



Charter Against Harmful Sexual Behaviours Commitment

Background

The horrific abduction and murder of Sarah Everard on her way home, the shocking information shared on 'Everyone's Invited' and the recent Ofsted review into young people's experience of sexual abuse in schools has led many in education to want to better understand the lived experiences of the young people we work with. We hope this will allow us to be better educators, and to support children, young people and their families more effectively.

As such we have committed to creating two, linked, 'charters' which we will use in our schools. The first will be for adults working with young people. The second will be for young people. They will support discussion by establishing a common language and wider training.

The Ofsted research into sexual abuse in schools highlights a range of key points. Of particular importance for supporting the thinking of educators are Ofsted's observations nationally that:

'Adults vastly under-estimate the 'common place' experiences of children and young people.'

'If we vastly under-estimate these experiences how can we effectively work with young people to help them to understand that what seems 'common place' for them may not be healthy?'

'...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. Children and young people told us that sexual harassment occurs so frequently that it has become 'commonplace'. For example, 92% of girls, and 74% of boys, said sexist name-calling 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.'

Young people don't feel they can talk honestly with adults about sexual harassment and violence.

This means that the way we support and educate young people can quickly become outdated (for example, adults use terms like 'sexting'. The Ofsted report found young people do not use this term). As part of online safety, we teach children about keeping themselves safe online from threats like grooming. Do we teach young people about how to manage risks and emotions around the uploading and sharing of images with the peers they actually know?

If we don't have a common language and set of expectations, how can we support students to know what is acceptable?

Educators' Charter

We will commit to including an open and supportive discussion of children and young people's experiences of sexual harassment and violence within our **student voice work** every school year. This will be age appropriate.

We will use the knowledge we gather to help us **adjust the way we educate young people**, and particularly to adapt and develop our RSHE curriculum on an ongoing basis. The information will help **inform the professional development** of all our staff.

We will share and discuss the **Student Charter with our students**, as appropriate to age. The Charter will be written to be appropriate for all students of secondary school age. The Charter will also be shared with all parents of secondary age students and we will encourage parents to discuss the Student Charter with their child.

We will work with groups of students to identify areas of the school site where students feel less safe. We will react to student feedback and put actions in place to address concerns students raise.

We will ensure students know how to raise concerns with an adult in school and that they know their concerns will be listened to.

We will not minimise or assume we know the lived experiences of our students in relation to sexual harassment or violence. We will seek to know more about the reality of the experiences of our students. We will model the high levels of respect we want to see between students and we will directly address 'banter'.

'Thanks for asking me. Adults do assume things which aren't always true.'

Young People's Charter

We are all part of our school community and know it is important that **we treat one and other with respect**.

Matthew 7:12

'So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.'

Examples of not being respectful to others in our community include:

- Sexualised comments and language about how people look
- Using homophobic language or commenting on the sexuality or gender identity of others
- Online sexual harassment, including asking for or sending unrequested explicit images ('nudes') to other students. This includes 'sharing-on' pictures
- Sexually harassing others, including cat-calling or up-skirting.

We commit to making sure that these behaviours are not seen as 'normal' or a 'joke' within our student community.