

Respond to the challenges and keep relationships positive

- **Pause**, don't try to have a challenging conversation while you are still angry.
- **Identify** and acknowledge all the behaviours you are finding challenging, then decide which one you will work on.
- **Model** your child will copy the behaviour that you display towards them. Especially when you are upset.
- **Listen** to your Child's experiences. Give your child the opportunity to explain their actions. Think about how their behaviour fits with what we know about teenagers *Forming New Identities*
- **Boundaries** are essential. Share clear expectations, which are important to your family and stick to them.
- Don't try to **Control** everything. Give your child the opportunity to *Assert their Independence and Form New Identity*.

Keep your child safe from harm.

How do you recognise when you need more help?

Unexplained or unexpected behaviours can be indicators of concern for your child

for example

- Weight loss
- Cuts and bruises
- Going missing from home
- Being very secretive
- Complete withdrawal from family and friends
- Money - having extra, going missing or online purchasing
- Refusing to attend school

**Do not wait until it is too late.
Discuss and act on your concerns**

Contact School

- Form Tutor, Head of Year,
- Ms Sproat (LSU)
- Ms Kamei, Ms Brown (Safeguarding)

Contact your GP - 111

**In an emergency call the Police
or go to A&E**



Understanding the challenges that **all** parents face.

Strategies to support positive relationships with your child.



Teenagers will demonstrate challenges in a variety of ways

For example;

- Going to bed and getting up
- Phone and internet use
- Time to be home
- Homework
- Arguing
- Friendships

Understanding why teenagers behaviour can be challenging is not a justification for behaviour which is unacceptable. Setting and sticking to boundaries becomes more important during this time.

However having an understanding of where these challenges come from, helps us to keep a sense of perspective without blame or rejection. You need this to keep calm and make good decisions about how you respond to challenging situations. It is also helpful to think about what behaviours you want to challenge and what you are going to accept as part of accepting you are the parents of a teenager that is growing up

Why are teenagers challenging?

There are lots of great things about living with teenagers. However, there will also be very challenging times, which can be difficult to manage. This is not a reflection of your parenting, but just the natural response of a teenager growing up.

Teenage behaviours are rooted in the early evolution of humans and their natural process of maturing. As teenagers enter puberty they experience changes to their bodies and their brains. Their bodies sexually mature and become capable of reproduction. Their brains drive them to become more independent and form stronger relationships with their peers. For thousands of years this was an essential part of human survival, because it enabled young people to break from their parents, move away, set up new communities and reproduce. Today we expect our teenagers to stay at home and live with their parents throughout their teenage (and often early adult lives) However the changes to their bodies and brains, and the need to be independent and linked with their peers is still just the same.

Teenagers will challenge the expectations of parents

To demonstrate their independence, teenagers have to show they have control over their own lives. This means they have to make and take decisions for themselves. This creates conflict in two unfortunate ways.

Asserting Independence

You can't demonstrate independence by making decisions, which you know your parents will agree with. You can only truly demonstrate it through actions, which you know they would not have taken. The drive for independence takes place rapidly, however the development of emotional maturity does not. Emotional maturity helps to consider consequences and enables you to make thoughtful decisions based on emotional impacts.

Forming New Identities

When your child appears to become a different person (not like you) it can be upsetting and disappointing, you may start thinking "I don't even know you any more!" - but it is also very normal.

Separation from you requires them to "delete" their childhood identity from when they were part of you.

Establishing this new identity means the relationships with their peers become more important than their relationships with you.