



29 March 2019

Dear Parents

“It takes a whole village to raise a child”

Many of you will have read the article in the Herts Advertiser this week concerning drug activity within our town and local secondary schools. As school leaders we fully recognise that we live in times where in many areas of society, drug use is accepted; not challenged; and seen as part of everyday life. As educators of young people we endeavour to provide a very different view, educating our young people through our PSHCE programmes, providing opportunities for talks and assemblies and offering parents and pupils joint school information evenings on the dangers of taking drugs and the impact that this can have on their physical and mental health. We have clear and concise discipline policies which outline the consequences of involvement in drug activity, which have to be made publicly available through our websites. As schools we seek to sanction where we feel it is necessary to send a clear message to our pupils that we will not tolerate both the supply and consumption of drugs within our school communities.

In addition to this, all of our schools will offer support, rather than disciplinary sanction, to those who seek help to escape their drug habit. Our staff are trained and our knowledge of drug types, drug nomenclature and the symptoms of drug use; and our awareness of the issue of County Lines and CCE (Child Criminal Exploitation) are all reviewed on a regular basis. We work closely with each other and with our partner agencies, including the police, to share information, provide support and ensure that parents are aware of the support and guidance that they can receive from outside the school environment.

This is a societal issue however, and it is only when parents, schools, the police and the community as a whole work together that we have a chance of ridding our world of this issue. This letter opens with the statement based on an African proverb “*It takes a whole village to raise a child*”. We often refer to the Harpenden district as “the village”. It is a place that we see as a pleasant environment to live and work in and one that is relatively safe.

We recognise that as school leaders we have a role to play in helping it remain such a place; but we cannot do that alone. As Lynda Coates from Herts Police implies in the news article, we ALL need to be vigilant; we ALL need to play our part in reporting incidents to the police and we ALL need to play a part in educating those young people who we come into contact with.

If we do not accept our collective responsibility and our collective need to challenge, then the problem will persist and is likely to increase.

You can be reassured that we fully accept our part of that collective responsibility and will continue to work hard together, to ensure that our schools remain safe places for our young people to learn.

Yours sincerely



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