



**Inspiring Learning, Achieving Excellence**

Headteacher: Mr Adam Shelley MEd, BSc Hons, PGCE, NPQH

January 2022

Dear Parents

### **Re: Sexual Harassment Survey**

I wrote to you last term about our intention to survey our students and ask for their views on sexual harassment. We have now surveyed the majority of our students from Year 7 to 13 about their understanding of what sexual harassment is, whether and where they may have experienced it, and asked their views about whether they would feel confident to report harassment or abuse. I would like to take this opportunity to say how impressed we have all been with the maturity and honesty of our students in their responses. Alongside national reviews, our students' responses and opinions will be fundamental in developing a school strategy to address the issues identified and in focussing our efforts. I will write again to provide you with more detail on our school progress as this will undoubtedly be a long-term response. We want to make sure we can always support our students to feel safe in the community, school and online.

Our first school response to the survey, was to hold a staff training day on 5 January 2022, sharing the student views and exploring some of the issues with the support of professionals. Continuing to raise awareness of the issues, challenge stereotypes and promote inclusivity is our aim. The next steps will be to provide more regular opportunities for students to help us tackle the key issues, address cultural shifts and give confidence to each other to speak out. This will be through various strategies such as our relationships' curriculum, anti-bullying ambassadors and several student forums.

As parents, you will be aware that this issue has been discussed frequently over recent months in the media, and you may be wondering how you can best support your children. The Children's Commissioner, Dame Rachel de Souza DBE, has recently spoken out about the issue, as her previous experience as a Headteacher had shown her "how stressful and damaging it can be for children, especially girls" and that "boys can experience sexualised bullying too, and when they do it's often in the form of homophobic abuse, or through pressure to be more 'masculine'." She gathered a group of 16–21 year-olds together to tell us "What they think parents should know, and what they should say to their children when talking about sexualised bullying and the pressures of growing up online. We asked them to think back to when they were a bit younger and tell us what their parents and carers did and said that was helpful...and what wasn't." From this research, a support booklet has been created to help parents speak to their children about sexualised bullying. The overriding message of her findings and those of the agencies she works with, is to talk early and talk often. Please find a link to the guide for parents to help you consider how to talk about these sensitive issues with your children.



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The Registered office is at: **The Sir John Colfox Academy, The Ridgeway, Bridport, Dorset DT6 3DT**  
Tel: 01308 422291: Email: [office@colfox.dorset.sch.uk](mailto:office@colfox.dorset.sch.uk)

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Alternatively, if you would like us to send you a hard copy, please let us know.

Finally, thank you for the messages of support from parents and students for the work we have done so far. It means a lot when a student tells you "Thank you for helping us understand what it is and encouraging us that it's ok to get help and to be more confident"

Yours faithfully



Carol Duffy  
Deputy Headteacher  
Designated Safeguarding Lead