

**Do Now**

# How can we navigate peer influence and peer pressure?



Callum's best mates were on their phones, laughing. 'What is it?' Callum asked. 'We're trolling Craig, it's hilarious. He thinks we're that girl, Kaz, he likes so much. I made a fake profile. OMG his replies are so cringe. Read it Cal, what shall I say next?'

**Discuss: Why might Callum feel some pressure to join in with the online hoaxing/catfishing?**



Yes of course I'm really Kaz.

What do you mean I don't talk like her??



Why do you think it takes so much strength to do the right thing when others around us are all doing something that seems wrong?

*I think this takes a lot of strength because...*

# How can we navigate peer influence and peer pressure?



## Learning outcomes:

Recognise peer influence and to develop strategies for managing it, including online.

Describe the role peers can play in supporting one another to resist pressure and influence, challenge harmful social norms and access appropriate support.

Recognise that the need for peer approval can generate feelings of pressure and lead to increased risk-taking; strategies to manage this.



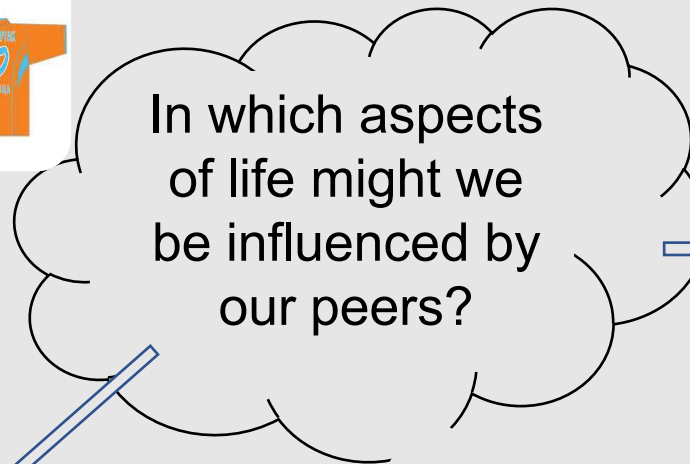
**Peer Pressure** - A feeling that one must do the same things as other people of one's age and social group in order to be liked or respected by them.

**Peer Influence** - Peer influence refers to the impact that peers have on an individual's thoughts (good or bad), feelings, and behaviours, particularly during adolescence.

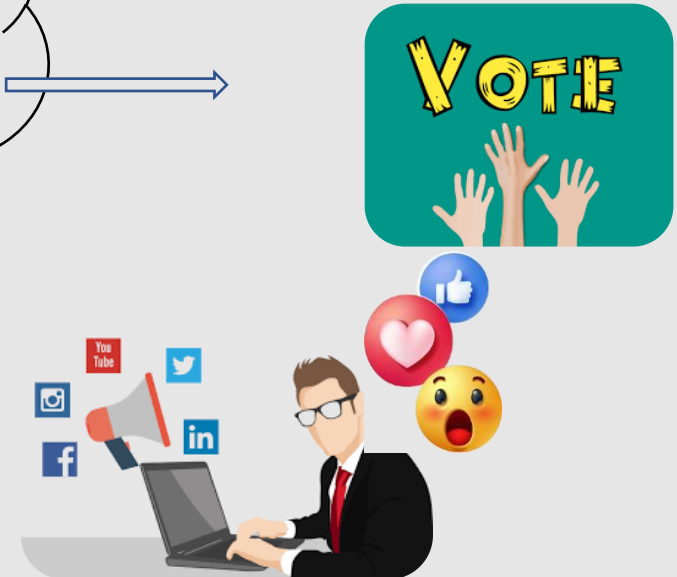
# Online safety – trolling and cyberbullying



Around the mind map, write down as many ideas as you can to answer the question in your mind map bubble. You can add others which you think we may not have thought of before and **you can use the images as clues.**



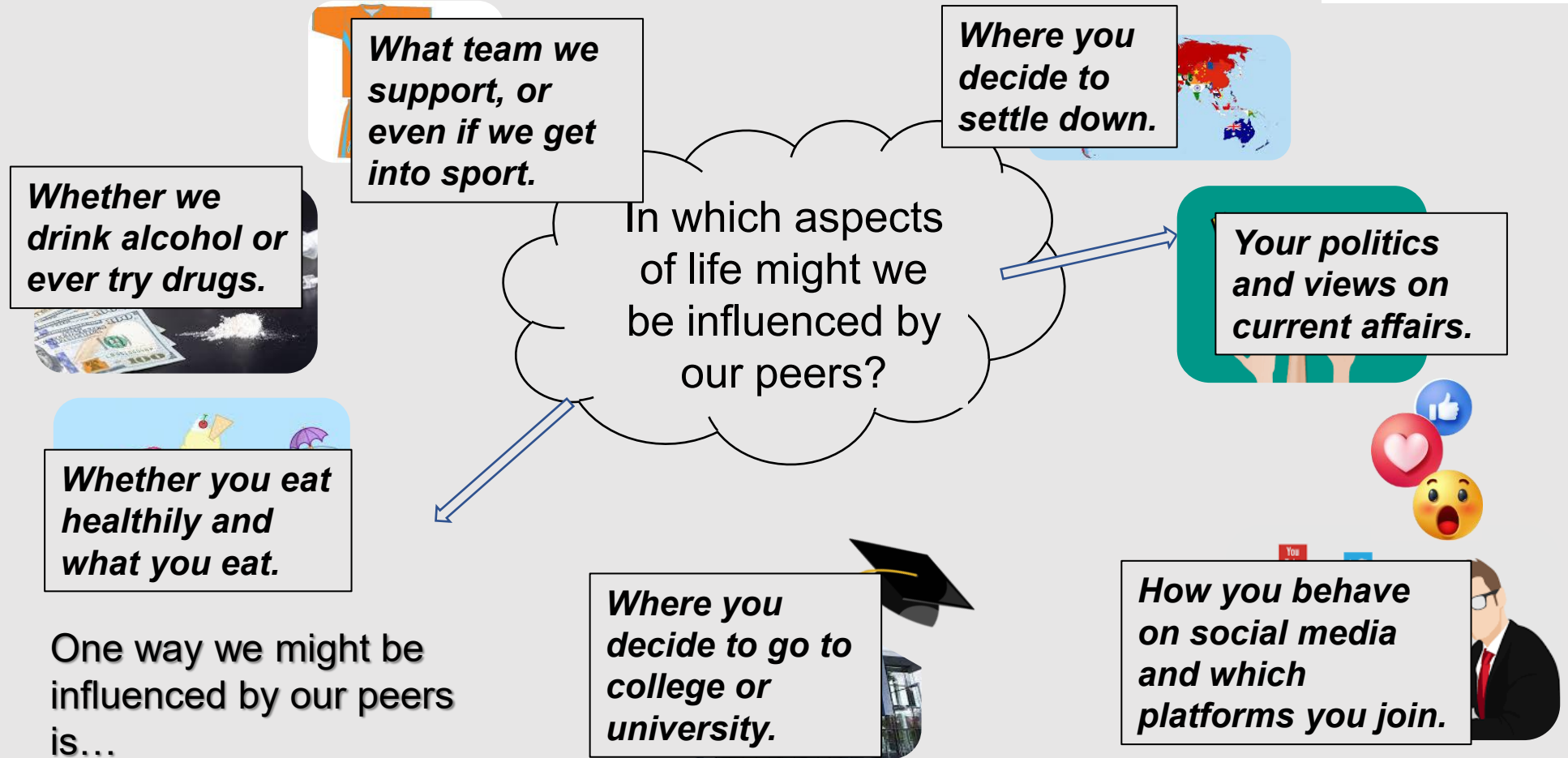
One way we might be influenced by our peers is...



# Online safety – trolling and cyberbullying



Let's go through our answers together and write down any new ideas we thought of.



# How can we navigate peer influence and peer pressure?



So, peer influence can affect almost every aspect of our lives. This also applies to adults too, although studies show that adolescents are more susceptible to being influenced by their peers. For some reason, adolescents seem to find peer influence much harder to resist.

**Discuss:** Why do you think this is? We'll find out in a minute, but let's hear some ideas first. . .

Do I really LOVE those trainers, or do I just think they're cool because everyone seems to be wearing them. *I don't even know myself anymore!*



# Why is peer pressure so hard to resist?

## THORNDEN THREE READING

We'll now read a source extract from a magazine article as a class.



**Why peer pressure can be so hard to resist**

*"One reason for herd behaviour is that people and animals tend to do what others around them are doing. This usually is because those who join the group in the behaviour figure that if several others are doing something, it must be worthwhile, or they would not be doing it. For example, people figure that a crowded restaurant must be serving good food, or it would not be as busy. In most cases, this thought process comes naturally or subconsciously, which is one reason why animals take part in herd behaviour. — from the **UKHOMES** Website*

So, what does this mean for teens feeling peer pressure? It means **exactly the same** as it does for adults, we all act the same when 'herd mentality' comes into play.

**Herd Mentality and Me**

**1. Brain Development:** During adolescence, the brain undergoes significant changes, particularly in regions associated with decision-making, risk-taking, and social behaviour. This makes teenagers more sensitive to social cues and more likely to seek acceptance and validation from their peers.

**2. Identity Formation:** Adolescence is a period of intense identity formation. Teens are exploring who they are and where they fit in society. Peer groups play a crucial role in this process, as teens often model their behaviour, attitudes, and values based on those of their peers in order to establish a sense of belonging and identity.

**3. Social Comparison:** Adolescents are more susceptible to social comparison, where they evaluate themselves in relation to their peers. They may conform to peer norms and behaviours in order to fit in or avoid rejection, even if those behaviours conflict with their own values or beliefs.

**4. Desire for Autonomy:** As teens strive for autonomy and independence from their parents, they may turn to their peers for guidance and validation. Peer groups offer a sense of freedom and belonging that can be appealing to adolescents seeking to assert their independence.

**5. Risk-taking Behaviour:** Peer influence can also lead to increased risk-taking behaviour among teens. Adolescents may engage in risky activities, such as substance abuse or reckless driving, in order to gain acceptance or approval from their peers.

**6. Emotional Intensity:** The emotional intensity of peer relationships is often heightened during adolescence. Friendships and social interactions can have a profound impact on teens' emotional well-being, making them more susceptible to peer influence.

In contrast, adults have typically developed a stronger sense of self and are less influenced by peer pressure. They have more established identities, priorities, and values, which provide a firmer foundation for decision-making. Additionally, adults often have broader social networks and diverse sources of influence, such as family, colleagues, and community, which dilute the impact of peer influence compared to the relatively narrow focus on peers that adolescents may have. This is not to say that adults are not influenced by their peers – of course they are – but not as often and not to the same extent.



**1:** In pairs identify five reasons why peer pressure is so hard to resist according to the article. Underline the reasons on the sheet and then describe them in your own words in your

**2:** Explain why good students often cave in to peer pressure, using quotes from the article explained in your own words.

**3:** Explain the difference between herd mentality, herd behaviour and peer pressure. Which of the strategies we've learned about would help us most in each case? Analyse.

# THORNDEN THREE READING!

Follow the text in your booklet as it is being read to you. You will be answering questions on it next.

## Why peer pressure can be so hard to resist

*“One reason for herd behaviour is that people and animals tend to do what others around them are doing. This usually is because those who join the group in the behaviour figure that if several others are doing something, it must be worthwhile, or they would not be doing it. For example, people figure that a crowded restaurant must be serving good food, or it would not be as busy. In most cases, this thought process comes naturally or subconsciously, which is one reason why animals take part in herd behaviour. “* **from the WiseGeek Website**

So, what does this mean for teens feeling peer pressure? It means exactly the same as it does for adults, we all act the same when ‘herd mentality’ comes into play.

### **Herd Mentality and Mob Mentality.**

Experts tell us that "herd mentality" is often used to something that can be influenced by things such as peer pressure, conformity, the need for acceptance and the desire to belong to in-groups.





These things often cause people who are in groups to behave in ways that are similar to others around them, in the 'in group'. For example, a person might choose to drink when in a group of friends do, even if they aren't actually keen on alcohol. Or listen to a type of music, and say they like it when really they don't.

When 'herd mentality' turns into 'mob mentality' however a person can find themselves in a far more serious situation. A football match, where everyone around you is chanting offensive chants may see you join in, when you would never usually do this – or even get involved in a fight or vandalize a building, A person may start to feel that there is less of a chance of getting caught than if he or she was acting alone. He or she might also feel less guilt because other people also caused the damage. The guilt is 'spread' in their minds.

### **So why does peer influence tend to affect teens more than adults?**

Peer influence tends to affect teens more than adults due to a combination of biological, psychological, and social factors:

**Brain Development:** During adolescence, the brain undergoes significant changes, particularly in regions associated with decision-making, risk-taking, and social behaviour. This makes teenagers more sensitive to social cues and more likely to seek acceptance and validation from their peers. Remember you don't actually *need* the validation.



**Identity Formation:** Adolescence is a period of intense identity formation. Teens are exploring who they are and where they fit in society. Peer groups play a crucial role in this process, as teens often model their behaviour, attitudes, and values based on those of their peers in order to establish a sense of belonging and identity.

**Social Comparison:** Adolescents are more susceptible to social comparison, where they evaluate themselves in relation to their peers. They may conform to peer norms and behaviours in order to fit in or avoid rejection, even if those behaviours conflict with their own values or beliefs. Remember you don't need to follow the herd.

**Desire for Autonomy:** As teens strive for autonomy and independence from their parents, they may turn to their peers for guidance and validation. Peer groups offer a sense of freedom and belonging that can be appealing to adolescents seeking to assert their independence.

**Risk-taking Behaviour:** Peer influence can also lead to increased risk-taking behaviour among teens. Adolescents may engage in risky activities, such as substance abuse or reckless driving, in order to gain acceptance or approval from their peers. Remember this when you see someone taking a risk – they may be trying to impress someone.

**Emotional Intensity:** The emotional intensity of peer relationships is often heightened during adolescence. Friendships and social interactions can have a profound impact on teens' emotional well-being, making them more susceptible to peer influence.

In contrast, adults have typically developed a stronger sense of self and are less influenced by peer pressure. They have more established identities, priorities, and values, which provide a firmer foundation for decision-making. Additionally, adults often have broader social networks and diverse sources of influence, such as family, colleagues, and community, which dilute the impact of peer influence compared to the relatively narrow focus on peers that adolescents may have. This is not to say that adults are not influenced by their peers – of course they are – but not as often and not to the same extent.

# How can we navigate peer influence and peer pressure?



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uME3JOM3W4k>

So how can we resist peer pressure? Why can it take such a powerful hold on us anyway? Watch carefully and answer the questions below. We'll go through the answers together shortly.

*Does 'just say no' always work?*

*Why do social norms have such a huge effect on our behaviour?*

*What are 'injective norms'? Give an example.*

*What is pluralistic ignorance?*

*What have studies shown about college students' attitude to heavy drinking?*

*What might make you feel less pressure to conform with a group?*

*How can speaking up help?*



# How can we navigate peer influence and peer pressure?



***Does 'just say no' always work?***

No. That was tried in drugs campaigns in the 1990s and had little effect.

***Why do social norms have such a huge effect on our behaviour?***

Because we are evolutionarily 'hard-wired' to want to fit in.

***What are 'injective norms'? Give an example.***

Normal ways that society expects us to behave. Stopping at a red light.

***What is 'pluralistic ignorance'?***

It's when everyone else seems to be ignoring something which is obviously bad, so you start to think you might be the one with the problem.

***What have studies shown about college students' attitude to heavy drinking?***

Most of them aren't that keen, but they think everyone else is ok with it.

***What might make you feel less pressure to conform with a group?***

Just knowing about the concept of pluralistic ignorance.

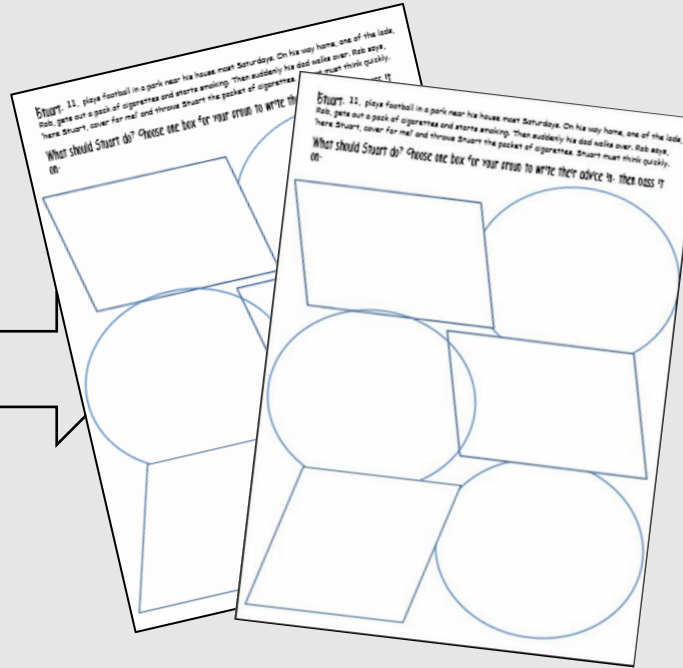
***How can speaking up about a situation you feel pressured into help?***

Because you will may find others are just as uncomfortable about a situation as you are.

## We're now going to examine some peer influence case studies.

Read the case studies in your pairs and complete one of the spaces with your advice.

After a few minutes your teacher will tell you to pass it on to the next group.



Hey, who pulled the plug on my accordion solo?



**Hamza, 12,** is one of only a few Muslim children at his new school. His mates have all bought bacon sandwiches to eat at break. Eating pork is forbidden in Hamza's religion, but his new friends are saying, 'I can't believe you've never tried it, it's so good, you'll love it!' One of the lads tried to shove his sandwich in Hamza's face and says, 'I dare you to take one bite.'

**What should Hamza do?**

**Sarah, 14,** has just started seeing a 16 year old lad in year 11. He has suggested they take their relationship a step further and have sex. She said no, as she wasn't ready. Now her friends have found out. Some of them are teasing her and calling her Sarah the virgin. What should she do?

**What should Sarah do?**



**Stuart, 11**, plays football in a park near his house most Saturdays. On his way home, one of the lads, Rob, gets out a vape and starts vaping. Then suddenly his dad walks over. Rob says, 'here Stuart, cover for me!' and throws Stuart the vape. Stuart must think quickly.

**What should Stuart do?**

**Sunita, 16**, has always wanted to be a doctor. She's studying hard in the first year of her A-Levels. Sunita's friends always want her to play online games with them and she loves doing that - they always seem to be online. Sunita's parents want her to spend all her time studying. Sunita is feeling a lot of pressure from both sides, and from college. She wants to maintain good relationships with everyone and do well. She does recognise however, that sometimes she does need a break.

**What should Sunita do?**



**Tyrone, 13**, is amazing at art. His mates are all really nice, genuinely good friends to him. They recently arranged a birthday surprise for Tyrone - they took him to the old abandoned scout hut in the local park, where they had bought loads of new cans of spray paint for him. They showed him the side of the old hut, a big blank brick wall, gave him the spray cans and said - 'here we thought you'd enjoy practicing your graffiti art. Happy birthday mate.' All the other lads start spraying the wall.

**What should Tyrone do?**

## Year 7 RSE – Autumn 2: Relationships and Friendships – Entry & Exit Quiz

### Instructions:

Please rate your confidence for each statement on a scale of 1 to 5, where:

1 = Not confident at all | 5 = Very confident

1. On a scale of 1 to 5, how confident do you feel that you can describe what makes a healthy and respectful friendship?
2. On a scale of 1 to 5, how confident do you feel that you can recognise the signs of a toxic or unhealthy friendship?
3. On a scale of 1 to 5, how confident do you feel that you can identify personal qualities that help maintain great friendships and avoid fall-outs?
4. On a scale of 1 to 5, how confident do you feel that you can explain the importance of trust in friendships and how to build it?
5. On a scale of 1 to 5, how confident do you feel that you can manage peer pressure and make safe, independent choices?
6. On a scale of 1 to 5, how confident do you feel that you can spot the difference between healthy peer influence and harmful pressure from others?
7. On a scale of 1 to 5, how confident do you feel that you can explain what bullying is, including the different types (e.g., physical, verbal, social, and cyber)?
8. On a scale of 1 to 5, how confident do you feel that you can suggest safe and effective ways to support someone being bullied?
9. On a scale of 1 to 5, how confident do you feel that you can respond respectfully and kindly when someone shares a concern with you, either in person or online?
10. On a scale of 1 to 5, how confident do you feel that you can name at least two trusted adults or services you can go to for help with a relationship or friendship concern?



**This is your Home Learning. It has been shared with you on Satchel. Please make sure it is completed by next week**

# How do you report something you are concerned about?

- It is important to us that all of you feel safe, happy and belong at Thornden.
- We also know that sometimes it is not as easy as simply telling a member of staff
- It could be:
  - A friend you are worried about
  - Someone being unkind to you
  - Something you have heard and think we should know



## How can you report anything you are worried about?

- Speak to a member of staff or parent / carer
- Visit the Well Being Den or Head of Year area
- On Satchel each week you will be sent a link to a form to share any worries you have
- On our school website homepage there is a 'Report a Concern' link.
- In the Student Bulletin there is a 'Report a Concern' link
- On all school desktops there is a 'Report a Concern' logo to click and report anything

# Need Support? You're Not Alone

If anything in today's lesson has affected you, or you want to talk to someone, there is help available.



## **Mental Health & Low Mood**

YoungMinds – <https://www.youngminds.org.uk>

Kooth – <https://www.kooth.com>

Mind – <https://www.mind.org.uk>

## **Talk to Someone**

Your Tutor or Head of Year – We're here to help.

Wellbeing Team and School Nurse

Report a Concern on Satchel

Safeguarding Team with the Purple lanyards

## **Healthy Lifestyle**

NHS Every Mind Matters – <https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters>

Change4Life – <https://www.nhs.uk/change4life>

## **Apps That Can Help**

Calm – For mindfulness and sleep.

Headspace – Meditation and stress relief.

Clear Fear – Manage anxiety (designed for young people).

MeeTwo – Anonymously talk to other teens, moderated by experts.

## **Eating Concerns**

Beat Eating Disorders –

<https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk>

NHS Live Well – Eating Disorders –

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/eating-disorders/>