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Welcome to the Summer Newsletter for the Rib Valley Partnership of Schools. We hope that the articles included in this issue will be of interest to you and your families. We have also included some suggestions to keep your children/teens busy over the summer period.

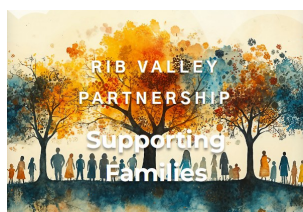
Our Signposting and Information service is closed during the school holidays and will reopen on **Thursday 3rd September 2026**. For urgent family support during the holidays, please see the helplines listed below.

We wish all our families a safe, happy and enjoyable summer break.



For signposting support to our service please contact your school or call **01442 401222 Ext 8**. Please remember that we operate during term time only.

We can support you with: **Communicating with your child; Routines and boundaries; Managing challenging behaviour ; Lone parenting; Family wellbeing; Worries, Anxiety, and attendance; Building independence; Managing anger; SEND signposting ; Financial guidance; and lots more!**



www.ribvalleypartnership.org.uk

EMERGENCY HELPLINES

Family Lives - 0808 800 2222

Samaritans - 116 123

Childline - 0800 1111

HCC Children's Services 0300 123 4043

Families First Portal:

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/familiesfirst

Foodbanks

[Find a food bank | Trussell](#)

For urgent mental health concerns, NHS 111 (option 2) is a dedicated mental health crisis line staffed by trained professionals

Top Tips for Transition to Middle and Secondary School

Starting a new school brings about several significant changes. Children/young people will go from being the oldest in school to being the youngest, having to find their way around a new and possibly bigger school with different teachers for different subjects. They will also have to take on more responsibility, such as:

- taking a new and unfamiliar route
- planning for each day's timetable
- making sure they have the right books and equipment
- doing homework most evenings, which has to fit into their routine alongside other interests

Top Tips

- *Check all the apps you need for homework, communications etc – there is often more than one*
- *Know key contacts eg form tutor, pastoral team*
- *Encourage your child to complete homework as soon as they can after it's been set*
- *Check uniform policy*
- *Pack bags the night before – different books needed for each day*
- *You could begin giving your child some responsibility in this last term of year 6 e.g packing their own bag with snack and water bottle*
- *Have a calendar on display at home clearly marked with different equipment needed for different days eg sports kit, projects, music etc*
- *Practise the route to school (especially if travelling independently)*



Article produced in conjunction with material available on Family Lives website
www.familylives.org.uk/

Support for Families

'POSITIVE APPROACHES TO BEHAVIOUR' WHEN YOU BAN SCREENS AS A CONSEQUENCE

WHEN THE CONSEQUENCE DOESN'T MATCH THE BEHAVIOUR

Banning screens is one of the most commonly used consequences – but often it has no logical link to what actually happened. When the outcome isn't connected, the child's brain struggles to learn anything meaningful. Instead of understanding why the behaviour was a problem, they only learn: "I've lost my screen time." This weakens cause-and-effect learning and reduces the chance of long-term behaviour change.

WHY SCREEN BANS OFTEN CREATE RESENTMENT

When a consequence feels unfair or unrelated, the child's emotional response shifts from reflection to resentment. Their energy goes into feeling wronged, not into understanding or repairing. This resentment can damage connection, increase pushback, and make the original behaviour more likely to happen again. The young person becomes focused on the consequence itself, not the behaviour that led to it.

THE BRAIN'S RESPONSE TO UNRELATED CONSEQUENCES

For a consequence to be effective, the brain needs coherence – the "this happened because of that" link. When the consequence has nothing to do with the action, the brain can't form that link. Instead, the child may feel punished, confused, or powerless, activating their stress response. This shuts down the parts of the brain responsible for learning, empathy, and self-regulation.



WHY SCREEN REMOVAL STOPS BEING A LEARNING TOOL

If screen removal is used for almost everything – arguing, rough play, forgetting things, mess, sibling conflict – the consequence loses meaning. The child doesn't connect it to the behaviour; they simply experience screen time as something adults can take away at any moment. This can increase anxiety, reduce trust, and create a sense of walking on eggshells, which inhibits genuine growth.

WHAT ACTUALLY TEACHES BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

Behaviour change happens when consequences are linked to the behaviour itself. If the issue was rough play, the learning should be about safety. If the issue was hurtful words, the learning should be about repair. If the issue was difficulty following instructions, the learning should be about pacing, support, or collaboration. Logical and natural consequences support the child's developing brain far more effectively than blanket screen bans.

WHEN SCREENS CAN BE PART OF A LOGICAL CONSEQUENCE

There are rare times when screen-related behaviour connects to screen-related consequences – for example, if the young person misused the device, accessed unsafe content, or hurt someone during gaming. In these cases, a temporary pause to reset, repair, and practise safer habits makes sense. Even then, the tone should be calm, clear, and focused on skill-building, not punishment.

FOR A COPY OF OUR INFORMATION SHEET, HEALTHY SCREEN HABITS, LIKE THE POST AND COMMENT SCREEN BELOW.

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How to get food - Bishop's Stortford Food Bank

To receive a food parcel, you must be referred by an agency or service (known as a voucher holder or authorised referring agency). They will issue a voucher to access food and other support.



Buntingford Food Support | Face- book

Tel: 07842 889772

Online Safety Newsletter for parents/carers

This newsletter has been produced to promote the safety of young people and children online.

[autumn-2025-parents-newsletter-v2.pdf](#)



The Contented Child

When you ban screens as a consequence, it can feel like the quickest way to make the lesson stick. But for many young people (especially Neurodivergent children), screens are a regulating tool, so removing them often ramps up overwhelm rather than reducing the behaviour.

This poster will help to explain why consequences that don't match the behaviour rarely lead to meaningful change. Article and poster taken from:

[The Contented Child | Nurturing the whole child](#)

SEND Support

Neurodiversity Support Hub

For Parents, Carers and Professionals

We can offer support, signposting and guidance about a whole range of things including but not limited to:

- Understanding ADHD/Autism
- Distressed Behaviours
- Anxiety
- School

The phones are answered by our team of parents and carers of neurodivergent children and young people

Are you a
Parent, Carer
or
Professional?



01727 833963

supporthub@add-vance.org

Open Monday-Friday
9 AM - 1 PM



We Can't:
- Give updates/
fast track places
on waiting lists
- Recommend
specific private
assessors

Here to support, reach out for a listening ear



Delivering Special
Provision Locally

Developing Special Provision Locally (DSPL)3

Support and Services for children with special educational needs and disabilities.



ADD-vance Helpdesk is open from 9am to 1pm every weekday via [01727 833963](tel:01727833963) or email: herts@add-vance.org

Website: www.add-vance.org

Facebook: www.add-vance.org/parents/

Hertfordshire Local Offer: The Local offer lets parents and young people know what special education needs and disabilities services are available in Hertfordshire and who can access them

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/Local-Offer/The-Hertfordshire-Local-Offer.aspx>



Holiday Activities



BEE HAPPY

Summer jar

If you are feeling a bit bored, have a look in the jar and try one of the activities. Colour the ones in that you try...

Activities inside the jar:

- Play a board game
- Write a story
- Create a photo booth with backgrounds and props
- Learn the lyrics to a song and sing it to your family
- Read your favourite book
- Do some baking
- Make a camp in your garden or room
- Design a nature collage
- Tidy one part of your room
- Learn to tie knots with string
- Learn to juggle
- Practise skipping with a skipping rope
- Collect twigs and make art
- Draw a star and draw all the things you are good at on the star
- Make jewellery with pasta shapes or beads
- Go star gazing
- Do an A-to-Z scavenger hunt
- Make a pom pom
- Learn a poem by heart
- Make a picnic and eat it in the park
- Create a plant pot fairy garden
- Make homemade ice cream
- Make popcorn and then watch a movie
- Write a letter or make a card for someone
- Draw a happy picture
- Create a puppet show
- Set up an obstacle course
- Learn to sew
- Draw with chalk
- Make a treasure hunt with clues for your family
- Make a paper aeroplane and fly it
- Make a story stone set
- Design a board game
- Make a story stone set
- Visit the library
- Dance to loud music
- Photograph everything that makes you happy
- Make homemade ice lollies
- Collect pebbles or rocks and paint them
- Plant a seed
- Make a treasure hunt with clues for your family
- Set up an obstacle course
- Learn to sew
- Draw with chalk
- Make a plant pot fairy garden
- Make popcorn and then watch a movie
- Write a letter or make a card for someone
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Holiday Activities



ENJOY THIS SUMMER IN HERTFORDSHIRE

Here is a list of places that you can enjoy the water in Hertfordshire

LIDOS

- Hitchin Lido
- Letchworth Lido
- Ware Priory Lido

SPLASH PARKS

- Fairlands Valley Splash Park, Stevenage
- Splashlands, WGC
- Cassiobury Park, Watford
- Howard Park Splash Park and Paddling Pool, Letchworth
- Bancroft Splash Park, Hitchin
- Royston Splash Park
- Gadebridge Park - Hemel

WATER SPORTS

- Stanborough Park, WGC
- Fairlands Valley, Stevenage
- Lee Valley White Water Centre, Cheshunt
- Aqua Parcs, Stevenage
- ESSA Water Activities Centre, Broxbourne

BE WATER AWARE

Learn how to be Water Aware and know how to be safe around water by checking out our safety tips.

QR code: SCAN ME

Book HAPpy Camps

Search and book a HAPpy Activity Camp

HAPpy Camps are available for children and young people from reception to year 11, who are in receipt of benefits related free school meals.

The next HAPpy programme will take place in Summer 2026.

Should you have any questions about HAPpy please contact haf@herts.ac.uk or call 01707 284229.

sportinherts.org.uk/happy-activity-camps

Summer Reading Challenge



READ to the BEAT

Summer Reading Challenge 2026

Illustrations © Harry Woodgate 2026, Read to the Beat © The Reading Agency 2026

www.elsa-support.co.uk



THE TEENAGE BRAIN UNDER CONSTRUCTION UNDERSTANDING TEENAGERS

THE TEENAGE BRAIN IS UNDER CONSTRUCTION

The teenage brain is not finished — it is being remodelled. The emotional centre (limbic system) develops earlier than the thinking and planning centre (prefrontal cortex). This means feelings can be big, fast, and intense, while judgement and impulse control are still catching up. When adults see mood swings or reactivity, it is often brain development in action, not "attitude".

SLEEP IS A BIOLOGICAL NEED, NOT LAZINESS

Teenagers genuinely need more sleep, around 8-10 hours, and their body clock shifts later during puberty. Melatonin releases later at night, making it hard to fall asleep early and hard to wake up early. A tired teen can look irritable, unmotivated, or emotional. Often the most supportive response is helping protect rest, not pushing productivity.

RISK TAKING HAS A DEVELOPMENTAL PURPOSE

The teenage brain is wired to seek novelty, excitement, and reward. Dopamine sensitivity increases, making new experiences feel powerful and motivating. This can show up as risk taking, thrill seeking, or big social decisions. While it can feel worrying for adults, this drive helps teens explore identity and independence. They need guidance and safe boundaries, not shame.

PUBERTY REWIRES MORE THAN BODIES

Puberty brings hormonal shifts that affect mood, sensitivity, and social awareness. Teens often become more self-conscious and peer-focused because their brain is tuning into belonging and status. Friendship changes, strong emotions, and caring deeply about what others think are all developmentally typical, even when they seem dramatic from the outside.

CONNECTION BUILDS THE THINKING BRAIN

Teenagers still need adults, even if they push away. Calm connection, listening, and respectful boundaries help strengthen the prefrontal cortex over time. When teens feel safe and understood, their regulation and decision-making improve. They are not trying to be difficult — they are learning how to be human with a brain still under construction.



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Support & Advice for Teens

The teenage years can feel confusing for both young people and the adults who love them. If your teen seems bigger in emotions, later to sleep, or drawn to risk and independence, you're not doing anything wrong, you're seeing a brain in development.

This stage is not about pushing you away, it's about growing up. Your steady presence, calm boundaries and understanding of what's happening beneath the behaviour matter more than ever. Development is not defiance - its growth in progress.

Article and poster taken from:

[The Contented Child | Nurturing the whole child](#)

With Youth instant messaging (5-19 year olds, parents and carers)

withYouth
YOUNG PEOPLE'S Digital Wellbeing Services

Helpline and instant messaging service to chat online or over the phone to get support with any mental health concern. 0208 189 8400 (option 2) Mon-Fri 5-10pm www.withyouth.org

The East Herts team runs a wide range of groupwork projects for young people. Young people can make appointments with an advisor or youth worker for information, advice and support with issues such as mental health, sexual health, relationships, , finances, housing. The support is for young people aged 11-18, up to 25 for care leavers of those with SEND.

Services for Young People
Hertfordshire County Council

Email sfyp.eastherts@hertfordshire.gov.uk
Call 01992 588220

Text 07507 239947

[Services for Young People](#)

The Sandbox

Free online mental health support for young people aged 10-25 Years old.



Free Resources



Self-Guided Mental Health Modules



Live Chat



Up To 12 Therapy Sessions

Get Support At
thesandbox.mindler.co.uk



HertsHub

Hertfordshire's Children and Young People's Mental Health Services (CYPMHS) system

www.hertshub.co.uk



Rib Valley Partnership

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www.ribvalleypartnership.org.uk