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Dear Parents/Carers,

Re: Everyone's Invited

We understand that you may be concerned regarding the media coverage of the horrifying anonymous testimonies on the Everyone's Invited website and want to take this opportunity to inform of the actions we are taking at Radlett Lodge School.

Question 1: What is the Everyone's Invited website?

Everyone's Invited is a website which invites anyone affected by sexual harassment, abuse or assault to share their experience anonymously. Many of the testimonials submitted relate to experiences of children and young people at schools, college or university. Most of these testimonials are related to what is known as peer on peer abuse, i.e. one child / young person harming another child / young person. There are however some testimonials about the actions of staff members. You can review the website and testimonials at: www.everyonesinvited.uk

Question 2: Have any of the testimonials come from Radlett Lodge School?

As the website is entirely anonymous, with no names or dates mentioned it is difficult to know whether any past or current pupils have provided a testimony. The issue is likely to be more prevalent in secondary schools, colleges and universities, rather than primary schools. If you suspect that one of the testimonials is from your child please contact the school.

Question 3: Has the abuse only taken place face to face?

The majority of the testimonials on the Everyone's Invited website detail direct sexual harassment, abuse or assault. However, the Internet Watch Foundation's (IWO) latest study has indicated that online sexual predators are grooming children to record their own sexual abuse, and tricking children into abusing their siblings and friends. The study has found that there were:

- 511 self-generated child sexual abuse images and videos assessed between 28.09.20 and 23.12.20 involved siblings, which is 8 images or videos each day.
- In 65% of cases, one or both children engaged in direct sexual contact with the other.

Analysis of the study indicates that these children were manipulated or coerced into sexual activity by adults online through live streaming and that these images and videos were then shared using a variety of web platforms.

The study found that some of these adults were posing as children. On some occasions the abuse took the form of a game or dare, and the children were considered not to have any understanding of the sexual nature of what they were doing (IWO. 24.03.21).

Further details of the study can be found at: <https://www.iwf.org.uk/news/%E2%80%98beyond-heart-breaking%E2%80%99-abuse-predators-groom-children-film-siblings-and-friends>.

Question 4: What should I do if I am concerned that my child is being sexually harassed, abused or assaulted?

If your child tells you that they have been sexually harassed, abused or assaulted then you should report this to the police, your local authority Children's Services, your local authority Safeguarding Children Partnership or to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead.

At Radlett Lodge School the Designated Safeguarding Lead is Tamsin Adams, who is supported by the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads: Stuart Mainwaring, Ellie Freeman, Leigh-Anne Lamb, and Shelly Parr.

The NSPCC has set up a dedicated helpline (0800 136 663) for children and adults who are victims of sexual abuse which will provide support and advice, including how to contact the police and report crimes. The helpline will also provide support to parents and professionals.

Question 5: What does the school have in place to protect my child and what actions are you taking as a school to address this issue?

The school already provides the children and young people with close supervision, with most young people being staffed on a 1:1 basis according to their Education, Health and Care Plans. All pupils have an Individual Positive Behaviour Support Plan with most pupils also having an Individual Risk Assessment which details strategies to support your child to help keep them safe.

All staff at Radlett Lodge receive safeguarding training which highlights the need to maintain vigilance; respond to children's non-verbal cues such as a change in behavioural presentation; and what to do if a child makes a disclosure (a child raising a concern). The training also details who to report concerns to and how. All staff have a working understanding of the Keeping Children Safe in Education government guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

As a school we have a culture of recording all behaviours, concerns and disclosures, no matter how small, as this helps us build a better picture of the child, particularly as many pupils have not yet developed a functional communication system. The Designated Safeguarding Leads monitor all systems, which provides them with a holistic understanding of the pupils. Where actions are needed, such as making a referral to Children's Services, a child's allocated Social Worker or to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), they are taken in a timely manner. All pupils' emotional wellbeing is closely monitored and reviewed.

The school have taken the following initial actions as a result of Everyone's Invited:

- Highlighted the testimonials detailed on the Everyone's Invited website to all staff. Raising staff awareness of the severity of the situation and both the short- and long-term potential impact of sexual abuse on children and young people's physical and emotional wellbeing.
- Reminded staff of the safeguarding procedures and the need for all concerns to be reported, including who the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are.
- We have emphasised the need for children to be explicitly taught about awareness of themselves and others, relationships (including online), being respectful to each other, bullying, self and peer advocacy. All of which is underpinned by our continued focus on developing each pupil's communication and interactions skills.

- We will be reviewing our Relationships Education (Primary) and Sex and Relationships Education (Secondary) curriculums to ensure that we are adequately preparing pupil's for this aspect of their lives.
- The NSPCC helpline (0800 136 663) will be added to our school safeguarding poster.
- Where pupils have the understanding, issues raised via Everyone's Invited will be sensitively discussed as part of their PSHCE lessons.
- As an organisation we are reviewing our Safeguarding Children Policy, to ensure that it adequately guides staff when they have concerns that a child is being sexually harassed, abused or assaulted.

Question 6: Where can I learn more about Child Sexual Abuse and ways of supporting my child?

Please contact your child's Class Teacher to discuss any specific areas that you would like support with. Parents Protect (a project run by the Lucy Faithfull Foundation) has developed an online child sexual abuse and exploitation awareness learning programme for parents, carers and professionals to help:

- Understand potential risks
- Recognise the signs of potential abuse in children
- Beware of inappropriate behaviour in adults
- Know where to access help if you have concerns and would like to talk about them.

The learning programme can be accessed via the link: <https://www.parentsprotect.co.uk/what-is-child-sexual-abuse.htm>

The NSPCC has a variety of resources: www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/sex-relationships
Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) also have resources: www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre

Kind regards,

Geraldine Mendonça

Principal