



St Mary's Catholic School

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where everyone can succeed



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7th March 2023

Dear Parent/Carer,

We hope that this letter finds you well. We would like to take this opportunity at the half way point in this academic year to thank you all for your excellent support so far this year. The students have made a brilliant start to this half-term, following the February half-term holiday, and we are very excited to see what achievements and successes this new half-term will bring. As Assistant Headteacher Pastoral and Assistant Headteacher Sixth Form, we would also like to share some important safeguarding information with you all as well as inviting you to some upcoming 'Parental Safeguarding Briefings'.

As you know, we believe that pastoral care at St Mary's is outstanding and we pride ourselves on the excellent care that our students receive in order to help them develop holistically and reach their full potential. We lead the pastoral life of the school, working with our Key Stage Leaders, Heads of Year and Form Tutors. As you are aware, your first point of contact, should you have any concerns or questions, should be your child's Form Tutor or Head of Year. We have six Designated Safeguarding Leads: ourselves, Mr Donnelly (Key Stage 3 Pastoral Leader), Mrs McKelvie (Key Stage 4 Pastoral Leader), Miss Largue (Director of Student Support) and Miss Patterson (Headteacher).

As part of our ongoing safeguarding work and commitment to keeping all of our students safe, students regularly receive safeguarding sessions, assemblies and lessons as part of the Personal Development Programme. Topics covered in these lessons include 'Health and Wellbeing', 'Relationships and Sex Education', 'Life Beyond School', 'Staying Safe Online and Offline', 'Celebrating Diversity and Equality' and 'Rights, Responsibilities and British Values'.

As in previous years, we would also like to continue to support you all as parents and carers with regards to safeguarding and support for your children. We would like to offer all parents and carers the opportunity to attend two, online 'Parental Safeguarding Briefings' between now and the summer break. These sessions will be remote and will last around thirty minutes. They will explore broadly some of the risks that young person may face outside of school. The first session will take place remotely on Tuesday 28th March (4.30pm-5pm) and will explore support for young people around knife crime. The second session will take place remotely on Thursday 15th June (4.30pm-5pm) and will explore support for young people around extremist views. As both sessions will take place virtually, they will be recorded and posted on the school website, for any parents/carers who are unable to join on the above dates. More information will be shared closer to the time, including guidance on how to join these remote sessions.

As you know, if you are ever concerned about your child, or you believe that we need to know important safeguarding information relating to your child, please contact school. In addition to the 'Parental Safeguarding Briefings' above, please see below some useful websites and apps, that centre around supporting young people and their families in relation to various safeguarding issues, including both physical and mental health:

- Kooth – www.kooth.com: support, info, forums and online counselling.
- Anxiety UK – www.anxietyuk.org.uk: support and info, including videos.
- Young Minds – www.youngminds.org.uk: info, personal stories, support options.
- Heads Together – www.headstogether.org.uk: info and resources for support.
- SAM: self-help for anxiety management.
- WellMind (NHS): to boost wellbeing and improve stress, anxiety and depression

We hope the above resources, along with our support here at school, are helpful to you and your child. We will continue to do all that we can to support your child here at school. If you do have any worries, concerns or questions, please do get in touch. May we take this opportunity to thank you for your excellent, ongoing help and support. It is greatly appreciated.

Kindest regards,

Mr McDonald (Assistant Headteacher Pastoral)

Mr Turnbull (Assistant Headteacher Sixth Form)

