshops

Term time only

Old Dagenham Park

What is Flag Football?

Flag Football is a non-contact version of American football where players stop opponents by pulling a flag from the belt instead of tackling.

Focussing on speed, skill, and teamwork, Flag Football is a fun, inclusive sport that combines running, passing, catching, and strategy in a safe, non-contact environment.

Flag Football is one of the world's fastest-growing sports, giving everyone the chance to play, compete, and have fun.

The Dagenham Dynamos project is brought to you by You & Me Counselling and funded by Go!London in collaboration with the NFL

www.youandmecounselling.org.uk. Registerd Charity No.1163561

Lifeline Girls Club

A FREE, 12-MONTH COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMME FOR GIRLS AGED 11-18 IN EAST LONDON

Delivered by	Funded by	When	Where
LifeLine Projects	MOPAC - Girls and Young Women Local Groups Fund	Every Tuesday, 4:00–6:00pm	25 Neville Road, Dagenham RM8 3QS

Programme overview

SW!TCH Lives is a free, 12-month, trauma-informed programme for girls in East London who have lived experience of exploitation, coercion, harmful influences, violence, unhealthy relationships or situations where they have felt unable to make informed choices. The programme provides a safe, restorative and youth-centred space to build practical skills, confidence, positive connections and a stronger sense of agency.

To access the programme, young people must be formally referred and are expected to attend sessions regularly. Consistent attendance is important, not only for their own progress, but because the group dynamic and peer relationships are central to how the programme works.

REFERRALS & PARTNERSHIPS

We welcome referrals from professionals, schools, community organisations and parents/carers who believe the programme may be suitable.

PROFESSIONAL / PARENT/CARER/SCHOOL REFERRAL

Referral - SW!TCH Lives: The Reclaimed Project - LifeLine Projects

YOUNG PERSON EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

SWITCH Girls Club – Fill in form

Pupil Assistance Programme – Caregiver Helpline

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- The helpline provides immediate support for the wellbeing of the caregiver themselves too, as supporting a young person can bring about many different challenges.
- Trained counsellors will be able to provide advice on many areas for caregivers who are supporting a child or young person through:
- Generalised anxiety - Excessive worry about everyday matters.
- Social phobias - Severe feelings of self-consciousness and insecurity in social settings.
- Depression - Persistent feelings of sadness, anxiety, and/or emptiness.
- Eating disorders.
- Risk taking behaviours, including substance use.
- Suicidal ideation.
- Self-harm.
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

- We strongly recommend that all our parents and caregivers download the Wisdom App as it is the best way to access support and to make the most of your Health Assured membership.

Pupil Assistance Programme – Caregiver Helpline

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- This professional service can help you to support your child with all aspects of their emotional wellbeing, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- The number to call is 0800 012 1571 and the helpline can provide you with immediate support and advice.
- It is a completely free and confidential service – nothing you discuss will be shared with school.
- You will be asked for a school code. The code for Brittons parents/carers can be found on the version of this newsletter sent to you via Edulink.

School closure during Half-term

School will close on Thursday 22nd October for the Hal-term break. We will return to school on Monday 2nd November 2026 (we return on week B timetable). During the holidays, staff emails will not be checked regularly.

Please be reminded that if you are a Brittons parent/carer, you have access to a 'Caregiver Helpline'. This professional service can help you to support your child with all aspects of their emotional wellbeing, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The number to call is 0800 012 1571 and the helpline can provide you with immediate support and advice. It is a completely free and confidential service – nothing you discuss will be shared with school. You will be asked for a school code. The code for Brittons parents/carers can be found on the version of this newsletter sent to you via Edulink.

If you require any support over the break, please contact:

- 101 – non-emergency police
- 999 – Emergency police
- 01708 433222 – 9am – 5pm, Havering Social Care
- 01708 433999 – out of hours, Havering Social Care

For mental health support, you can access:

- Via GP / A & E – Queen's Hospital
- www.kooth.com – online counselling
- Mental Health Helpline for Urgent Help - NHS (www.nhs.uk)
- Mental Health Direct - 0800 995 1000
- 0300 300 1888 (CAMHS)
- NHS Direct – 111
- Young minds - https://youngminds.org.uk/
- Shout - UK's 24/7 Crisis Text Service for Mental Health Support | Shout 85258 (giveusashout.org)
- Papyrus UK Suicide Prevention | Prevention of Young Suicide (papyrus-uk.org)
- The Mix (11am – 11pm confidential support) 0808 808 4994

For other additional sources of information, you can access:

- Parenting Surgery - 01708 432636/ parenting@havering.gov.uk
- HAF activities - www.Havering.gov.uk/HAF (more information available online for selected families)

Any member of staff at school, including your **form tutor, SGM, HOY** and everyone on the **Safeguarding** poster in classrooms.

childline
ONLINE, ON THE PHONE, ANYTIME
childline.org.uk | 0800 1111

Other people that can offer support include your parents, doctor, a nurse, www.nhs.uk counsellor, PC Drew.

St John Ambulance

kooth
kooth.com

Kooth- your online mental wellbeing community. Have you downloaded the app?

just like us
THE LGBT+ YOUNG PEOPLE'S CHARITY

Where can you go for support?

PAPYRUS
PREVENTION OF YOUNG SUICIDE

HOPELINEUK
0800 068 41 41

HEAD STRONG

Headstrong is a new online space aimed exclusively at young people with a focus on promoting positive mental wellbeing. It is a section of the Youthscape charity.
Within Youthscape they also offer support for young people who are risk of self harm - **Alumina**

0808 1000 900
THE LUCY FAITHFULL FOUNDATION
Working to protect children

GamCare
Gambling Support Starts Here

Change Grow Live | Wize-up Thurrock

Wize-up are a free and confidential drug and alcohol service for young people under 18

If you need support relating to Careers and your future after Brittons, pop into the Careers Library during break or lunch. These websites may also be helpful

- https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk
- https://vinspired.com – young peoples volunteering charity
- https://www.ncsyes.co.uk 15-17 Year olds National Citizen Service
- https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/ - research careers your interested in.
- https://www.startprofile.com/ - Explore your dream Job!

mind
for better mental health

Beat
Eating disorders

"It's alright to ask for help"
SAMARITANS
116 123