



Robert Smyth Academy



Dear Families,

Netflix Drama: “Adolescence” – Recommended viewing for all parents

Like many of you who have already watched “**Adolescence**” over the last week, I am still recovering. This excellent [review](#) gives an insight into the quality of the production and its relevance today:

Recommended viewing for all parents

“Adolescence” provides a stark and realistic depiction of the challenges teenagers face today, which can help parents understand the complexities of their children's lives. Whether we like it or not, as the key adults in our children's lives, it is essential to be aware of the risks portrayed in the series so we can keep them safe:

- **Knife Crime:** The series highlights the disturbing rise in knife-related incidents among young people.
- **Bullying:** It addresses the severe impact of bullying on teenagers' mental health and well-being.
- **Misogyny and Online Radicalisation:** The series explores how online platforms can influence young minds, leading to dangerous ideologies, particularly the impact of the ‘*Manosphere*’ online.
- **Mental Health:** The series delves into the psychological struggles teenagers face.

What is the school doing to keep our students safe from harm?

- We provide a bespoke, age appropriate PSHE and assembly programme to all year groups that addresses safety and wellbeing explicitly. This is also dynamically reviewed and changed should an issue become more prevalent. For example, last week the theme of misogyny was part of the curriculum in reference to a small number of reported comments made by children and in the context of International Women's Day.
- Assemblies are led by Senior Leaders and the Principal to reinforce school values: Respect is at the cornerstone of this, and tutors provide weekly reminders of what respect looks like in practice.
- There are clear Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies in place; we remind our children of ‘red lines’.
- We reward and recognise students for their behaviour and attitude to learning. For example, this year our teachers have assigned over 25,000 Golden Tickets (probably now on many of your fridges!)
- We sanction students for behaviour that falls below our expectations.
- We provide clear channels for reporting anything that students and staff are concerned about via the Safeguarding Team, Mentors, MyVoice, Student Council and Form Tutors.
- The school has very strong relationships with agencies, including the police and youth services.
- Our Safeguarding Team work collaboratively with local schools (safeguarding trends).
- We schedule and deliver high-quality safeguarding training for staff.
- To ensure that the school is safe, calm and orderly by sustaining a significant investment in dynamic support. For example, we assign a Duty Officer and a staff duty team supervision at every break and lunchtime including members of the Safeguarding Team. In addition, the Senior Leadership Team supervise every lesson changeover, every day, which equates to 200-duty points over a fortnight.



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What actions should parents take to keep their children safe?

- **Monitor your child's social media use to manage risk and to prevent cyberbullying.**
- Foster a supportive home atmosphere where children feel comfortable sharing their experiences.
- Encourage participation in activities that boost self-esteem and confidence.
- Ensure your child gets enough sleep, exercise, and downtime to manage stress.
- Emphasise the importance of seeking help from trusted adults.
- Educate your child about recognising manipulation tactics and misinformation online.
- Be alert to changes in language, secrecy about online activity, or extremist rhetoric.
- Have honest conversations about the dangers and legal consequences of carrying weapons.
- Refer to the '**red lines**' outlined in our Behaviour Policy – use this as a guide for respectful behaviour.
- Don't hesitate to contact your GP or mental health professionals if you have further concerns.

What can we do together?

Robert Smyth Academy students benefit from a culture of strong partnership between school and home, which allows us to keep them safe and make them feel understood and protected. This series serves as a reminder of the importance of this partnership. In practice this means working together, especially when things are challenging. This includes **supporting teachers to apply the Behaviour Policy when children make mistakes** and being mindful not to act so as to undermine the authority of teachers, and by proxy, the school.

Get in touch

If this series provokes more questions than answers and you would like to ask for advice regarding any of these themes, then please email our Safeguarding Team, and we will do our best to support you:

safeguarding@robertsmyth.tgacademy.org.uk

You can find more information about our Safeguarding Team and support available [here](#).

Students can report any concerns that arise from this letter or, more generally, [here](#).

Thank you in advance for remaining engaged and involved in such critical years of your child's development. I am confident that no parent will watch this series without being struck by the grave consequences that children can face if we do not have honest conversations and proactively monitor and manage risk exposure online.

Yours sincerely,

D Cleary
Principal



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