

June 2016

Dear Parents and Carers

CREST, Young People's Substance Misuse Service, have contacted all schools in Redcar and Cleveland and requested we inform parents of the following. CREST is a project run by Redcar and Cleveland Local Authority as part of the Healthy Schools initiative. Its aim is to offer support, advice and treatment to young people using drugs and alcohol under the age of 19. Parents, carers and professionals are also able to receive advice and guidance.

CREST 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, Spook 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:

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. Large numbers of young people (up to 60) are congregating in isolated areas, specifically around Saltburn, Marske, Skelton, Redcar and Brotton. Children can easily become separated from friends or get themselves into 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.
- Consider using a family locator GPS tracker on your child's phone.
- If your child does not return home at an agreed time report them missing to the police.

If you have any concerns for your child's wellbeing or require further information regarding CREST please contact myself at school. Alternatively you can contact Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council directly by calling the First Contact telephone number 01642 771500 and asking for information regarding CREST.

Yours sincerely,

Harry Ainscough
Assistant Headteacher – Huntcliff School