



### WHO TO CONTACT IF YOU HAVE A CONCERN ABOUT A CHILD

If you are worried about a child's safety, please do not hesitate to contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputies straightaway.

Bedford Borough Integrated Front Door  
(children's social services) 01234 718700  
Out of hours – 0300 3008123

If a child is in immediate danger, call the Police on 999

#### Meet the Designated Safeguarding Team:

The Safeguarding Team oversee and coordinate all aspects of the school's work to ensure that children are kept safe  
[safeguarding@goldington.beds.sch.uk](mailto:safeguarding@goldington.beds.sch.uk)

#### Designated Safeguarding Lead

Mr Will Atkinson

[atkinsonw@goldington.beds.sch.uk](mailto:atkinsonw@goldington.beds.sch.uk)

#### Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

Head of Year Seven:

Mrs Anthea Jones

[jonesa@goldington.beds.sch.uk](mailto:jonesa@goldington.beds.sch.uk)

#### School Safeguarding Governor:

Mr Neil Davies

[daviesn@goldington.beds.sch.uk](mailto:daviesn@goldington.beds.sch.uk)

#### Special Educational Needs &/or Disabilities Coordinator:

Miss Claire Johnstone

[johnstonec@goldington.beds.sch.uk](mailto:johnstonec@goldington.beds.sch.uk)

#### Head of Year Eight:

Mrs Louise McCarthy-Gardner

[mccarthy-gardnerl@goldington.beds.sch.uk](mailto:mccarthy-gardnerl@goldington.beds.sch.uk)

#### Head of Year Nine:

Mr Michael Lincoln

[lincolnm@goldington.beds.sch.uk](mailto:lincolnm@goldington.beds.sch.uk)

#### Head of Year Ten:

Mr James Pinkney

[pinknevj@goldington.beds.sch.uk](mailto:pinknevj@goldington.beds.sch.uk)

#### Head of Year Eleven:

Mr Liam Hall

[halll@goldington.beds.sch.uk](mailto:halll@goldington.beds.sch.uk)

All can be contacted via the school office on 01234 261516

For a copy of our school's Child Protection Policy, please visit the Safeguarding page on our [school website](#)

Welcome to the thirtieth edition of the safeguarding newsletter from the Goldington Academy safeguarding team. Our aim is to bring you all the latest, relevant help and advice on issues that we feel will be of importance to you.

In this issue, we focus on **Clickbait** and **Toxic masculinity**. We teach pupils about online dangers through our Life Skills curriculum and through our assembly programme.

Safeguarding children is everybody's responsibility. If you have concerns about the safety or welfare of any child, please do not hesitate to speak to a member of staff.

We hope that you will find the information in this newsletter useful. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you require any further information or support with any of the topics raised.

Yours sincerely

Mr W Atkinson

**Assistant Headteacher**

**Designated Safeguarding Lead**

### Clickbait

Around one in five headlines online are clickbait. Clickbait is content designed to influence you to visit a page, video or image online. They usually have outrageous and misleading headlines, scripts or images. This kind of content is hard enough for adults to resist. It can be even harder for children who are still developing the skills to stay focused and consider the consequences of their actions.

Many platforms use a clickbait strategy to make money. This is because ad networks allow apps and websites to earn money from the number of views that their ads receive. Their business model encourages ad-supported networks to create clickbait content. The more shocking the story, the more views they collect and the more money they make. This can also spread misinformation, fake news and propaganda.

There is still plenty that can be done though to limit its influence, especially in relation to young people who are often more susceptible to sensationalist headlines. The #WakeUpWednesday guide details the potential hazards around clickbait and has expert tips for avoiding them [What you need to know about Clickbait | Free online safety guide](#).



# Navigating Masculinity

## The Media's Influence on Young Males

### Masculinity



Understanding masculinity is key to comprehending how it could become negative. Masculinity is a term for qualities or behaviours that people associate with being a boy/man. Being strong and brave are examples of what society traditionally expects from men. **It is important** to note that not all masculinity is toxic. It is ok for boys and men to be strong and brave in healthy ways. However, it becomes an issue when some of these ideas of 'being a man' become more extreme.

### Toxic Masculinity



The phrase toxic masculinity refers to when the ideas of masculinity and 'being a man' become harmful and extreme. People who promote toxic masculinity believe to 'be a man' you must:

- ❌ **Never show any feelings or emotions:** This means being strong all the time, not crying or feeling sad - even if you are.
- ❌ **Be aggressive and tough:** You must always be ready to fight or be in charge, even if it hurts others.
- ❌ **Hide your weaknesses:** You can never ask for support/advice or admit you are wrong - that makes you vulnerable.
- ❌ **Think you are stronger and better than girls or women:** This is disrespectful and untrue.

Recently on social media, the more harmful extremist views of what defines masculinity have increased in popularity.

### Core Messages of Toxic Masculinity



Young men can be influenced into these harmful communities through the promotion of ideals such as:

**Advocating for Dominant Male/Submissive Female Roles** - promoting exaggerated male characteristics like physical strength, focusing on the idea of the 'alpha male'. This is usually paired with the ideal that women are meant to be obedient and submissive to men.

**Men's Rights** - focusing on promoting 'men's rights', framing their content as a 'solution' to the increase of women's rights. This can seem relatable to young men who feel excluded by the equality movement, especially regarding feminism.

**Emotional Engagement** - claiming to empathise with the struggles that young men face such as exclusion, rejection or confusion about society's expectations. They often promise a future of wealth and relationships if their promoted lifestyle is followed. This makes content relatable for vulnerable young people while also giving them hope.

The buzz around Netflix's *Adolescence* sparks discussions on the impact of negative masculinity portrayals on young people.

The show highlights a growing concern: young males whilst online, are increasingly exposed to harmful, extremist views of what it is to be masculine. To address this, it's crucial to promote healthier models of masculinity, emphasising emotional expression, self-awareness, and helping young men critically engage with, rather than be unquestioningly influenced by online content.

### Signs a Child May Be Affected by Toxic Masculinity



Although valuing masculinity is not always toxic, it is important to be aware of the signs that a child may be influenced by extremist views.

- Withdrawal from friends/family
- Repressing emotions and rejecting support
- Low self-esteem and insecurity
- Speaking negatively about women (e.g., appearance, relationships)
- Excessive time spent on specific websites/apps
- Obsession with physical appearance

### Top Tips for Having Supportive Conversations



Engage in conversations about:

- ✓ **Healthy relationships** and treating girls/women respectfully.
- ✓ **Healthy masculinity**, model emotional expression and self-awareness.
- ✓ **Use parental controls** on social media to monitor screen time and limit harmful content consumed.
- ✓ **Ensure** the young people in your care know who their trusted adults are, that they can confide in if they are anxious about content they find online.
- ✓ **Introduce** positive male role models who embody healthy masculinity.
- ✓ **Educate** the young people in your care about how they can critically evaluate online content.

### Language and Symbols



Discriminatory language and harmful emojis used in extremist online communities play a role in creating a culture that normalises harmful views of masculinity.

- 🔴 **Red pill** - A reference to the film *The Matrix*. If you are a 'red pill', you are 'waking up' to a 'reality' of the world being against you because women are in charge/only attractive men are successful.
- 🖤 **Black pill** - This refers to accepting the belief that women choose sexual partners based on predetermined genetic features and a man cannot change this.
- 🟢 **The 80 to 20 rule** - The belief that 80% of women are only attracted to 20% of men.
- 🔴 **Kidney bean/coffee beans** - Used to call someone or self-identify as an incel (involuntary celibate).
- 👤 **Alphas and Betas** - Alphas are believed to be confident men who are leaders. Betas are believed to be submissive, weak men.

## What parents & educators need to know about energy drinks

[What you need to know about energy drinks | Free E-Guide](#)

While the short-term benefits of energy drinks can be attractive it is not wise to ignore the potential health risks. Consuming these beverages regularly can have negative effects on the heart and blood pressure and even cause dependency on these products to keep users' energy at a 'normal' level. Factoring in that many shops have issued a voluntary ban on selling these drinks to under-16s, the rise in children and young people using energy drinks is a cause for concern.

This marked increase in young people using highly caffeinated drinks to supplement their energy has heightened the risk of these health issues arising in children, at a time in their lives where such impacts can have greater, longer-lasting consequences. Our guide addresses these possible hazards letting you know how to minimise them for children and young people who like the occasional can.

<http://nationalonlinesafety.com/enrol/goldington-academy>

Once you have registered, you will be able to access the "Online Safety for Parents and Carers course" and National Online Safety's Resources (which includes a wide range of online platform guides on the latest social media channels and games). This aims to help empower parents with the knowledge to protect their children from the dangers of the internet.

## Early Help Service

The Early Help service is made up of six Early Help professionals who support schools to co-ordinate early help for pupils and their families. The Early Help service includes the following teams:

- Adolescent response team
- Early Help Hub
- Education Welfare
- Family Information Service
- Family Support Hub
- Inclusion Support
- Parenting Team
- Strengthening Families Team

For further information, please visit [Early Help Assessment - Overview | Bedford Borough Council](#) or speak to any member of the school's safeguarding team.