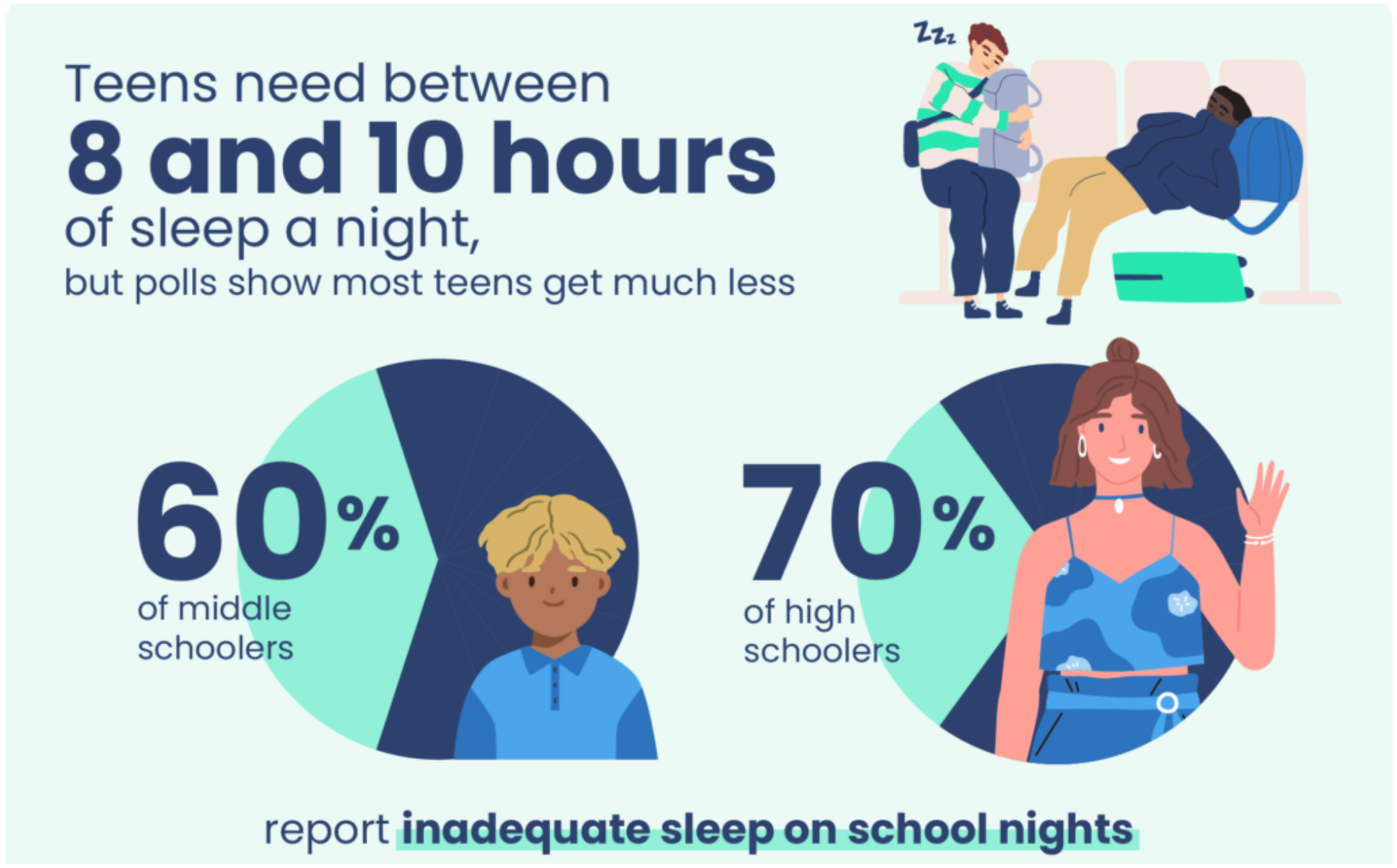
FAMILIES BULLETIN
27th February

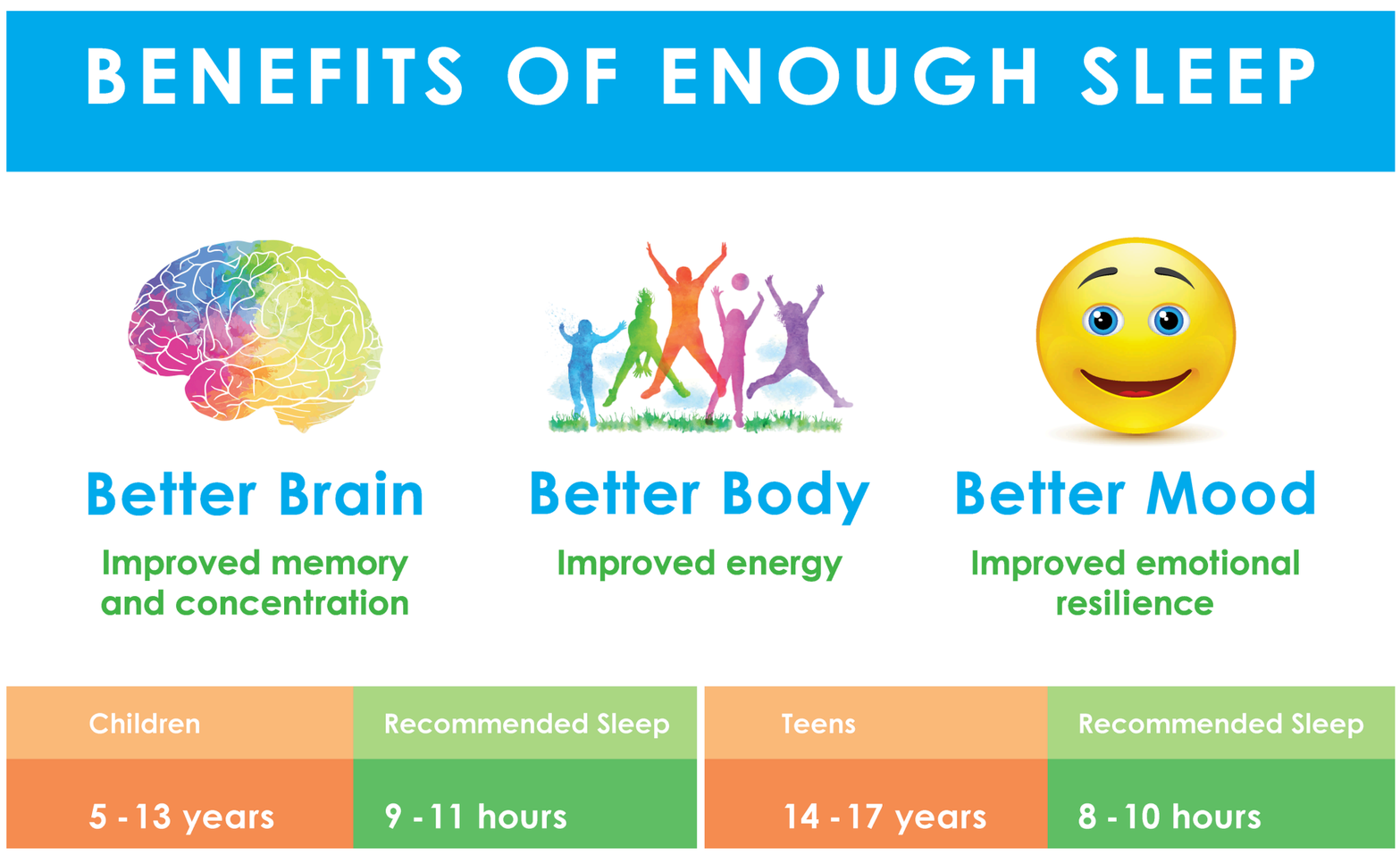
Why Sleep Matters for Learning

Good quality sleep is one of the most powerful, yet often overlooked, contributors to our young people's wellbeing and academic success. Research consistently shows that sufficient sleep supports attention, memory consolidation, emotional regulation, and problem-solving — all essential skills for learning. As the **Sleep Foundation** explains, without enough sleep, children and teens can experience problems with attention, memory, problem-solving and emotional regulation that can directly harm academic achievement.

Experts recommend that school-age children aim for around **9–11 hours** of sleep per night and teenagers **8–10 hours** to support healthy brain development and school performance.



The evidence is echoed in educational research, which shows that "sleep plays a critical role in the consolidation of academic-related memory and is predictive of daytime cognitive functioning and school performance." (Journal of Educational Psychology). Regular, restorative sleep helps the brain process and retain what has been learned during the day — and even supports better attention and engagement in class.



Getting enough sleep isn't just about feeling rested — it literally helps the brain learn. Encouraging healthy evening routines, limiting screens before bed, and aiming for regular sleep patterns can make a meaningful difference in students' wellbeing and school outcomes.

Mrs Houston
Assistant Headteacher - Character Development and Transitions

Year 11 GCSE Mock Examinations

The final set of Year 11 Mock Examinations for your child begin on **Monday 2nd March at 9:00am**.

All students were issued with an individual exam timetable on **Tuesday 10th February**, outlining the dates and times of each of their examinations.

Parents can view the timetable on our Year 11 page of the school website: Year 11 Parent/Carer Page

Why are these exams important?

These examinations form an essential part of your child's preparation for their GCSEs. They allow teachers to assess:

- your child's current knowledge and understanding in each subject
- the progress they have made since the November Mock Examinations
- how they perform under formal examination conditions



What are the arrangements for the Mock Examinations?

All examinations will take place in the **Sports Hall**, unless your child is entitled to access arrangements such as a reader, scribe or extra time.

Morning exams will begin promptly at **9:00am**. Students must arrive in school by **8:30am** so they can be in the **Lecture Theatre** to receive key messages from subject staff, prepare for their paper, and move calmly into the exam space.

Please note:

- Students may not be permitted to sit an exam if they arrive late.
- Entry for late students is at the **discretion of the Exams Officer.**

Equipment

Students must attend in **full school uniform** and bring the following equipment in a clear pencil case or clear plastic bag:

- 2 × black pens
- Pencil
- Sharpener
- Ruler
- Eraser
- Calculator
- Maths set (compass, protractor)
- Highlighters (students may highlight questions, **but not their answers**)



Water must be in a **clear bottle with no labels, writing or logos**, and with a small lid. Water bottles should be reuseable for ease.

All electronic devices, watches and other prohibited items must be left in lockers and must **not** be brought into the exam room. All pockets must be completely empty before entering.

Students with extra time

If your child receives additional time for exam, please check the afternoon timetable carefully, as some examinations may finish after the end of the normal school day.

Mr Drumm
Assistant Headteacher - KS4

AI - The Safeguarding Perspective



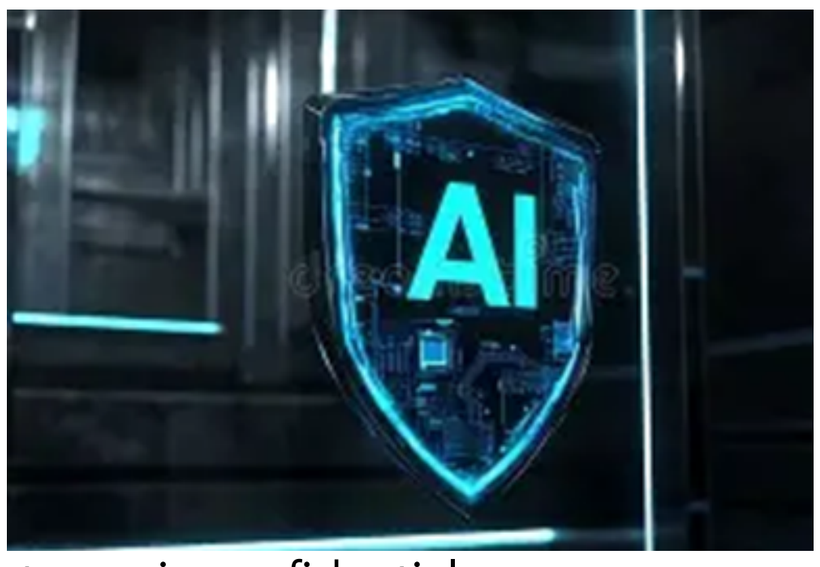
There is no doubt that Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools such as, Google Gemini, and various image or audio generators are increasing rapidly and already affecting children's online safety. Many of these tools have little or no age verification, meaning children can often access them easily on personal devices.

At RGTS, we value technology and its role in learning, but the safety and well-being of our students will always be our top priority. As these tools are widely used often without parents or carers being aware we want to highlight the key safeguarding risks so that we can work together to keep your child safe online.

The Safeguarding Risks of Generative AI

These are the main risks we are monitoring, in line with national guidance:

Creation of harmful content
Image and video generators can be misused to create deepfakes, including sexualised or manipulated images of peers, staff, or others. This can lead to serious bullying, emotional harm, blackmail, and in many cases is illegal.



Exposure to inappropriate, false, or harmful information
Many AI tools can produce content that is inaccurate, biased, or inappropriate, including sexually explicit material. AI chatbots available on websites and social media may also act in emotionally manipulative ways or give unsafe advice about health, well-being, or self-harm.

Data privacy and security
Information typed into AI tools is often stored and used to train future systems. Personal details such as names, locations, school information, or private thoughts should not be shared, as they may not remain confidential.

6 Top Tips for Parents and Carers

Children often use devices outside of school where controls may be limited. Regular conversations with your child about AI can make a significant difference. You may find these tips helpful:

1. Explain the legal aspects
Have an age-appropriate conversation about the law. Creating, sharing, or possessing AI-generated images or text used to bully, harass, or sexually exploit someone is illegal and causes real harm.

2. Check age restrictions and explore tools together
Most major AI tools require users to be at least 13 years old and may require parental consent. Before allowing your child to use an AI tool, try it together. This helps you understand how it works and encourages shared trust. You may also want to set up a Digital Family Agreement.

3. Set safety controls
You can apply safety filters on your home broadband, your child's device, and individual apps or games. For guidance, visit parentsafe.lgfl.net. Remember that no filter is perfect, so explain to your child why controls are in place.

4. Encourage critical thinking
Help your child understand that AI is not always accurate. Encourage them to check information using trusted sources—teachers, books, or reliable websites—before accepting it as true.

5. Protect personal data
Remind your child not to input personal details such as full name, address, school, phone number, or photos into AI chatbots or image generators. This information can be stored and may not be secure.

6. Promote open communication
Let your child know they can always talk to a trusted adult if something online frightens, confuses, or pressures them, or if they see someone misusing AI. They can also contact Childline 24/7 on 0800 1111.

We remain committed to teaching students how to use AI safely, ethically, and responsibly as part of our digital literacy and safeguarding curriculum.

If you need further advice or support, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Thank you for your continued partnership.

Mr Asafo Adjei Jnr
Assistant Headteacher - Safeguarding (DSL) and Attendance

Upcoming Key Dates

Date	Event	Year Group	Timings
Monday 23rd February - Friday 6th March	Year 10 Work Experience	Year 10	2 Weeks
Monday 2nd March - Friday 13th March	Year 11 March Mock Exams	Year 11	Various
Thursday 5th March	Year 7 Parents' Evening	Year 7	4:00pm - 7:00pm
Wednesday 11th March	Year 12 Interviews	Year 11	3:30pm - 6:00pm
Thursday 12th March	Year 10 Parents' Evening	Year 10	4:00pm - 7:00pm
Wednesday 18th March	INSET Day (School Closed)	All	All Day
Monday 13th April	INSET Day (School Closed)	All	All Day

Year 7 Parents' Evening - Thursday 5th March

We would like to invite you to our Year 7 Parents' Evening on Thursday 5th March. This event is an excellent opportunity for you to meet with your child's teachers and discuss their progress so far this year.



Appointments can be booked via the Arbor Parent App. A step-by-step guide on how to do this can be found here: https://support.arbor-education.com/hc/en-us/articles/203792102-Booking-Guardian-Consultations-Parent-s-Evenings-on-the-Parent-Portal-or-Parent-App

If you experience any difficulties making your appointments, please contact the school office team at **info@rgtrustschool.net**. When emailing, include your availability between **4:00pm and 7:00pm** (you will need approximately **35 minutes**). Our team will do their best to accommodate your request; however, please note that appointments are allocated on a **first come, first served basis**.

We look forward to welcoming you and working together to support your child's continued progress.

Mr Nott
Assistant Headteacher - KS3

Year 10 Parents' Evening - Thursday 12th March

You are warmly invited to attend our Year 10 Parents' Evening on Wednesday 12th March. This event will provide a valuable opportunity for you to discuss your child's progress with their subject teachers as they work towards their GCSE qualifications.

Appointments should be made using the Arbor Parent App. Guidance on how to book appointments can be found here: https://support.arbor-education.com/hc/en-us/articles/203792102-Booking-Guardian-Consultations-Parent-s-Evenings-on-the-Parent-Portal-or-Parent-App

If you encounter any difficulties when booking, please contact the school office at **info@rgtrustschool.net**. When emailing, kindly include your availability between **4:00pm and 7:00pm** (allow approximately **35 minutes**). The team will allocate appointments as best they can, though please be aware that times are offered on a **first come, first served basis**.

We look forward to seeing you and continuing to work together to support your child throughout Key Stage 4.

Mr Drumm
Assistant Headteacher - KS4

Community Spotlight: Regional Victory at Charlton Football Club

On Friday 13th February, five students visited Charlton Athletic Football Club to compete for the chance to represent the Borough in the National Premier League Inspires Programme. After an exciting tour of the stadium—including the changing rooms, pitch-side area and museum—the students presented their project on promoting mental-health awareness among young people.

Robert led the pitch with confidence, supported by Yohan, who shared his idea of using music to challenge stereotypes and spread a positive message. Frankie-Bleu, Kiki and Tofunmi also played key roles in delivering the presentation.

Their exceptional teamwork earned first place in the regional finals for the second consecutive year, along with the "PL Inspires School of the Year" shield. The team will now represent the Borough at the National Finals in April, hosted at Everton FC in Liverpool.





Ms Faucher
Student and Family Support Worker

Curriculum Spotlight: Year 10 GCSE Art & Design - Cubism and Collage

Our Year 10 GCSE Art & Design students have been producing an outstanding body of work as part of their current project, Cubism and Collage.

Inspired by the work of Juan Gris and Georges Braque, students explored Cubist techniques before developing their own original responses using sublimation inks. They carefully designed, painted and cut layered compositions, applying their understanding of abstraction, fragmentation and tonal contrast to create bold, dynamic outcomes.

Students then transferred their designs onto poly satin using an industrial heat press — demonstrating real responsibility and maturity when working with specialist equipment. The process required precision, patience and focus, and students rose to the challenge with impressive grit.

Throughout the project, students also demonstrated strong teamwork, supporting one another during the preparation and pressing stages to ensure high-quality finishes.

Importantly, students can now confidently explain the Cubist process — from initial artist research, to developing a design suitable for sublimation printing, to producing a professional final outcome.

Student Voice

“It was challenging using the heat press at first, but once I understood the process I felt really proud of my final piece.”

“Cubism makes you think differently about shape and perspective. I liked breaking things up and putting them back together in a new way.”

“Working as a team helped us feel more confident using the equipment.”

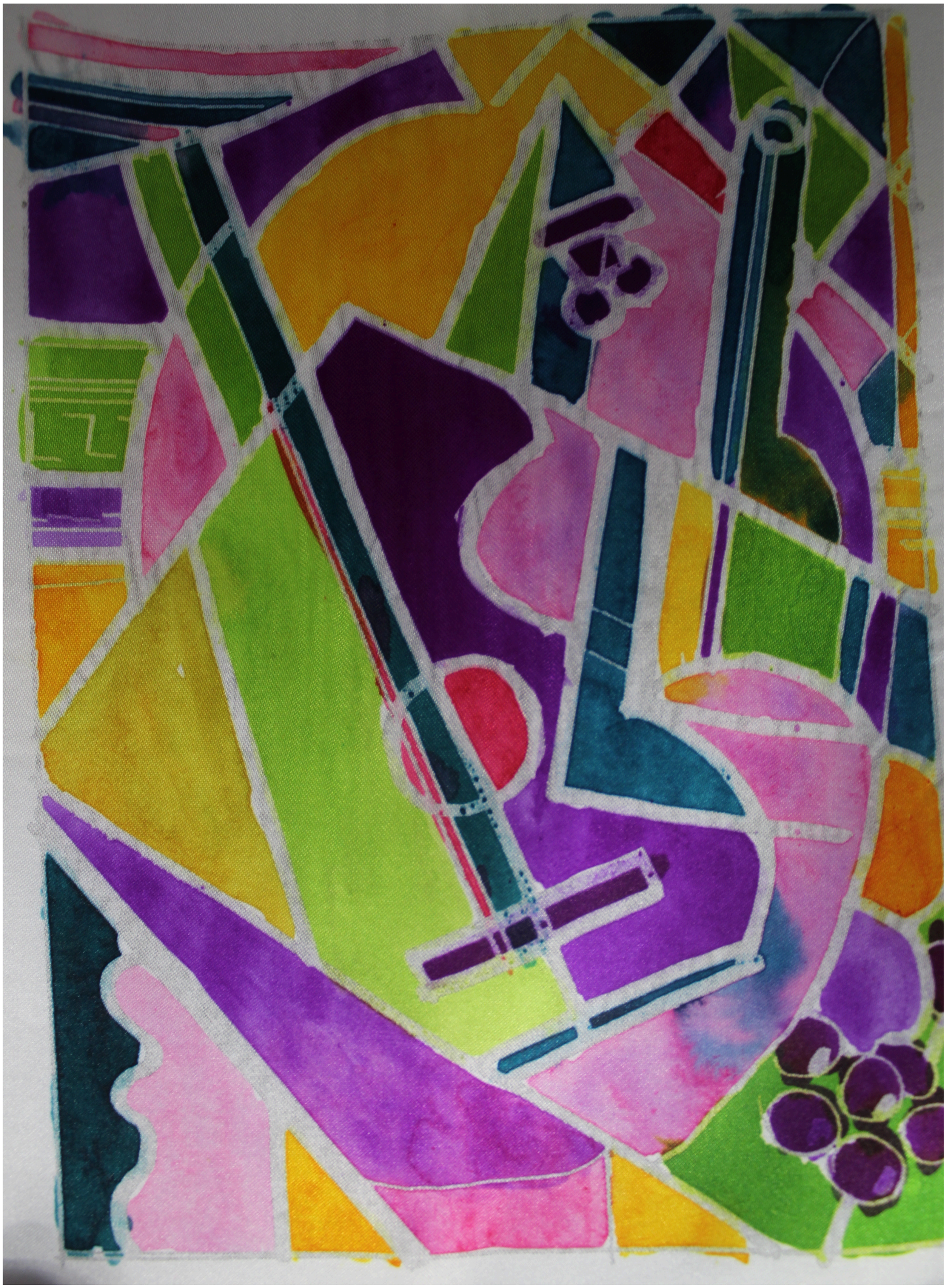
This project beautifully reflects our school values of Grit, Responsibility and Teamwork, alongside the development of strong technical and creative skills.

We are incredibly proud of the creativity, independence and professionalism shown by our Year 10 artists.





Mrs Houston
Assistant Headteacher - Character Development and Transitions



PARENTS AND CARERS ARE INVITED TO OUR UPCOMING

INCLUSION COFFEE MORNING



THIS SESSION WILL PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THEMES AROUND SAFETY, CHOICES, AND COMMUNITY AWARENESS.

TUESDAY 24TH MARCH 2026, FROM 9:15AM TO 10:30AM

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

WHATSAPP

AGE RESTRICTION 13+

WhatsApp is a free messaging app owned by Meta, allowing users to send text and voice messages, share multimedia, make video calls, and chat in groups. With end-to-end encryption, only the sender and receiver can view messages. This may offer privacy, but it also comes with risks that parents and educators need to be aware of.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

GROUP CHAT PRESSURES

Group chats enable multiple users to message in the same space, but this can also make it easier for young people to feel excluded or overwhelmed. Negative comments can escalate quickly, and young people may feel pressure to respond or stay engaged even when the conversation is uncomfortable or upsetting.

SCAMS TARGETING YOUNG USERS

Scammers are increasingly using WhatsApp to trick users into sharing personal information. Common scams include fraudsters posing as family members in an emergency or tricking users into revealing security codes. These can lead to identity theft or access to private conversations.

DISAPPEARING AND HIDDEN MESSAGES

WhatsApp offers features like disappearing messages and 'Chat Lock', which can give users a false sense of security. While intended to protect privacy, they can be used by young users to hide inappropriate conversations or content, making it harder for adults to spot potential issues.

EXPOSURE THROUGH CHANNELS

'Channels' are an optional feature that allows users to follow updates from public figures or organisations; however, there is no way to block this feature or filter its content by age. Young users may encounter adult or distressing content, including misinformation and harmful ideologies.

UNWANTED CONTACT AND LOCATION SHARING

WhatsApp users can share their live location, and if not managed carefully, this can allow others – even those in mutual groups – to track someone's whereabouts. Also, without the right privacy settings, young users may be contacted by strangers.

COMMERCIAL AND AI CONTENT

WhatsApp now includes ads in the 'Updates' feed and has introduced an AI assistant – Meta AI – across the app, which cannot be removed. These additions raise concerns about targeting, privacy, AI use, and the type of content children and young people might interact with.

...ONLINE...

Advice for Parents & Educators

REVIEW PRIVACY SETTINGS TOGETHER

Help young users check who can see their profile photo, status, and location. Activate the 'Silence Unknown Callers' setting and set group chat invitations to 'My Contacts' or 'My Contacts Except...' for added safety.

TEACH HOW TO SPOT SCAMS

Encourage caution around unusual and unexpected messages, especially if they involve money or codes. Help young users understand the signs of scams and what to do if they receive a suspicious message. Enable two-step verification to add an extra layer of protection.

BE OPEN ABOUT HIDDEN CHATS

Discuss why children and young people might use features like disappearing messages or 'Chat Lock'. Encourage them to share if something made them uncomfortable, even if the messages are gone. Let them know that privacy should not mean secrecy.

TALK ABOUT ADVERTISING AND AI

Explain that WhatsApp now includes ads and AI tools. Discuss the difference between genuine and sponsored content, and the potential for AI to share inaccurate or age-inappropriate responses. Encourage young users to think critically before trusting or interacting with these features.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian Government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.

See full reference list on our website

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