

4 October 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Harmful Sexualised Behaviour in School-aged Children

As explained in my start of year letter, one of our priorities this year is focused on further developing a culture of safeguarding. I am writing to share information on a specific aspect of this work.

Many of you will remember that in June 2021, Ofsted were asked by the Government to carry out a rapid review on sexual abuse in schools and colleges. 900 students from 32 schools across the country were spoken to by Ofsted inspectors regarding their experiences of harmful sexual behaviour. Full details of this report can be found [here](#).

Ofsted's report is excellent in highlighting a national problem. Ofsted's report states that certain forms of harmful sexualised behaviour, including sexting, have become normalised in today's society and is experienced by females and males.

Harmful sexualised behaviour has become endemic for a variety of reasons, including:

- The acceptance of generation-long demeaning and mistreating of women, especially through every day misogynistic language.
- Inappropriate, sexualised content readily viewable on social media platforms.
- The development of technology, resulting in most school-aged children having smartphones.
- The widespread accessibility of pornography that is sometimes viewed by children as young as seven years old (BBFC, 2019).

Whilst we cannot change society as a whole, SMRT can certainly be part of the solution. Our approach to responding to any form of child-on-child abuse, including harmful sexual behaviour, sexualised name calling, misogynistic language or sexual harassment/violence is outlined in our [Behaviour and Good Relationships Policy](#).

The following actions by the School and families will help address this national issue.

At St Mary Redcliffe and Temple School and Sixth Form we:

- Provide staff with annual training regarding harmful sexual behaviour.
- Challenge any forms of harmful sexual behaviour.
- Frame our approach to harmful sexual behaviour in the context of our Alive Model of learning as well as legislation and professional guidance.
- Ensure that the Year 7, Year 8, and Year 9 Values in Practice (ViP) curriculum includes specific lessons on child-on-child abuse within its RSHE topics.

- Develop the pastoral curriculum (tutor time and assemblies) and the Values in Practice (ViP) curriculum to ensure that all students understand the meaning of consent and the importance of reporting any forms of harmful sexual behaviour.
- Utilise specific year group and house group 'drop-down days' (where students are off timetable) to cover age specific aspects of harmful sexualised behaviour.
- Design and present bespoke assemblies in year group assembly time.
- Ensure stakeholders are clear about how to [report bullying, discrimination and harassment or any behaviour that makes them or a friend feel unsafe](#).
- Work effectively with external partners to prevent and respond to cases of harmful sexual behaviour.

Families should:

- Discuss harmful sexualised behaviour at home, including how to keep safe online.
- Challenge any harmful sexualised behaviour, including misogynistic language.
- Remind their child about the dangers of taking and sharing nude/semi-nude images.
- Ensure their child is not accessing harmful content online (by checking privacy settings and search history, etc).
- Useful tips regarding online safety can be found here.
 - <https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/parents-and-carers>
 - <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

Yours faithfully



Mr D Planter
Headteacher

Important Notice:

We are seeking to translate our key letters into several languages to develop communication with as many families as possible. We are initially using Google Translate for this task and there is the chance that some meaning may be lost in translation. The original correspondence in English will be the definitive version and if you have any queries, please do contact your child's tutor who will be able to help or direct you to support. We thank you for your patience and feedback as we work to develop this feature of our practice.