



Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Peer on Peer Abuse – Our Commitment

As you will be aware, there has been a significant amount of attention from the media focussed on the issue of peer on peer abuse. There has been much discussion on what happens within a school context, and whether interactions between students mirror what is happening beyond the school gates.

Several activist movements, including “Everyone’s Invited”, have presented testimonials from the past and present, detailing incidents of sexual assault/abuse, sexualised ‘banter’, harassment and discrimination within high school communities. This is not acceptable and raises concerns about how much societal issues, which occur within everyday external experiences, filter into the attitudes, relationships and interactions between students.

The Colne Community School and College is part of the Sigma Trust family of schools and, like everyone, we have been appalled by the stories emerging from across the country. Collectively, we are passionate about our students’ well-being, both physical and mental, and want all of our students to feel empowered to step forward and talk about their experiences; this is good for them and good for society as a whole.

The Sigma Trust schools are committed to educating our students to become respectful, tolerant and inclusive members of society. Through our well-established curriculum, we teach about appropriate relationships and sex education alongside a focus on equality, equity, diversity and inclusion.

We are absolutely committed to ensuring our students feel safe in school, secure in the knowledge that when they encounter or witness anything which causes them to feel uncomfortable or concerned in any way, they know where to go for help and have full trust in our highly trained staff.

It is equally important that, as parents/carers, you are able to talk to your children about any negative experiences they encounter and for you to also have trust to share this information with us; girls and boys are faced with many challenges, both can be victims of sexual harassment and abuse, we will provide help and support.

With individuals brave enough to speak out, without fear or discrimination, and attitudes and behaviour now open to full scrutiny, we are confident that change will happen. Across the Sigma Trust, our young people will continue to be educated and encouraged to develop

positive and respectful relationships, understand boundaries and know that any circumstance which diminishes or normalises any form of sexual assault/abuse, sexualised 'banter', sexual harassment, racism or discrimination is not acceptable and they must feel secure and confident to talk about this. Our commitment is to you and your children; we will not tolerate any peer on peer abuse or any form of sexual violence or sexual harassment. Through our existing practices, Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and our Sexual Violence and Harassment policy we will support and take appropriate actions as required for any breaches of expectation or offence caused to others.

This form of abuse is a societal issue, schools are at the heart of our communities and we will continue to work to be part of the solution, together with parents, students and a range of partners we aim to eradicate this type of abuse and discrimination from our culture and society.
Yours sincerely



N GALLAGHER
Executive Headteacher

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