



# CARDINAL POLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

# Parent Booklet

*Guidance for  
parents and carers*





# Page of Contents

1-2

*Mobile Safety*

2

*Mobile Safety*

3

*Sleep*

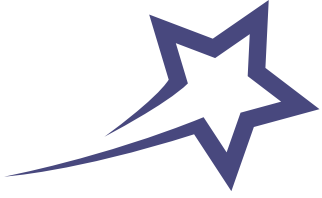
4

*Anxiety*

5

*The Adolescent Brain*





# Our Top 3 Tips for Child Safety on Mobile Phones

## 1 SET BOUNDARIES

It's important to set boundaries and limits with your kids. Talk to them about the boundaries themselves, and your reasons for setting them.

These boundaries could include screen time limits, restrictions on what apps they can use or where they can use their phone.

By setting these limits, you can encourage children to still enjoy activities that stimulate their minds in other ways, such as sports, board games or reading. It also allows you to reclaim family time and ensure your child isn't using age-inappropriate apps.

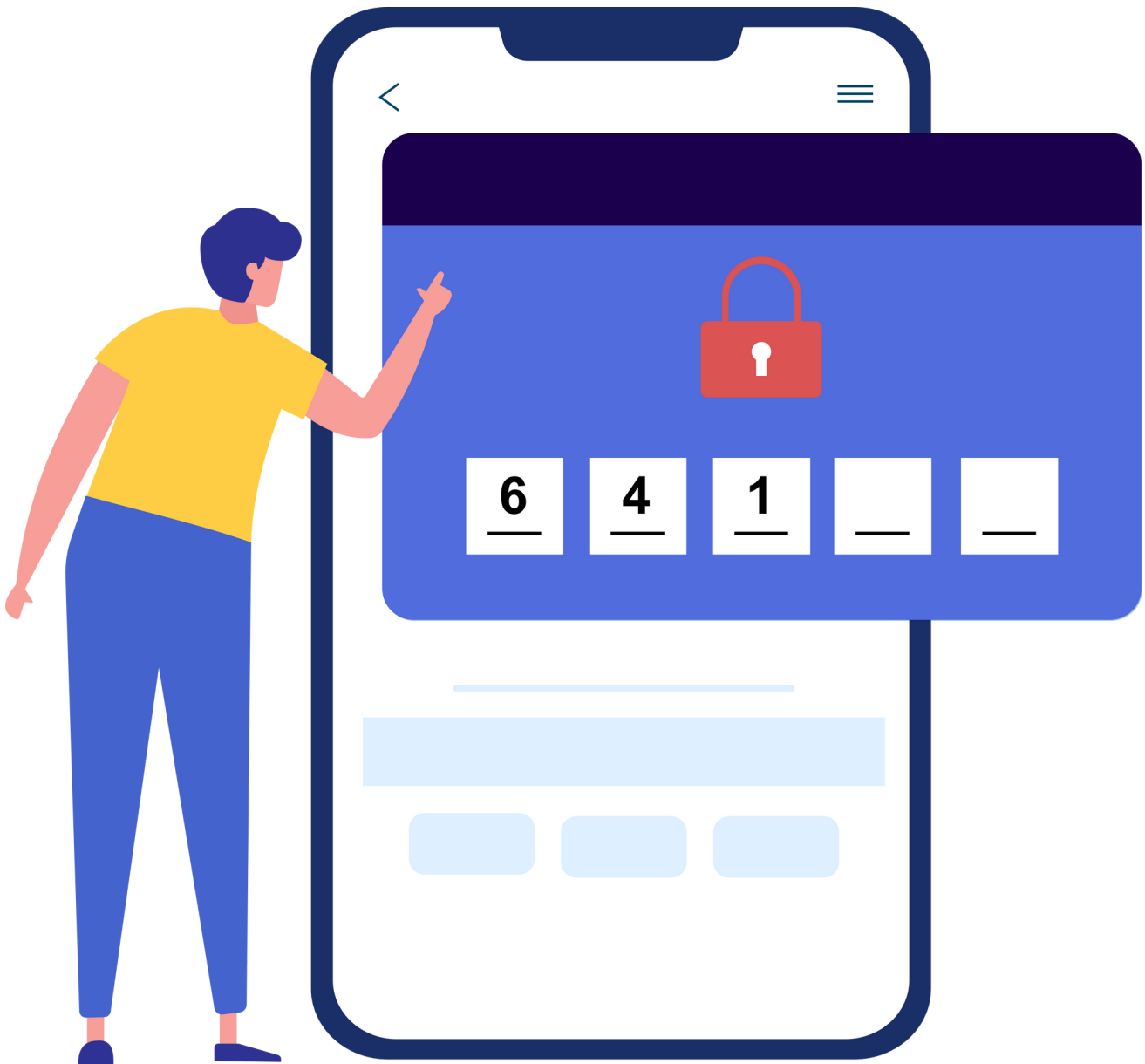
## 2 USE PARENTAL CONTROLS & MONITOR YOUR CHILD'S PHONE USAGE

Parental controls allow you to see exactly what sites and apps your child is accessing on their smartphone, tablet or computer. It also lets you see how long they are spending on these devices. For more information on parental control and how to use them you can visit: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/parental-controls/>

While there are many parental control apps to choose from, the standard choice is Google Family Link. Free to use, Google Family Link works with both Apple and Android devices.

While you still may want to use a parental control app to check what your child is doing online, it's always good to engage with them directly as well. By encouraging them to share what they are doing on their phone, you may get a better insight into risks such as cyberbullying or their social network use.





### 3 TEACH YOUR CHILDREN PHONE SECURITY

By teaching your child a few security measures now, you will help them keep their devices secure in the long run. Examples include:

- Don't connect to public wi-fi as that may give hackers access to your child's phone and information.
- Don't share passwords with friends or strangers.
- Don't overshare online – once a photo or video is out there, it can't be taken back.
- Keep your phone close in your bag or on-hand rather than leaving it in public places where it can be stolen.
- Password protect the phone so that if it is stolen, personal photos or messages can't be easily accessed.



# Supporting your child's sleep

There are many things we do not understand about sleep, but we do know that sleep:

- Helps to restore and repair our bodies
- Provides an opportunity for our brain to clear out and process events
- Helps to regulate our emotions

If we sleep well, we usually wake up feeling refreshed and restored and feel more able to learn and process information. However, if we experience sleep difficulties, we might wake up feeling tired, foggy or grumpy and find it hard to concentrate and learn.

How much sleep does my child need?

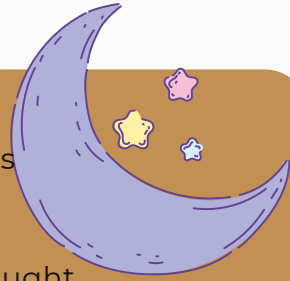
There is no set amount, and it varies according to age:

- 6-13 year olds will usually sleep around 9-11 hours.
- An adolescent 8-10 hours but this could be as little as 7 hours or as much as 11 hours.

## STAGES OF SLEEP

Although we talk about "sleep" it actually cycles through different stages throughout the night.

- During the first third of the night we have our deepest sleep. It is thought that this is the time when most of the body's restoration and repair occurs.
- For the remaining two-thirds of the night we cycle through lighter and rapid eye movement (REM) sleep.
- REM sleep helps with emotional processing and this is when we often experience our more vivid and emotional dreams.
- Because our sleep becomes lighter through the night it becomes more likely that we will wake up briefly. This is completely normal and very common.



## BODY CLOCK

The timing of our body clock can vary.

- We talk about “morning people” for those who are more awake in the morning or “night owls” for those who are more wakeful late evening –this is often something that is genetically programmed.
- Our age is also important. For example, around puberty, the body clock of adolescents shifts forward, so that young people are unable to fall asleep as early as they used to. At bedtime, their bodies may be pushing them to stay up for several more hours. This shift is natural for teenagers.

Light affects some of the chemicals our bodies make. One of these chemicals, Melatonin affects the sleep/wake cycle and tells us when it's time to go to sleep. Its production is affected by evening and night-time light exposure and this may make it harder to fall asleep.



## REDUCE BLUE LIGHT

The simplest way to reduce exposure to artificial light is to encourage your child to turn off their smartphone, TV, and other gadgets well before bedtime. If the young person feels unable to do this completely then cut down on screen time at least 2-3 hours before bed. Another option is to dim the brightness on devices. This is often called night or dark mode and emits less light, however, turning off these devices is still the best way to manage.





# Helpful nighttime routine



## AVOID

- Gaming, socialising, or activities that make them alert or excited should be avoided.
- Physical exercise in the evening since it activates us and can mask our sleepiness.
- Using electronic devices for at least an hour before bed and if possible, leave them outside of the bedroom.
- Caffeinated drinks such as coffee, tea, energy drinks and "Coke". Caffeine is a stimulant so avoid these types of drinks in the evening.

## TRY

- A relaxing bath, a warm shower or a milky drink.
- Quiet activities such as reading a book, doing a puzzle, listening to calming music.
- Perhaps some relaxation, mindfulness or mediation exercises.



## YOU CAN HELP THEM TO RESET THEIR BODY CLOCK

- Agree with your child, on a regular time that they will go to bed and when they will wake and get out of bed in the morning. This routine helps to set their body clock to a more regular cycle.

# 5 Steps to improve your child's sleep



## **1 SLEEP DIARY**

Check your child's sleeping habits

## **2 HELPFUL SLEEP HABITS**

Develop habits that will help your child

## **3 RELAXING AT BEDTIME**

Help your child develop different methods to relax and feel calm

## **4 COPING WITH A BUSY MIND**

Discover different ways to deal with worries

## **5 RESET THE BODY CLOCK**

help your child reset their natural wake/sleep cycle





# Anxiety

Through your child's time they will come across lots of situations that may cause them anxiety, transitions to new schools, exams, homework or fall outs with friends. Anxiety is normal and a response the body has to perceived threats. When anxiety becomes a problem is when it begins to get in the way of your child's life.



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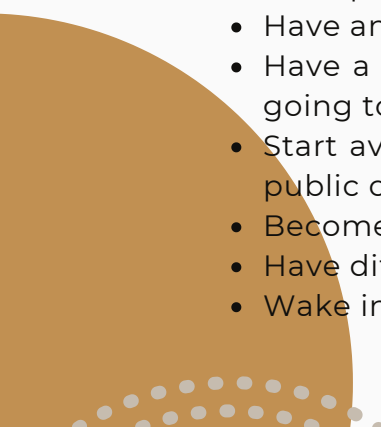
## WHAT IS ANXIETY ?

Everyone has feelings of anxiety at some point in their life. For example, you may feel worried and anxious about sitting an exam or having a medical test or job interview. During times like these, feeling anxious can be perfectly normal. But some people find it hard to control their worries. Their feelings of anxiety are more constant and can often affect their daily lives.

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## WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF ANXIETY IN CHILDREN?

In adolescent children you may notice that they:

- Lack confidence to try new things or seem unable to face simple, everyday challenges
  - Find it hard to concentrate
  - Have problems with sleeping or eating
  - Have angry outbursts
  - Have a lot of negative thoughts, or keep thinking that bad things are going to happen
  - Start avoiding everyday activities, such as seeing friends, going out in public or going to school
  - Become irritable, tearful or clingy
  - Have difficulty sleeping
  - Wake in the night
- 



# How to help an anxious child

If a child is experiencing anxiety, there are things that parents and carers can do to help. First and foremost, it's important to talk to your child about their anxiety or worries. Reassure them and show them you understand how they feel.

It may help to explain what anxiety is and the physical effects it has on our bodies. It may be helpful to describe anxiety as being like a wave that builds up and then ebbs away again. As well as talking to your child about their worries and anxiety, it's important to help them find solutions.

For example, if your child is worried about going to a sleepover, it is natural to want to tell them not to go. However, this could mean your child feels that their anxiety will stop them from doing things. It's better to recognise their anxiety and suggest solutions to help them, so they can go to the sleepover with a plan in place.

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## OTHER WAYS TO EASE ANXIETY IN YOUR CHILDREN



- Teach your child to recognise signs of anxiety in themselves.
- Encourage your child to manage their anxiety and ask for help when they need it.
- Children of all ages find routines reassuring, so try to stick to regular daily routines where possible.
- If your child is anxious because of distressing events, such as a bereavement or separation, look for books or films that will help them to understand their feelings.
- If you know a change, such as a house move, is coming up, prepare your child by talking to them about what is going to happen and why.
- Try not to become overprotective or anxious yourself as this can reinforce their worries.

- Practise simple relaxation techniques with your child, such as taking 3 deep, slow breaths, breathing in for a count of 3 and out for 3.
- Turn an empty tissue box into a "worry" box. Get your child to write about or draw their worries and "post" them into the box. Then you can sort through the box together at the end of the day or week.

# Support at school

If your child is experiencing anxiety at school, contact the Wellbeing Team who may be able to support your children with counselling through A Space. Ensuring the school are aware means they will also be able to keep this in mind for any transitions or exams which may increase the anxiety of your child to ensure they can be supported during these periods.

The school will also be running coffee mornings with information about anxiety for parents so keep an eye out for these. For more information check out the Wellbeing section of the Cardinal Pole website for links to YoungMinds and Health for Teens Resources about anxiety.





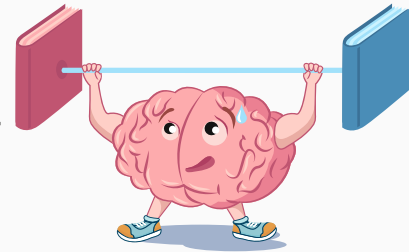
# The Adolescent Brain

## 6 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THE ADOLESCENT BRAIN

Adolescence is the second biggest period of brain development since the womb and takes until the mid 20s to complete. It is a time young people begin to develop an understanding of who they are, social interaction begins to hold a greater importance and young people begin push for independence and take risks which often can cause conflict with their parents.

Below are 6 important things to know about the adolescent brain to help give an insight into your children's behaviours.

### 1 ADOLESCENCE IS AN IMPORTANT TIME FOR BRAIN DEVELOPMENT



Although the brain stops growing in size by early adolescence, the teen years are all about fine-tuning how the brain works and the brain finishes developing and maturing in the mid-to-late 20s. The part of the brain behind the forehead, called the prefrontal cortex, is one of the last parts to mature. This area is responsible for skills like planning, prioritizing, and making good decisions. Often thought of as the rational part of the brain.

### 2 BRAIN DEVELOPMENT IS RELATED TO SOCIAL EXPERIENCES DURING ADOLESCENCE

Changes to the areas of the brain responsible for social processes can lead teens to focus more on peer relationships and social experiences. The emphasis on peer relationships, along with ongoing prefrontal cortex development, might lead teens to take more risks because the social benefits outweigh the possible consequences of a decision. These risks could be negative or dangerous, or they could be positive, such as talking to a new classmate or joining a new club or sport.

### 3 THE TEEN BRAIN IS READY TO LEARN AND ADAPT



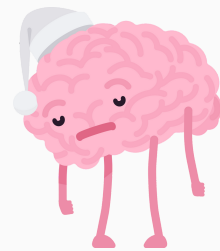
The teen brain has an amazing ability to adapt and respond to new experiences and situations. Taking challenging classes, exercising, and engaging in creative activities like art or music can strengthen brain circuits and help the brain mature.



## 4 TEEN BRAINS MAY RESPOND DIFFERENTLY TO STRESS

Because the teen brain is still developing, teens may respond to stress differently than adults. This could increase teens' chances of developing stress-related mental illnesses such as anxiety and depression. Recognizing possible triggers and practicing effective coping techniques can help teens deal with stress. For more information look at our wellbeing section of the Cardinal Pole website and look out for our coffee mornings focused on anxiety.

## 5 MOST TEENS DO NOT GET ENOUGH SLEEP



Research shows that the sleep hormone melatonin works differently in teens than in children and adults. In adolescence, melatonin levels stay high later at night and drop later in the morning, which may explain why teens may stay up late and struggle with waking up early. Many teens do not get enough sleep, making it harder to pay attention, control impulses, and do well at school. Getting good sleep at night can help support mental health. For more information about sleep have a look at the wellbeing section of the Cardinal Pole website and keep an eye out for our sleep focused coffee morning.



## 6 THE TEEN BRAIN IS RESILIENT

Despite the stresses and challenges that come with adolescence, most teens go on to become healthy adults. Some changes in the brain during this critical phase of development actually help support resilience and mental health over the long term.

Here is a good video explaining what happens to the brain during adolescence: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kvk4sqNP4M>

# BEHAVIOUR STRATEGIES FOR THE TEENAGE BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

While your child's brain is developing, your child might:

- Choose high-risk activities or risky behaviour.
- Express more and stronger emotions.
- Make impulsive decisions.

## HERE ARE SOME TIPS FOR ENCOURAGING GOOD BEHAVIOUR AND STRENGTHENING POSITIVE BRAIN CONNECTIONS:

- Let your child take some healthy risks. New and different experiences help your child develop an independent identity, explore grown-up behaviour, and move towards independence.

- Help your child find new creative and expressive outlets for feelings. Your child might be expressing and trying to control new emotions. Many teenagers find that doing or watching sport or music, writing and other art forms are good outlets.

- Talk through decisions step by step with your child. Ask about possible courses of action your child might choose, and talk through potential consequences. Encourage your child to weigh up positive consequences or rewards against negative ones.

- Provide boundaries and opportunities for negotiating those boundaries. Young people need guidance and limit-setting from their parents and other adults.

- Offer frequent praise and positive rewards for desired behaviour. This reinforces pathways in your child's brain.

- Talk with your child about their developing brain. Understanding this important period of growth might help your child process their feelings. It might also make taking care of the brain more interesting for your child.

