



Parental Guidance: Managing Risk-Taking Behaviour

Adolescence is a time when young people may begin exploring independence, new friendships and different social environments. During this stage, some teenagers may encounter situations involving risk-taking behaviours such as vaping, alcohol, substances or pressure from peers.

This guide aims to help parents recognise possible early warning signs, respond calmly and support young people in making safer, more informed decisions.

Recognising early warning signs

Changes in behaviour do not always indicate risk-taking, but certain patterns may suggest a young person is experiencing increased social pressure. These may include:

- Sudden changes in friendship groups
- Increased secrecy around activities or devices
- Noticeable changes in mood, behaviour or routines
- Reduced engagement with school or usual interests

Recognising changes early can help parents open supportive conversations before concerns escalate.

Starting calm conversations

Open communication can help young people feel safe discussing difficult topics:

- Choose a calm moment rather than raising concerns during conflict
- Ask open questions and listen carefully to your child's perspective
- Focus on understanding rather than immediate judgement

Young people are often more likely to talk when they feel they are being heard rather than criticised.

Understanding peer pressure

Peer influence can play a significant role during adolescence. Supporting your child to recognise and respond to pressure can help them maintain their values and boundaries:

- Talk about how peer pressure may appear in social situations
- Encourage strategies for declining offers confidently
- Reinforce that true friendships should not rely on risky behaviour



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Supporting safer decision-making

Parents can help teenagers build confidence to make safer choices:

- Discuss potential risks and consequences openly
- Encourage your child to think ahead about how they might respond to pressure
- Reinforce that it is acceptable to walk away from situations that feel uncomfortable

Helping young people think through situations in advance can strengthen decision-making.

When to seek additional support

If risk-taking behaviour becomes persistent, secretive or begins to affect wellbeing, relationships or school engagement, additional support may be helpful.

Families may wish to:

- Contact the College Pastoral Team for advice and support
- Seek guidance from healthcare professionals where appropriate
- Access specialist services that support young people with substance use or wellbeing concerns

Working together with school and external services can help ensure young people receive the guidance and support they need.

Working together with the Academy

If concerns arise, families are encouraged to contact their child's College Pastoral Team so that school and home can work together to support the student effectively.

Contacting College Pastoral Teams

Angelou College - angelou@stationers.latrust.org.uk
Caxton College - caxton@stationers.latrust.org.uk
Hansard College - hansard@stationers.latrust.org.uk
Equiano College - equiano@stationers.latrust.org.uk
Woolf Sixth Form College - woolf@stationers.latrust.org.uk