Safeguarding Bulletin

beth.chitty@brixhamcollege.tsat.uk – Designated safeguarding lead
zoe.harrison@brixhamcollege.tsat.uk – Deputy designated safeguarding lead

Netflix's 'Adolescence' just pulled back the curtain on something every parent, needs to know—the hidden language of emojis.

Online, young people are communicating in ways that most adults completely miss. What looks innocent could have a much darker meaning.

Here are some of the codes being used:

🔴 Red Pill – "I see the truth." Used in toxic male spaces to mean waking up to supposed hidden 'truths' about women and society, often linked to misogynistic ideologies.

🔵 Blue Pill – Represents those who are "blind to the truth" or still believe in mainstream views about relationships and gender dynamics.

🧨 Dynamite Emoji – An "exploding red pill," meaning someone is a radicalised incel.

🫘 Kidney Bean – A symbol linked to incel culture, sometimes mocking women.

💯 100 Emoji – Tied to the "80/20 rule," the belief that 80% of women are only attracted to 20% of men.

⚫ Black Hole – Used to express depression, hopelessness, or being sucked into negative online spaces.

🌪 Tornado – Represents chaos or feeling overwhelmed, sometimes used to indicate mental distress.

🐸 Frog Emoji – Associated with alt-right and extremist meme culture, often linked to Pepe the Frog, which has been co-opted by some toxic online groups.

🦅 Eagle – A symbol of extreme nationalism, sometimes used in far-right online spaces.

💀 Skull – While often just slang for "that's funny" or "I'm dead (from laughing)," in certain groups, it can signal darker themes like nihilism or self-harm.

❤️💙💛🤍🧡 Heart Colours – Not just about love!

❤️ = Love
💜 = Lust
💛 = "Are you interested?"
🤍 = Interested but not in sex
🧡 = "You'll be okay"

So, what should parents do?

Get Curious, Not Combative – Ask open-ended questions: "I saw something about emojis meaning different things. Have you heard of this?" Keep the conversation light.

Create a Judgment-Free Zone – If your child feels like they'll be punished for opening up, they won't. Make it clear you're there to listen, not just lecture.

Decode Together – Ask them to explain their digital world. What do different symbols mean? Who are the influencers they follow? Don't assume, ask.

Teach Critical Thinking – Help them question online content. "Why do you think some groups push this idea? Who benefits?" Arm them with questions, not just rules.

Monitor Without Spying – Open conversations work better than secret surveillance. Make checking in on their online spaces a normal part of parenting, not a crisis move.

Be Real About Manipulation – Explain how toxic online groups groom young people by making them feel special, included, or like they have 'insider knowledge.'

Build Their Offline Confidence – The more they feel valued and confident in the real world, the less they'll seek validation in dangerous online spaces.

Did you know we have our own online safety hub? You can find it here.
There are lots more tips for keeping young people safe online available on the Safer Internet Centre website here.

Wellbeing support

Many young people struggle with low mood or anxiety. Growing up is hard and it is important to remember that these feelings are normal. When some additional support is needed, The Children's Society can help with a range of issues including; dealing with hard feelings, relationships, identity/ culture, plans for the future and more.
The quickest and easiest way to access this support is via their drop-in service available across Torbay.

Kooth also provide free mental health/ wellbeing support to young people. Below is a free recorded session for parents explaining how Kooth works, how your child can access support, keeping young people safe and tips for talking to your child about their feelings. **Watch it here.**

Safeguarding and Attendance

A child who is not in school is not achieving: development, social and emotional wellbeing and safety may all be compromised.

A pupil who misses more days of school is likely to under achieve in their GCSEs. We can use current research and data from the DfE to estimate the indirect effect on earnings in the future.

- One day of additional absence between Years 7 to 11 for a typical student was associated with an approximate £7505 (2024 prices) loss in future earnings.
- We find the likelihood of being in receipt of benefits increases by 2.7 times for pupils who are classified as persistently absent (>10% absence). This rises to 4.2 times for those who are classified as severely absent (>50% absence).
- The likelihood of being in sustained employment for 12 months decreases by approximately 60% for pupils who are classified as persistently absent and approximately 75% for those who are classified as severely absent.

Ensuring good attendance now, ensures your child reaches their full potential later.

If a child starts to feel worried about school, they may find it hard to attend or avoid going completely then this is known as emotional based school avoidance.
Devon County have published some great advice and resources for parents to support with EBSA here.

Family Hubs bring together all the support a family may need from pregnancy through to young people turning 19 (or 25 if they experience SEND).
Torbay online Family Hub provides free, local and trusted information, services and support.