



21st June 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

At The Piggott School, safeguarding and the welfare of our students remains a priority for us all.

At the start of the academic year, all teaching and support staff complete the statutory annual safeguarding training, including a declaration to show that they have read the relevant sections of the DfE document, Keeping Children Safe in Education. Our policy and procedures in school ensure that we are fully compliant in meeting, and exceeding, the thresholds for keeping our students safe. We accept the accountability that we must educate young people to make healthy and safe choices, not only now, but in preparation for future adult life. Schools are in the privileged position, through the education and empowerment of young people, to lead and inspire change for the better in society. This is not a small task. Whilst we work hard to ensure that our curriculum teaches personal development and growth, there are many opportunities for social learning available to our students outside of the classroom. The development of technology, media and social platforms in society offers an exposure to learning and observation beyond the boundaries of our curriculum. Research shows that some media is having a 'toxic' effect on the behaviours and well-being of young people.

In recent months, Ofsted completed a review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges. On the 10th June, they reported their findings and recommendations on sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online sexual abuse. The findings concluded that sexual harassment, including online sexual abuse, has become 'normalised' for children and young people nationally.

The review included visits to 32 state and private schools and inspectors spoke with more than 900 children as part of their research. The report stated that a significantly large proportion of girls shared that sexist name calling and unwanted explicit pictures 'happened a lot'. Explicit pictures, 'nudes', were collected and shared on platforms such as WhatsApp and Snapchat. The inspectors were told that the young people did not see the point of challenging or reporting harmful behaviour due to concerns of 'reputational damage' or being socially ostracised. They were also concerned about the potential of police involvement. Due to an unwillingness to report, the review recommended that schools should act on the assumption that sexual harassment is affecting their students and to take a whole-school approach to addressing the issue, creating a culture where sexual harassment is not tolerated, and sanctions are implemented when appropriate.

Other recommendations included in the report focused on the RSHE curriculum. Our curriculum is in line with the latest developments and designed to address some of the concerns raised in the report. It is delivered by specialist staff and it does provide a suitable platform for learning, discussion and reflection. A copy of this curriculum is available on our website.



The report encourages strong links with our multi-agency safeguarding partners. We have successful and on-going links with CAMHs, Children Services, the police and our LSCB. We are in agreement that early intervention is essential for the holistic support of a young person at risk and the school will refer or signpost to the relevant specialist organisation to keep a young person safe. This will always be completed in partnership with parents or carers and we remain committed to ensuring transparency and trust as we work together to address sensitive concerns.

Additional recommendations were made for the government regarding an on-line safety bill and a communications campaign about sexual harassment and online abuse. This campaign will include support and advice for parents and carers. Whilst schools are able to address and plan for educating, the exposure to inappropriate or 'toxic' material outside of school via social platforms has significantly contributed to the 'normalisation' of the sexual language and risky behaviour of young people. To establish a culture of change, parents and schools must work in partnership to limit this exposure and challenge or scaffold the young person's understanding or interpretation in order to keep them safe.

From September, we are hopeful that we will be able to come together for our assemblies. The pastoral and RE team have continued to provide excellent assemblies virtually this year, but we look forward to coming together to further embed our culture and identity as a community. We have taken the learning from this report and explicitly remind our students that our school community is based on trust and positive relationships. We will reaffirm our school values and empower our students to have respect for themselves, showing courage in standing up for what is right. Courageous advocacy and student voice remains an important part of school life and our students will be clear that they will be listened to and that their voices will be heard. In line with the school Christian vision of 'Go and do likewise', we want our students to lead change. To teach others and make change for the better. They will need our help and they will need your help in finding their voice and reporting behaviour that is toxic to their wellbeing.

If you are concerned about the well-being of your son or daughter, please encourage them to talk to their tutor, their Head of Year or any other member of staff whom they trust. They can be assured of an empathetic and sensitive response. The safeguarding team will work alongside them to take steps to keep them safe and secure their well-being. All safety decisions will be made in partnership.

Please do keep in touch and thank you again for your continued support.

Yours faithfully



Mrs R Alexander

Deputy Headteacher



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