

17 June 2016

Dear Parents/Carers

### **Risk-taking behaviours in Redcar & Cleveland**

We have been asked to draw to your attention concerns regarding risk-taking behaviour that is leaving some young people in the Redcar & Cleveland area particularly unsafe. Areas include Saltburn, Redcar, Marske and New Marske. Colleagues in safe-guarding agencies and youth support have passed on the content of this letter which I would ask that you read and discuss with your son/daughter where appropriate.

CREST, Young People's Substance Misuse Service, has become increasingly aware and concerned that some young people have been attending evening and overnight gatherings in local open spaces, woodlands and beaches. Often young people tell parents or carers that they are staying at friends' homes or going camping with friends. Parents allow them to stay out overnight believing that they are safe.

We know popular venues include local beaches, Spooky Wood in Saltburn, Saltburn Valley Gardens and Woods, Kirkleatham Woods, Errington Woods in New Marske, Guisborough Forest, Eston Nab/Hills and open spaces between Marske and Redcar.

Children aged from 13 to older teenagers attend these gatherings.

**CREST's concerns are** that some young people are using drugs and alcohol. CREST believes that alcohol, cannabis, Ecstasy, Mephedrone and LSD type drugs are being used at these gatherings. CREST has real concerns that these drugs could cause harm to young people who may not know how much and what they are taking.

On occasion, large numbers of young people (up to 60) congregating in isolated areas, specifically around Saltburn, Marske, Skelton, Redcar and Brotton. Children can easily become separated from friends or get themselves in to situations which they find difficult to get out of. This risk obviously increases if substances are consumed.

Young people can get involved in risk taking behaviours such as anti-social behaviour and unprotected sex which could result in sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancies.

**Advice to parents:** Always check with your child's friend's parents or carers to ensure that your child is staying somewhere safe and with adequate supervision.

Do not buy children alcohol or give children money which could be used to buy drugs or alcohol, Drugs and alcohol able to cause serious harm can cost as little as £3.

Keep in regular contact with your child via mobile phone. Ensure their phone is always fully charged, and consider using a family locator GPS tracker on your child's phone.

If your child does not return home at an agreed time report him/her missing to the police.

If you have any concerns for your child's wellbeing or require further information please contact your school or request some advice from Redcar & Cleveland BC, First Contact telephone number 01642 771500.

Yours faithfully



Andrew Wappat  
Principal