

31 March 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

There has been a significant amount of highly disturbing media reports around sexual harassment and sexual violence outside as well as inside schools. I have found the volume and nature of these reports deeply shocking both as a school leader and as a parent. I am sure you will share my grave concern over this.

I wanted to share with you how we approach sexual harassment and sexual violence at school, including how we help any pupils who experience sexual harassment or violence outside school.

### **Background**

In 2016, The Women's and Equalities Committee published its report on sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools. The scale of the problem reported was shocking. Our immediate response was to undertake a survey of all students in the school with clear questions relating to students' own experiences as well as those they may have heard about or witnessed. I was determined that if there were an issue in our school, I would want to know and tackle it as an urgent priority.

The survey provided every student with the opportunity to anonymously inform the school of any incidents. None were reported. However, this does not mean we are complacent and we continue to be vigilant.

### **Our Culture of Respect**

At Oakmoor, we use the word respect to refer to how we speak and behave towards one another within our community. I often say that our school 'runs on respect'. There is mutual respect between students, mutual respect between adults and mutual respect between adults and students.

With several hundred individuals in one space, there are occasions where we do not always agree with each other, but we expect each other to express our disagreement respectfully. The overwhelming majority of the time, this happens.

We all expect to behave respectfully to one another at all times.

## **Our Culture of Telling**

Every child has a mentor who they see every day in school, with whom they can share concerns. Each mentor group is part of a house led by an Academic and Pastoral Leader. We have a non-teaching team of 3 pastoral staff, led by a Pupil Support and Guidance Manager. The Academic and Pastoral Leadership Team is led by Mrs Moral, our Deputy Headteacher.

Students are frequently reminded of our telling (or whistleblowing) culture in our school and are encouraged to identify an adult that they feel happy and comfortable to speak with if they have a problem or want to report a concern about another student or member of our community.

We have notices in every toilet cubicle and around the school reminding students, staff and visitors who our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is and the two Deputy DSLs. Our DSL is Mrs Moral and in her absence the Deputy DSLs are Mr Beere, Assistant Headteacher and me.

Having these staffing systems in place ensures that we are quickly aware of any issues and are able to respond as swiftly as possible. Parents & carers are very positive about the speed and nature of our responses to issues as they arise.

## **Our Curriculum - Experience Days and Relationship and Sex Education**

Embedded in our curriculum is clear teaching and learning about appropriate and respectful relationships. We also educate all students about behaviour which is not acceptable in relationships and should not be displayed or tolerated. Outline details of this part of our curriculum are available in the Curriculum & Learning section of our website. However, we will update this after the Easter holiday so that you have more detail.

## **Annual Student Survey**

Every year we organise surveys for our key stakeholder groups. These are for students, staff and parents & carers. We consider precisely the areas we would like feedback around and all our questions are carefully written to ensure that responses can be as clear as possible. We spend a great deal of time analysing the findings and then determining actions we need to take to continually improve all aspects of our school.

Since 2016, we have included a series of questions regarding sexual harassment and violence as I outlined earlier in this letter. This year we will change how we set up the opportunity for students to take the survey. We will organise our Main Hall with tables, chairs and laptops in a configuration which will prevent any student being able to see another student's screen. This will ensure there is an absolute guarantee that responses are confidential. Students will be collected from a lesson and taken to the Main Hall where we will remind them of the importance of the survey and draw particular attention to the sexual harassment and violence questions. A member of either the Senior Leadership Team or the Academic and Pastoral Leadership team will oversee each group.

## **Reporting Concerns to us**

Please advise us immediately if you become aware of someone who is at risk of harm or being harmed. Our normal safeguarding and disclosure routines continue to apply. Please email

Mrs Moral at [s.moral@oakmoor.hants.sch.uk](mailto:s.moral@oakmoor.hants.sch.uk) or telephone the school stating, "May I speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, please". You will be immediately put through to someone who is fully trained as a DSL.

We will continue to work together to safeguard every member of our community. Thank you for being an important part of our community and our approach to safeguarding.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Hemmings', written in a cursive style.

Mr P. Hemmings  
Headteacher