

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that you are well and that your children will have been able to enjoy headspace and time with their friends and extended families following the changes to national restrictions from Monday 29th March. I have no doubt that this will have been a moment of relief felt around our community.

Everyone's Invited Website

I know that many of you will have read about the national response to the Everyone's Invited website over the last two weeks. This is a website that has been set up with the purpose of changing societal attitudes by highlighting examples of sexual harassment, sexual violence, and abuse through anonymous testimonies (to date, over 10,000 anonymous allegations have been made).

It is clear that these testimonies raise a significant national and societal issue and in that context, I wish to remind parents and students of the safeguards that we have in place to make sure that Robert Smyth students are not placed at risk:

- All staff have updated safeguarding training in line with the latest government [guidance](#)
- All students are taught the Relationships and Sex Education curriculum. The overview is available [here](#). Our curriculum ensures that all children and young people understand what a healthy relationship and acceptable behaviour looks like, including the teaching of informed consent and where to go for support if there is a problem
- All students benefit from working in a calm, safe school underpinned by a clear behaviour policy and subsequent expectations. This behaviour policy is available [here](#)
- We advocate high expectations of conduct from all members of our community including respect, honesty, kindness, tolerance and courtesy. We communicate these values every day through high expectations of behaviour and this is further supplemented by daily tutorial sessions focused around the PSHE curriculum and an assembly programme
- We have robust procedures in place to respond to any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment, based on the DfE's 2018 advice on sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools. This includes sharing information and working with the police and, after consideration of ongoing risk factors, implementation of any appropriate sanction, including permanent exclusion when necessary
- Our students know our safeguarding team as this forms part of their induction. We have posters around the school with photographs of these members of staff to ensure that students know who they can go to for this support.
- All students are well supported throughout the day including during break and lunchtimes. At break times, the senior leadership team and teaching staff maintain a high level of supervision to ensure that all students are safe and have access to responsible adults should they need to report any concern. A member of the leadership team is on-call every day so that they can be available to support students with any concerns or matters that arise
- We benefit from the strong governance of Tudor Grange Academies Trust. In practice, this involves regular visits to the school and detailed monitoring of safeguarding processes alongside high quality training and development support

At the start of the summer term, we will take the following actions to ensure that we continue to proactively ensure that all students are explicitly taught about relationships within a climate of high expectations and mutual respect for all, by all:

- Expectations Assembly led by the Principal (this will be on a virtual platform)
- Continued regular monitoring of reported concerns on our safeguarding dashboard
- Meeting between the Principal and student leaders to discuss their views
- Continued safeguarding governance review from Tudor Grange Academies Trust

Our position as a school is clear: sexual violence and sexual harassment are never acceptable, will never be tolerated and are not an inevitable part of growing up. I can assure you that we will never permit such behaviour to become accepted as a cultural norm and we remain committed to working openly and transparently with our student community to promote mutual respect.

What should I do if I have concerns?

To continue to keep everyone safe, we must keep lines of communication open. The appropriate means for disclosing an allegation of abuse **relating to a student** is always to inform a member of the safeguarding team*. In the event that an allegation is made against a **member of staff**, this must be sent to me directly, as Principal. We will always act on concerns raised.

Whilst I am not aware of any cases reported on the Everyone's Invited website, I am clear that we cannot monitor testimonies in this way nor can we act on anonymous information posted on social media because it is not possible to carry out a proper investigation into a report. It is also clear that some of the allegations on social media describe behaviour that is unlawful and if we were informed of such an allegation, we would refer to the police in the first instance.

The nature and volume of testimony regarding alleged abuse on social media reflects an issue for the whole of our society and as a school, we recognise and take seriously the role that we play in setting a culture of mutual respect for all. If any child or young person attending our schools is worried or upset by any content they have read on Everyone's Invited, we would encourage them to talk to a member of staff about their concerns when we return to school after the Easter break.

We remain committed to ensuring that every child benefits from a calm, respectful climate for learning. I hope that this letter offers you reassurance that we recognise the importance of this issue.

Yours faithfully,

D Cleary
Principal

***Safeguarding Team**

Mrs McNair (Designated Safeguarding Lead)

Mrs Osborne

Mrs Dockree

Miss Nicholson

Ms Kirk

Mr Luhrs