

To: Parents/ Carers of Years 7 to 11 Students

Our ref: 87436047

9 March 2023

To Parents/ Carers

Re: Sexual Harm and Harassment

As an open and honest school which operates under the premise that "it could happen here and could certainly happen to our children in their time outside of school", we have aligned with the national focus on the lived experience of many young people with regard to sexual harm and harassment.

As parents and carers, it can be very difficult to think of our children in the context of sexualised comments and behaviours, but it is vital that we do so, so that we are best placed to support them if or when they encounter anything that makes them feel uncomfortable.

In the summer term of 2022, South Hunsley School conducted an anonymised survey of all our students in Years 7 to Year 10. The overriding message that came from this survey was that our students feel that we educate them on such matters, that they feel safe in and around school, and that they would know what to do if they had any issues or concerns. However, it was also clear that there was still more that we can do. We shared some of these student responses in an open video to all students, a link to which you can find below. We remain open as ever to the fact that "it could happen in our school" and we will always work to guard against any complacency.

Away from school and especially when online, our survey showed us that some of our students do have to pick their way through sexualised comments and unwanted behaviours, which can make them feel unsafe. We must work together and consistently in our messages to our young people, so that they never see any sexualised comments or behaviours as "banter"; simply put, they are not acceptable.

Where our young people feel that they have experienced or are experiencing anything that has made them feel uncomfortable, the key is that they TELL somebody as soon as possible.

Statistically, in terms of reported incidents, females are more likely to be the victims of such comments and behaviours, and males the perpetrators. However, anybody can be affected by sexual harm and harassment. To assume that boys are never the victims is a dangerous and false assumption that can help to perpetuate stereotypes.

This week to support this key message we are delivering assemblies on misogynistic behaviour, a subject that should not be shied away from and a behaviour that cannot and will not be ignored in our school. Within the assembly we will be sharing some examples, some statistics and some views of "celebrities" such as Andrew Tate, an influencer who has been prominent in the national news recently. Please see below a news article which outlines the concerns of one parent about the influence of Andrew Tate on their child:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-63794012>

We will share strategies with students on what to do if they have comments directed towards them or if they hear comments being made by friends. We will be using the catch phrase “come off it mate” to call out inappropriate comments.

Such is the complexity of the topic, we feel that you may like to take a look at the following resource when talking to your children about this topic; <https://www.kidscape.org.uk/news-and-blogs/2021/june/sexual-harassment-in-schools-what-can-parents-or-carers-do/>

Please do contact the school through your child's House Team in the first instance if you feel you would like to talk through any behavioural changes you have experienced related to these issues at home.

<https://youtu.be/JmRMICIO9xs>

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M Trainor". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Mitch Trainor
Deputy Headteacher