

Safeguarding Snapshot – 19.04.24

Energy drink consumption by children

Energy drinks are soft drinks that contain high levels of sugar and caffeine. They also contain stimulants such as guarana which adds to the level of caffeine. These drinks claim to boost energy and improve concentration. The feeling of energy from these drinks comes from the high levels of sugar and caffeine, users will experience a short lived 'sugar high' followed by a 'sugar crash'.

What's the harm?

Research shows the use of energy drinks by under 18s is linked to a range of negative health effects including: *Headaches, increased heart rate, trouble sleeping, hyperactivity, nausea, fainting abdominal pain and feeling anxious.*

Some of the ingredients in energy drinks can make some medicines less effective, such as ADHD medication.

Caffeine and Sugar

A large can of energy drink has the caffeine equivalent of 7 cans of cola. A small can of energy drink has the caffeine equivalent of 3 cans.

Caffeine is an addictive substance. The NHS has stated that because of the high levels of caffeine, sugar and acidity in energy drinks, they are 'unnecessary' and 'unsuitable' for children under 16.

Research shows the use of energy drinks by under 18s is linked to a range of unhealthy behaviours.

Young people who drink energy drinks are more likely to drink alcohol, smoke or use drugs. 59% of young people (14-17) surveyed in Lancashire, UK mix energy drinks with alcohol. If you mix the two drinks it allows you to drink more and for longer periods of time. As a result young people can get more drunk and take more risks.

Many young people use energy drinks to help with their studies, especially at exam time when they feel under pressure, but it can make them perform worse.

The stimulant effect of energy drinks can have an impact upon young people's behaviour in the classroom. They can become 'hyper', talkative, unable to sit still and once the effects wear off they may feel drowsy, irritable and unable to concentrate.

A gentle reminder to parents and students, energy and fizzy drinks are not permitted in school at any time.

For more information please refer to the National Colleges what parents need to know guide [\[here\]](#).