



THE BUCKINGHAM SCHOOL

A SPECIALIST SPORTS COLLEGE

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Headteacher: Mr A McGinnes

19 April 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope that you are keeping well. I am sure that the small steps in easing national restrictions are welcome; we just need the temperature to hit double figures!

I am writing to you about a single issue.

Everyone's Invited – a movement committed to eradicating Rape Culture

I know that many of you will have read about the national response to the Everyone's Invited website over the last two weeks. This is a website that has been set up with the purpose of changing societal attitudes by highlighting examples of sexual harassment, sexual violence and abuse, through anonymous testimonies (to date, over 10,000 anonymous allegations have been made). More widely, "Rape Culture" is broadly used to refer to a culture in a community or society whereby sexual assault, rape, and general violence are ignored, trivialised, normalised, made into jokes and even to the extent that victims are blamed.

I am aware that it has been the response of schools across the country to reassure their families of how safe their environment is. We work hard as a school to ensure that we stay up to date with national and local issues and we have extensive safeguarding practices in place to make sure that our students – your children – are as safe as possible. These include:

- Our safeguarding ethos is underpinned by a recognition that "it can happen here"
- All staff have updated safeguarding training in line with the latest government [guidance](#)
- All students are taught the Relationships and Sex Education curriculum, via Personal Development and other inputs, such as form time and assemblies. The overview is available in the curriculum area of our website. Our curriculum ensures that all children and young people understand what a healthy relationship and acceptable behaviour looks like, including the teaching of informed consent and where to go for support if there is a problem
- All students benefit from working in a calm, safe school, underpinned by a clear Behaviour Policy and subsequent expectations. This Behaviour Policy is available on the school website
- We advocate high expectations of conduct from all members of our community in our stated virtues of Ambition, Confidence, Curiosity, Integrity, Empathy, Resilience and Respect. We communicate these values every day through high expectations of behaviour and this is further supplemented by daily tutorial sessions focused around the PSHE curriculum and an assembly programme
- We have robust procedures in place to respond to any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment, based on the DfE's 2018 advice on sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools. This includes sharing information and working with the police and, after consideration of ongoing risk factors, implementation of any appropriate sanction, including permanent exclusion if necessary

The Buckingham School is concerned that every student should have the opportunity to attend school activities/obtain equipment, regardless of their financial circumstances. As such, it may be possible to subsidise those students who would otherwise be unable to attend trips/purchase items. Please feel free to write in confidence to Mrs K Bones at kbones@buckinghamsschool.org, if you wish to seek assistance, or obtain more information about Pupil Premium funding.



- Our students know our Safeguarding Team. We have posters around the school with photographs of these members of staff to ensure that students know who they can go to for support. Members of the team are seen regularly by the students, for example in assemblies
- All students are well supported throughout the day including during break and lunchtimes. At break times, the Senior Leadership Team and teaching staff maintain a high level of supervision to ensure that all students are safe and have access to responsible adults should they need to report any concern. A member of the Leadership Team is on-call every day so that they can be available to support students with any concerns or matters that arise
- We benefit from the strong governance of safeguarding issues. The Safeguarding governor is an experienced governor, committed to the importance of safeguarding. Further, the school seeks independent safeguarding advice, including a review held in February 2020. You will recall that Ofsted praised aspects of the school's provision, such as no tolerance of bullying and eradicating behaviour which disrupts learning.

What Next

As we return this week, a working group that is already underway will continue its work. This group was formed to investigate the experiences of females at The Buckingham School (staff and students) and, without knee-jerk reactions, put into place a long term programme to make sure that our community understands the full meaning of mutual respect. The staff involved will be presenting a plan of action to the Senior Leadership Team in the next couple of weeks.

Our position as a school is clear: sexual violence and sexual harassment are never acceptable, will never be tolerated and are not an inevitable part of growing up.

What should I do if I have concerns?

To continue to keep everyone safe, we must keep lines of communication open. The appropriate means for disclosing an allegation of abuse **relating to a student** is always to inform a member of the Safeguarding Team. You can either contact a member of the team directly (detailed below) or by emailing safeguarding@buckinghamschool.org.

In the event that an allegation is made against a **member of staff**, this must always be sent to me directly, as Headteacher. We will always act on concerns raised.

The nature and volume of testimony regarding alleged abuse on social media reflects an issue for the whole of our society and as a school, we recognise and take seriously the role that we play in setting a culture of mutual respect for all. If any child or young person attending our school is worried or upset by any content they have read on Everyone's Invited, we would encourage them to talk to a member of staff about their concerns.

We remain committed to ensuring that every child benefits from a calm, respectful and safe climate for learning. I hope that this letter offers you reassurance that we recognise the importance of this issue and please be aware that the governors are wholly supportive of this work.

With my best wishes,



Mr A McGinnes

Headteacher

aallen@buckinghamschool.org

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Safeguarding Team

Mr M Wardle	Designated Safeguarding Lead (Lead Deputy Headteacher)
Mr A McGinnes	Additional Designated Safeguarding Lead (Headteacher)
Mrs J Goodger	Additional Designated Safeguarding Lead (Director for Attendance & Welfare)
Miss S Barnes	Additional Designated Safeguarding Lead (Inclusion Manager/First Aid Co-ordinator)
Miss P Matthews	Additional Designated Safeguarding Lead and Mental Health Lead
Mrs A Wallace	Additional Designated Safeguarding Lead, Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator & Student Voice Lead
Mrs A Baxter	Additional Designated Safeguarding Lead and SENDCo
Mrs E Curtis	Additional Designated Safeguarding Lead and Lead Practitioner
Mr K Harvey	Safeguarding Governor and Vice Chair of Governors

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