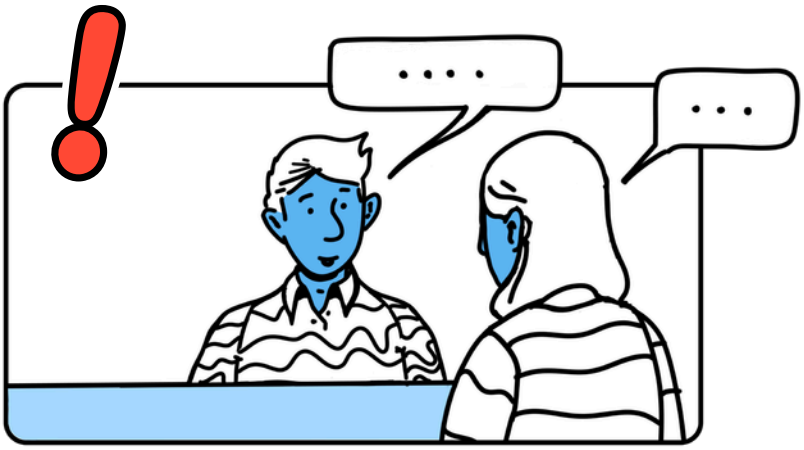
The Komodo Student Safety Conversation Guide



This guide is purpose-built to support conversations triggered by the specific Komodo student safety questions:

- I feel safe at school.
- I feel safe online.
- I have been bullied at school this week.

While we want to normalise conversations about safety, some students might be reluctant or anxious to have them due to fear of consequences, embarrassment, or shame. What matters most is approaching these conversations with a calm, grounded, and non-judgmental mindset to ensure the student feels safe and heard and that adequate time is allocated.

Unlike general wellbeing checks, safety flags fall into two categories:

- The brief touch point: Some students may have misclicked or be experiencing an addressable wellbeing concern. In these cases, a quick, reassuring chat ensures they know their surveys are actively monitored, and their voice matters.

- The safety disclosure: Other students will be experiencing significant distress. In these cases, focus on providing immediate emotional containment to validate their experience and safely connect them to your school's safeguarding network and/or pastoral care pathways.

Staff Considerations & Best Practice

Supporting student safety can be challenging, and it shouldn't be the responsibility of just a select few. It is completely normal to feel varying levels of comfort when engaging in these difficult conversations.

Remember, you cannot pour from an empty cup. It is vital that you have access to support for your own wellbeing. If a safety result or student interaction upsets you or makes you feel uncomfortable, please look after yourself and access guidance through your school's pastoral care network or other healthcare channels.

When navigating these specific safety conversations, you can use these 3 psychological anchors to ensure you are delivering effective support:

1: Regulate before you reason:

A student reporting a safety concern can be in a high-emotion state. It is important first and foremost to bring a calm, steady presence to the room (see Co-regulation strategies for more). Low, steady vocal tones and pace will help their nervous systems to settle and understand that they are secure in this moment.

2: Avoid the "Investigator" Trap:

Do not press for immediate, granular details (e.g., exactly who, when, and where). Focus first on how the student is feeling and ensuring they feel supported. Deeper understanding can come later.

3: The Rule of Transparency:

Never promise absolute secrecy. If a student asks you to keep a safety issue a secret, gently set a boundary:
"I will respect your privacy completely, but because I care about your safety, I cannot keep secrets that put you at risk. We will work through this together with people who can help."



Co-Regulation Strategies for Staff

When a student is distressed, the survival centre of their brain takes over, placing the logical, reasoning mind effectively offline. A dysregulated brain cannot process logic, which is why attempting to problem-solve, investigate, or ask logistical questions right away simply does not work. Before a student can reason, they must first feel safe. Because children and adolescents do not yet have fully developed neural pathways to calm themselves down independently (self-regulation), they rely on the nervous system of a trusted adult to do it for them. This process is called co-regulation. By bringing a calm, grounded, and predictable presence to the interaction, your nervous system acts as a biological anchor. Through co-regulation, you literally quiet their survival brain, allowing their logical brain to come back online.

You do not need to be a therapist to do this - co-regulation is a natural human skill that anyone can use to provide immediate, powerful support when a student needs it most.

Actionable Co-Regulation Strategies

When a student enters a conversation in distress, their body is actively looking to your nervous system to determine if they are safe. You can intentionally use these 3 physical triggers to help them calm down:

1: The "Low & Slow" Voice:

Drop your vocal pitch slightly and slow your speech down by about 20%. A quiet, steady tone signals to their subconscious that there is no immediate emergency in the room.

2: Parallel Positioning:

Avoid sitting directly opposite the student, which can feel confrontational or clinical. Instead, sit side-by-side or at a 90-degree angle, looking at the screen or a neutral point together to reduce intense eye contact.

3: Match, Then Lower:

If a student is highly agitated, avoid telling them to "calm down." First, validate their high energy ("I can see you are very upset right now"), and then intentionally drop your own volume and pacing. They will naturally follow your lead.

Conversation Starter

The following are scenarios that might occur and ways in which you can approach the conversations. They are not intended as a script but can provide a scaffold to support the students and guide conversations. Remember to communicate with your student in an age-appropriate way, while remaining open, empathetic, and non-judgmental.

Remember to communicate with your wider team on actions taken with students through notes and records on the “pastoral note” tab in Komodo. These notes are stored about the student, not for the student.

Q: I feel safe at school.

A: No

Opening:

I noticed on your survey this week that you haven't been feeling safe at school lately. Thank you for being honest about that. I wanted to catch up because your safety is the most important thing to me.

Follow up question ideas:

- “Tell me more about what is going on for you.”
- "Tell me a bit more about what that feeling of being unsafe looks or feels like for you?"
- "Are there certain times of day, or specific places at school (like the corridors, playground, or certain classes) where that feeling gets stronger?"
- **Validate the feeling: "It makes complete sense that it's hard to focus on class when you don't feel entirely safe here. Anyone would feel that way."**
- "What is one thing we could do today to help you feel a bit more secure when you walk out this door?"
- "Now that we’ve talked about this, what is the very next thing you feel you need to happen to feel a little bit safer?"
- "If we go and talk to [Pastoral Lead] together, would you prefer to do the talking, or would you like me to explain it to them for you?"

Conversation Starter

Q: I have been bullied at school this week.

A: Yes

Opening:

"I read your response to the survey where you shared that you've experienced bullying this week. I am sorry that has been happening, and I want to thank you for having the courage to let us know. You shouldn't have to carry that alone."

Follow up question ideas:

- “Tell me more about what is going on for you.”
- "When you're at school right now, what is happening that is making things feel unsafe or uncomfortable?"
- "Who is an adult at home or school that you've been able to talk to about this so far?"
- "Who is a friend or a peer here at school who you feel completely comfortable and safe around right now?"
- "When you feel the most overwhelmed by this during the school day, where is the safest place for you to go?"
- "Would you prefer to take the lead on the next steps, or do you need the school to step in and handle the boundaries for you?"
- "What is one thing I can do for you right now before you head off to your next class?"

Validation ideas for bullying:

- If they feel fear/anxiety: "It makes sense that you feel anxious walking down that corridor or going into that class. Anyone would feel that way if they were being targeted."
- If they feel shame/embarrassment: "Thank you for telling me. I know it takes an immense amount of courage to speak up about this. This is not your fault."
- If they feel helpless/exhausted: "It sounds incredibly draining to feel upset and unsettled throughout your school day. No wonder you are tired and finding it hard to concentrate ."

Conversation Starter

Q: I feel safe online.

A: No

Opening:

“I noticed on your survey this week that you haven't been feeling safe online. Thank you for being honest about that. I wanted to catch up because your safety is the most important thing to me.”

Follow up question ideas:

- “Tell me more about what is going on for you. “
- "When you're online right now, what is happening that is making things feel unsafe or uncomfortable?"
- "Is this happening on a specific app, group chat, or game, or is it a few different places?"
- "Who is an adult at home or school that you've been able to talk to about this so far?"
- "How can we work together today to help put a boundary between you and that digital space?"



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The student who has left a concerning comment

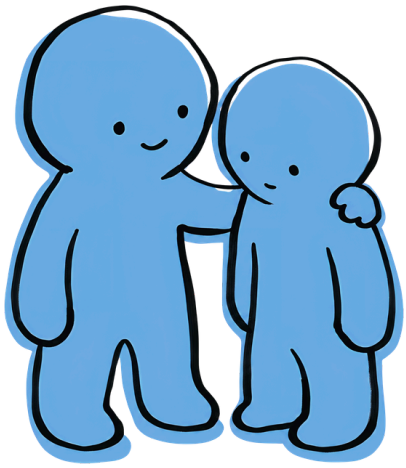
At the end of each Komodo survey, students are prompted to leave any other comments about their wellbeing. Staff who are assigned to this student are able to communicate with the student and view their comments in the “Feed” feature. Sometimes students use this as an opportunity to communicate about a difficulty that needs to be followed up.

Opening:

“I have seen the comment you left at the end of your survey this week. Let’s make time to catch up this week.”

Follow up question ideas:

- “Tell me more about what is going on for you at the moment?”
- “What can I do to support you today?”
- Validate how they are feeling.
- “Remember that you can also make use of the “request check in” button in Komodo if you need support around this.”
- “Who is an adult you trust who we can contact to help support you?”



For further guidance on student conversation, please check out our resource “Validation: The ultimate guide” in the Resource Hub.

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Next Steps, The Support Network & Closing the Loop

The final stage of the conversation is to shift gently into a forward-looking, collaborative space. Because this involves safety, the teacher should never feel they have to solve the problem alone. Your goal here is to map out a "safety network" for your student, identifying both immediate next steps and the key people who can support them.

Mapping the Support Network

When discussing who else can be part of their support, help the student identify trusted individuals across three distinct areas:

- In-School Professionals: "We have people here whose job is to make sure you are safe and supported. I would love to bring in [Name of Pastoral Lead / School Counsellor / Dean] so we can make an official plan to support you. How do you feel about us talking to them together?"
- Trusted Adults at Home: "Does anyone at home know that things have been tough this week? Can we look at the best way to share this with them?"
- Safe Peer Anchors: "When you are walking between classes, at lunch, or online, who are the friends you feel completely safe and comfortable around? Let's make sure you are connecting with them over the next few days.

Remind your student that involving the support network is an act of protection, not a violation of trust: "Because your safety is my number one priority, I am going to pass this information on to [Pastoral Lead] after our chat. We are all going to work as a team to make sure this gets sorted for you."

Closing the Loop

Always end the conversation by locking in a concrete time to follow up. This removes the anxiety of the unknown and reassures your student that they haven't just been passed off to a system, but that you are personally staying in their corner.

"Thank you again for trusting me with this today. To make sure you're feeling supported, I am going to check back in with you [insert specific time tomorrow/next week] just to see how you are and how our next steps are working out. Does that sound like a good plan?"