

16 June 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

2020 SAFEGUARDING UPDATE FOR PARENTS – JUNE 2020

During what remains a period of school closure for many of our students, we thought it is important to write to update you and remind you about safeguarding children and what to do if you are worried about someone.

Safeguarding concerns

If you are concerned a child is in imminent danger of harm your first call should always be to the Police via 999. If you would like to report a situation that worries you, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the wider safeguarding team are available during school hours. You can contact the Safeguarding Team by emailing safeguarding@bexhillacademy.org which is regularly monitored or by phoning 01424 730722 and requesting a response from the safeguarding team.

Online safety

Any student whilst at school is safeguarded by our filtering and monitoring systems but of course whilst at home and working remotely this will not always be the case.

- Work for students is left on Show My Homework and any messages sent between staff and students will take place via the school email system.
- If any contact comes from someone not using a Bexhill Academy email address then please let the safeguarding team know.
- If students are conducting their own research or working on aspects of schoolwork, outside of the specific tasks set, we would advise using all normal parental controls to help keep them safe. Please check you have parental controls in place.

I have also attached a brief Information Sheet on Online Safety that you may find helpful.

Mental Health

These are anxious times and our children will all respond in different ways to the social distancing and other measures in place. The resources on the Child Line website give some very good techniques for coping with these feelings:

<https://www.childline.org.uk/toolbox/calm-zone/>.

Domestic Violence

This can affect anyone at any time and under the current restrictions may be even more of an issue for some families. The 24 hour Domestic Abuse Helpline – 0808 2000 247 may help.

Child Exploitation and County Lines

County lines is a term used which refers to drug networks that originate from large urban areas such as London to more rural communities. These can be run by both gangs and organised crime groups, both of whom are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to carry out illegal activity on their behalf.

County lines gangs frequently use vulnerable children and adults to carry out illegal activity on their behalf. Signs include:

- Persistently missing from school, college or where they should be, often to be found out-of-area;
- Unexplained acquisition of money, clothes or mobile phones;
- Excessive receipts of texts or phone calls;
- Relationships with controlling, older people or gang association;
- Leaving home or care without explanation;
- Significant changes in emotional well-being;
- A decline in school performance;
- Parental concerns;
- Unexplained injuries or suspicion of self-harm.

The charities, groups and organisations below can offer help and advice without having to talk directly to the police.

[Fearless](#): offers advice and guidance and allows you to pass on information about crime anonymously.

[Change, Grow Live](#): a national health and social care charity which provides free and confidential services and support.

[Children's Society](#): provides advice and helps support vulnerable young people.

[Childline](#): offers free and confidential help for young people.

[Missing People](#): SafeCall provides a non-judgemental safe space for children to talk about their experiences in confidence.

[FRANK](#): provides straight-talking information about drugs – their helpline number is [0800 77 66 00](tel:0800776600).

[Families Anonymous](#): support groups for family and friends of people with a current, suspected or former drug problem. Their helpline number is [0845 1200 660](tel:08451200660).

We hope that you are all managing to stay well and safe. If there are any concerns about children's safety, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely

Mrs T Hillman
Designated Safeguarding Lead