

MJC/jr
29 June 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

You will be aware that on 31 March, the Secretary of State announced that he has asked Ofsted to undertake a thematic review into sexual abuse across state and independent schools and colleges. Amongst other things the review would look at whether schools and colleges have appropriate processes in place to allow students to report concerns freely, knowing these will be taken seriously and dealt with swiftly and appropriately.

This review has now been published and tells us that Ofsted visited 32 schools and spoke to 900 children. Its report includes these comments: "On our visits, girls told us that sexual harassment and online sexual abuse, such as being sent unsolicited explicit sexual material and being pressured to send nude pictures ('nudes'), are much more prevalent than adults realise. For example, nearly 90% of girls, and nearly 50% of boys, said being sent explicit pictures or videos of things they did not want to see happens a lot or sometimes to them or their peers... the frequency of these harmful sexual behaviours means that some children and young people consider them normal."

This term the senior pastoral team have been reviewing Wildern's approach to Harmful Sexual Behaviours (HSB), the delivery of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and the policies and procedures around the reporting, actions taken and partnership working when an incident is reported. We have a strong RSE curriculum that informs our students about healthy relationships and appropriate behaviours. The curriculum also covers sexual harassment and sexual violence, including where it takes place online. We allow for discussion and enquiry during delivery and we give students time to talk about things they may find difficult, such as consent and the sending of "nudes". We believe by working together with parents, outside agencies and the police to address these issues we will ensure that our students, your children keep themselves safe. The monitoring of your children's devices is so important, especially their use of social media. Please continue to check your children's devices regularly and talk to them about being safe and the dangers that are present.

We aim to continue to use student voice, both anonymously and through our student forums to address these issues in order to consistently ensure we are supporting students where there is a developing need. It is important students know they are heard and feel protected from those that are behaving in an unwanted and inappropriate way towards them.

This is a good opportunity to remind you that if your child is concerned about anything with regard to welfare and safety that they can speak to their tutor, DOPA, the Student Services team or indeed any member of school staff.

We believe that every student has the right to feel safe and comfortable in lessons and around school and it is important that they feel they are able to inform staff if this is not the case.

The Safeguarding team at school, comprises of key staff who are trained to support students, families and staff when there is a concern for welfare or when a student is at risk. The team consists of Mr M Chance, Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mrs K Thomas, Mrs E Brenton, Mrs A Chandler, Mr T Hastings, Miss E Millard, Miss H Jones, Mrs N Cowan, Mrs C Oakley and Miss ML Litton. The team will also be joined by Mrs N Dunn in July.

Yours faithfully

Mr M Chance
Deputy Headteacher