

## **Keeping our community safe - Coombe Girls' School and Sixth Form. –**

### **Guidelines for parents.**

We are fully committed to keeping all our students and the adults who work with us safe from harm.

Every young person can potentially be hurt, regardless of age, gender or culture

Our safeguarding practice means that we invest time and resources to make sure that :

- Young people are protected from mistreatment
- A young person's development is protected
- Young people grow up with safe and effective care
- We take action when something prevents any of these things happening and we work within the LA guidelines and with all the appropriate outside agencies. We will share information appropriately.

Every year, we put 'Safeguarding' assemblies on for each year where we talk through some of the issues which might affect them. Each year, these assemblies trigger some disclosures from students and these students are always supported through this.

Our Child Protection Designated member of staff is Mrs Knight, Deputy Head teacher and the deputy Designated member of staff is Mrs Blanchard..

## **Years 7 and 8.**

### **What parents can do to help keep all our young people safe:**

We start from the understanding that all adults who either come onto our site or who have any contact with any of our students must behave properly towards all children; they all have a duty of care regarding the welfare of all the students and other adults. Child Protection is the way we protect young people from harm or the risk of harm: this includes physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect.

### **Transition.**

As the girls move up from year 6 into Secondary school, some can find the transition difficult. If this is the case, we have a transition support programme which runs from September for a few weeks. Students are identified from the advice of their primary school teachers and through noticing a concern early on in their year 7. If you have any concerns about your daughter in this area, please contact the Head of Year.

### **Safe travelling:**

Make sure your daughter understands how to travel to and from school. Talk about crossing roads safely, without using her phone, talk about the safety implications of using her earphones and not being able to hear cars or footsteps, talk about travelling with friends. Make sure your daughter understands that she must not allow anyone else to use her Oyster card as she could have this removed from her. It is important that all students remember that public transport is for the whole community and school students should be mindful of the needs of other travellers.

### **Social Networking.**

Generally, using social networking sites is not a major issue at this stage but you may well be coming under some pressure to allow this with your daughter and we are seeing increasing usage by younger students. There is a legal age limit but this is often ignored. Good advice is that you set the account up yourself and have a good chat about having access so that you can monitor it if you are concerned.

Children in primary school have been known to meet up with people they have connected to on-line so, it is a possible problem- you just need to be vigilant. Many families have internet access through a computer and it may be an idea to put in safeguards at home to monitor the use of the internet both to protect your own child but to also protect others' children. Talk to your own child about their responsibility for what they do on the internet. Learn how to block unwanted people and prevent their access to your child. Keep talking to your child about these issues.

Do not use any social networking site yourself to air your own views about the school community either as a whole or about individuals within the community; it is easy to

get carried away if you are irritated about something or someone and then, later regret it.

Useful web sites: <http://ceop.police.uk> - there are many interesting and helpful video clips and pamphlets.

### **Talking to other children.**

Never approach other people's children to discuss something that you may be concerned about- always go to the school with your concerns about events in school. We will take the appropriate action. Adults approaching a young person can make them feel afraid and vulnerable and put them in a difficult position.

### **Protecting other children.**

If you are concerned that a young person is being hurt or being pressured to do something that is wrong or that they really don't want to do, please come and tell the school so that they can take the action that is needed. If something happens when the school is not open, please contact the police, NSPCC or ring Kingston's Single Point of Access (SPA) which is a way of passing on any concern about any young person – tel No 02085475008

### **Safety from abusive behaviour.**

The school will be highlighting possible areas through assemblies, Active Tutorial sessions, PSHE days and individual conversations; during these days, we will look at: language, racism, homophobia, discrimination, bullying both in real life and through the internet, protecting students from extremism of any kind and the different ways that different cultures care for their children- this is just a flavour of the areas we cover and this is a very responsive area, changing as the needs change. .

We will also talk about where they could be abused by strangers or people they are more familiar with; we will be offering support, if they need it. - this is just a flavour of the areas we cover and this is a very responsive area, changing as the needs change. .

Listening to your child is important- try these tips, it might help.

### **Active listening: the basics**

Active listening to your child is more than simply hearing her. You can actively listen by:

- getting close to your child when she's speaking
- looking at your child
- allowing your child to finish and not interrupting
- avoiding questions that interrupt your child's train of thought
- actively trying to understand what your child is saying

- concentrating hard on what your child is saying rather than thinking about what you will say next
- showing your child that she's being heard and understood
- showing her that you're interested by nodding your head, smiling, and making comments like 'I see'.

Listening isn't the same thing as agreeing. You can understand another person's point of view without agreeing with it.

### **Benefits of active listening**

When you use active listening with your child, it shows your child that you care and are interested. In fact, it can help you learn and understand more about what's going on in your child's life.

Active listening can prevent blocks in communication and even make it more likely that your child will seek your views.

It's good for your child's thinking processes too, and can help her to clarify her thoughts.

Good listening is the best way to show your child that you're genuinely interested and that you really care. It also helps to avoid conflict caused by misunderstandings.

Talk to your own children about issues regarding their safety; the NSPCC has a new campaign- 'The Underwear Rule' – you might find that helpful- it is aimed at young children but there may be ideas you can adapt.

## **Indecent images**

As the taking and sharing of indecent images of a child is happening more and more and is very easy now to do, we need to make sure that our whole community understands the law and how it can protect a child.

At times, young people are put under pressure to take pictures of themselves which should not be shared and they then pass them onto to another person. In these circumstances, putting pressure on a person to do this could be seen as harassment and this would be something that the Police would investigate.

It is an offence, in law, for any person over the age of 10 years to

- Possess
- Download
- Distribute
- Take
- Publish

an indecent image of a child.

A child is defined as a person under 18 years of age.

A wide range of sanctions are available to the courts and police would take into account the difference in the ages of those involved and specifically, the age of the victim- the younger the victim, the more serious the offence.

The penalties can be significant and could lead to imprisonment and having to behave in accordance with the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

The NSPCC has some very useful resources to help you keep your child safe. Visit their website : [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

A further useful site is : [youngminds.gov.org](http://youngminds.gov.org) and this has some insight into mental health concerns for young people.

Useful links for any young person or parents at any stage. :

- **NSPCC:** [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)
- **Young Minds:** [youngminds.gov.org](http://youngminds.gov.org)
- **CEOP:** <http://ceop.police.uk>
- **Female Genital Mutilation:**  
<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs241/en/>
- **Enforced marriage:** <https://www.gov.uk/forced-marriage>
- **Domestic Violence:** <http://www.thehotline.org/> Or  
<http://www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk/>
- **Alcohol abuse:** <http://www.helpguide.org/articles/addiction/alcoholism-and-alcohol-abuse.htm>
- **Drug abuse:** <http://www.helpguide.org/articles/addiction/drug-abuse-and-addiction.htm>
- **Sexual health :** [www.kingstonhospital.nhs.uk](http://www.kingstonhospital.nhs.uk) or  
[www.sexualhealthkingston.co.uk](http://www.sexualhealthkingston.co.uk). Or

Email: [ku19@kpct.nhs.uk](mailto:ku19@kpct.nhs.uk)

The following contacts are useful if you need any help:

**Relate:** [www.relatelondonsw.org](http://www.relatelondonsw.org)

**Islamic resource centre:** 02085495499 or <http://www.irckingston.co.uk/>

**SPA** (Single Point of Access) : 02085475008

**General advice and support:** [www.younglavin.org.uk](http://www.younglavin.org.uk)

FASS (Family and student Support) : via SPA

FACT (Family and child therapy) : via SPA