

## **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 9 and 10.**

### **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 through the school and the work becomes harder and more challenging, some can find the transition difficult. Some students suffer anxiety about their success in examinations and this can make them unhappy.

It is important to keep talking to your own child, let them know that examination success is important but it is only one measure of success. If you feel the anxiety is hampering their life, come in and talk to your daughter's HoY and there may be things we can put in place to help.

Web sites which may help: **Young Minds.gov.uk** – there is a great deal of interesting information.

### **Social Networking.**

Generally, using social networking sites will be becoming a bigger issue with your child by this stage and they may use it in a way which you find quite hard to understand. Please do keep an eye on their internet use- this is much more difficult with a smart phone- but they will need to feel that there are some controls; young people can feel very reassured by boundaries that they can push against.

While the school is very clear about what it feels is acceptable use of the internet, things do sometimes go wrong and students abuse this powerful tool. While we, at school can support when things go wrong, it is more powerful if school and home are giving out the same messages. It is important for parents to remember that abuse conducted across the internet is no different than face to face abusive behaviour. While it is comfortable to believe that your own child would never behave badly in this way, many students do get pulled into doing things on-line that they would find much harder in reality- it really is rarely a one-sided issue. Any approach to a problem in this area is more powerful if home and school are giving the same message.

Children 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. Put in safeguards at home to monitor the use of social networking 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; 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.

### **Influences on young people.**

Your child may be quite open to the ideas of other people as they grow up and your influence will become only one of the many which they listen to.

There is a great many ideas and theories available in the internet; one useful one is the skill of listening actively when your child is floundering a bit:

#### **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.

### **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.

### **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 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. You might want to look at who they are spending time with and, if you are not happy with some of the influences, you will need to start a conversation and possibly putting in boundaries.

Talk to your child openly about the possible dangers once they start living a life which more and more is taking place beyond your home.

## **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)**

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