



June 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

Safeguarding Reminders

Further to my letter in the previous half term on peer-on-peer abuse, I am writing to you to, firstly, remind everyone of our reporting routes for any safeguarding concerns and, secondly, to share advice and guidance on three specific topics – online safety, substance misuse and ‘county lines’ criminal exploitation. These will be covered in the supplementary section of this letter.

Reporting concerns reminder

We have a trained team of Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs). They are:

- Dr Hall (Senior DSL)
- Mr Lovegrove
- Ms Jenkins
- Mr Tiley
- Mrs Harper
- Miss Yacoby
- Mr Alderman
- Mrs Wheeler
- Ms Bateman

Concerns can be raised via the DSL team or indeed any colleague in the school that a student feels comfortable to talk to. All staff receive annual safeguarding training, including how to support when disclosures are made.

If a student does not want to speak directly to a member of staff, then there are also students trained in anti-bullying and/or mental health support who can be approached. As well as providing immediate peer support, they will also ensure that the DSL team are informed.

We also have our Stay Safe (staysafe@testbourne.school) and No to Bullying (ntb@testbourne.school) alerts that can be used to raise concerns with our DSL Team.

Our Child Protection Policy is available on our school website [HERE](#)

The supplementary section of this letter outlines how the school addresses the specific issues of online safety and substance misuse. I shall also provide guidance on criminal exploitation and ‘county lines.’

Yours faithfully

Dr Hall
Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral)

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Supplementary Information

Online Safety

Technological hardware and software are developing continuously with an increase in functionality of devices that people use. Most children use online tools to communicate with others locally, nationally, and internationally. Access to the internet and other tools that technology provides is an invaluable way of finding, sharing, and communicating information. While technology itself is not harmful, it can be used by others to make children vulnerable and to abuse them.

With the current speed of online change, people may have only a limited understanding of the risks and issues. Parents and carers may underestimate how often their children come across potentially harmful and inappropriate material on the internet and may be unsure about how to respond. Some of the risks could be:

- unwanted contact
- grooming
- online bullying including sexting
- digital footprint

The school curriculum provides opportunities to support students understanding of how to stay safe online and to raise their awareness of the potential risks. This education is delivered through our Personal, Social, Health and Careers Education (PSHCE) as well as the Computing curriculum.

The school has robust internet filtering and monitoring systems in place, as well as Acceptable Use policies that all students and staff must read and sign to declare they understand them.

In addition, it is both helpful and important for parents and carers to be aware and vigilant to the risks.

The NSPCC provides excellent advice and guidance. I shall summarise these, with the appropriate links, below:

- General advice on having discussions about online safety with your child can be found here: [General discussion advice](#)
- Advice on inappropriate and explicit content, including how to support your child if they see something that upsets or concerns them, can be found here: [Inappropriate or explicit content](#)
- Advice on how to ensure that internet connected devices (e.g. FitBit, smart watches) are kept safe for children can be found here: [Keeping internet connected devices safe](#)



- Advice on setting appropriate parental controls can be found here: [Parental controls](#)
- Advice on ensuring that children are safe during online gaming can be found here: [Advice on Online Gaming](#)
- Advice on live streaming and online video applications can be found here: [Live streaming and online video apps](#)
- Advice if you are concerned that your child is viewing online pornography can be found here: [Advice when concerned about online pornography](#)
- Net Aware is an excellent online resource for advice and guidance on the latest apps, social media, and video streaming sites. This can be found here: [Net Aware](#)
- Advice on grooming, including online, can be found here: [Advice when concerned about grooming](#)

I should like to bring to your attention concerns about an online subscription service 'Only Fans' and that young people nationally have been using this to sell and appear in explicit videos. There has been a recent article on this by the BBC '[Only Fans' article](#). You can find further information here: [Further information on 'Only Fans'](#)

Cyberbullying and Sexting (sending nude photos) are two online risks that are, sadly, particularly prevalent among teenagers. **The school does not tolerate these in any way. Reported incidents will be investigated and dealt with.**

The school addresses these through our Anti-Bullying policy and our protocols for peer-on-peer abuse, that I outlined in my previous letter.

- Advice on sexting can be found here: [Advice on concerns about sexting](#) **Please note that creating or sharing sexual images of a child under 18 is illegal, even if the person doing it is a child.**
- Advice on bullying, including cyberbullying, can be found here: [Cyberbullying](#)

It is very important that everyone knows how to report any concerns that they have relating to the online safety of a child. There are several ways that this can be done:

1. Reporting a concern via one of the school's safeguarding routes. We would always want a child, colleague, or parent and carer to do this, even if the matter was then referred to an external agency. We can only act and support when an incident has been reported to us.
2. If your child has been a victim of online sexual abuse, or is concerned about someone communicating with them, then a report can be made to the Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) command. This is part of the wider National Crime Agency. A link can be found here: [CEOP Reporting](#)
3. Your child can also talk to someone through [Childline](#) or the [Internet Watch Foundation](#)



Substance misuse

It is a sad reality of modern society that drugs are available to young people. It is our collective responsibility, both as a school and as parents and carers, to be informed, to take appropriate action where necessary, and to assist students getting the support they need.

The school acts on all information that is reported to us and we share information in line with safeguarding partnerships with the police and other relevant agencies.

The school addresses incidents related to substance misuse through its 'Drugs Use and Misuse' policy. This can be found on our school website here: [Drug Use and Misuse policy](#)

Our policy and procedures are clear that substance abuse, including possession and/or supply will not be tolerated, and we address issues through both consequence and appropriate support and follow-up.

At Testbourne, we do not have unusually high numbers of incidents of substance misuse or possession of drugs and, indeed, incidents are rare. Most situations we deal with are based on behaviours and interactions off the school site. We do, however, recognise that the school population reflects societal issues so we would be foolish to be complacent. As a result, we encourage an open safeguarding culture here at Testbourne and this means that no adult or student should be frightened or deterred from reporting issues. We encourage all our community to recognise their shared responsibility to report anything that can cause harm to others. This transparency and high expectation to safeguard one another enables us to take swift action and ensures this remains a safe school.

We do not respond to hearsay or gossip that can arise through social media outlets, largely because this is often sensationalised or based on factual inaccuracy. As with all safeguarding matters, we can only address issues fully when they are reported to us. This is the only effective and responsible way that people can help safeguard others from coming to harm. We also encourage people to contact the police, as well as us, if they have any concerns and we work closely with them as part of our safeguarding partnerships.

Raising awareness and supporting parents and carers is very important. There are numerous websites and resources available. We find that [Frank](#) is the most informative and the link will take you to the main home page.

Frank provides a detailed A-Z of substances, advising on the various names used, appearance, effects, levels of addictive property etc. It also provides information on the law and the likely consequences of possession and supply.

You can also access detailed help and advice from the home page, including who to contact in an emergency. Parents and carers will find the section on [Concerned about a child](#) very helpful. This includes advice on the signs to look out for, how to discuss drugs with your child and how to



offer them support. Students will also find the section on [Dealing with peer pressure](#) and [Concerned about a friend](#) very helpful and informative.

We have been made aware of a current national issue around edible cannabis, specifically the cannabidiol (CBD) version, which to be legal must contain less than 0.2% cannabis oil (an illegal substance in the UK). There are now various products on the market e.g., gummy bears, chocolate etc that look like typical sweet-based products.

You need to be over 18 to buy them and there is concern that some of these products have a higher concentration than 0.2% cannabis oil and it is certainly worth being on the lookout for, as they are being marketed at young people.

The link below is an American website but gives you an idea of the things to keep a look out for.

[Incredibles Cannabis | Delicious and Effective Edibles \(iloveincredibles.com\)](#)

I should like to also make you aware of a widespread concern that young people are using the Snapchat application to set up deals for illegal substances. Arrangements to obtain illegal substances are made via anonymous users in this way, either through advertising or by arranging meetings. There are number of reports of this activity in the national press and here is one example that highlights the issues. Whilst this report is not specific to our area it is typical of activity happening in many towns, such as Andover and Basingstoke, and the surrounding area. [Report on the use of Snapchat](#). You can learn more about Snapchat using the [Net Aware](#) link.

Finally, I should also like to take the opportunity to draw parents and carers attention to the related issue of 'County Lines'. This is a form of child criminal exploitation (CCE).

Child Criminal Exploitation occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity. This is done:

- (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or
- (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or
- (c) through violence or threat of violence.

The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact, it can occur using technology.

County Lines

'County lines' is a form of criminal exploitation. It is a police term for urban gangs supplying drugs to suburban areas and market and coastal towns using dedicated mobile phone lines or 'deal lines'. It involves child criminal exploitation (CCE) as gangs use children and vulnerable people



to move drugs and money. Gangs establish a base in the market location, typically by taking over the homes of local vulnerable adults by force or coercion in a practice referred to as 'cuckooing'.

As a Hampshire school we work as part of the Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership. This has a strategic focus on county lines due to the geographical location of Hampshire, its transport links with London and the mix of rural and city conurbations.

A typical county lines scenario is defined by the following components:

- A group (not necessarily affiliated as a gang) establishes a network between an urban hub and county location, into which drugs (primarily heroin and crack cocaine) are supplied.
- A branded mobile phone line is established in the market, to which orders are placed by introduced customers. The line will commonly (but not exclusively) be controlled by a third party, remote from the market.
- The group exploits young or vulnerable persons, to achieve the storage and/or supply of drugs, movement of cash proceeds and to secure the use of dwellings (commonly referred to as cuckooing).
- The group or individuals exploited by them regularly travel between the urban hub and the county market, to replenish stock and deliver cash.
- The group is inclined to use intimidation, violence, and weapons, including knives, corrosives, and firearms.

The Children's Society provides some useful guidance for parents and carers on 'County Lines' and this can be accessed [HERE](#). This also includes advice on how to spot the signs and where you can report exploitation [HERE](#)

As with all other safeguarding matters, if you have any concerns about a child being criminally exploited then report these to us through one of our safeguarding reporting routes.

I hope that you will find this information helpful and, as always, if you have any concerns of any kind about your child's wellbeing then please don't hesitate to contact us.

DHL June 2021