**A message to school leaders from Rachael Wardell - Executive Director of Children, Families and Lifelong Learning 20.04.2020**

Dear colleagues,

Welcome back. I hope you were able to take some time to relax over the Easter holidays in preparation for the Summer term ahead.

Like me, you may have been monitoring the situation with disclosures made on the Everyone’s Invited Website and the subsequently announced Ofsted review. Not all testimonials on the platform are about schools and settings, but many of the circa 15,000 accounts do name the settings where the alleged perpetrators attend and where some of the incidents occurred. I anticipate that this number will grow, given the significant media attention.

Where testimonials do mention schools or settings, the allegations range from misogynistic behaviour to verbal harassment, sexual assault, exploitation and rape. In some cases, adults in a position of trust have been mentioned as alleged perpetrators of sexual abuse and harassment. There are multiple instances where reports made to individuals in positions of trust by pupils have allegedly been suppressed, dismissed, or ignored. As a result, the surge of emotion and anger that has been expressed by young women, and many young men, is understandably significant. I am sad to say a small number of Surrey schools and settings have been specifically mentioned on the website.

As we start the summer term, I would like to reiterate Surrey County Council’s offer of support and advice to all school and setting leaders via the Education Safeguarding Team and the School Relationships Service. I have also noted below some important points for your consideration as we continue to work together to promote the protection and safeguarding of our children:

**Embedding a safeguarding culture in all learning environments:**
Lead by example: reinforce your own and governors’/trustees’ commitment to a safeguarding first philosophy and practice, including combatting misogynistic, sexist and other harmful and offensive behaviours
Ensure a whole-school approach that challenges harmful sexual behaviour and peer on peer abuse
Provide a safe environment where children and young people feel empowered to disclose their concerns and discuss worries with trusted adults
Understand and articulate your school’s/setting’s safeguarding offer to all stakeholders
Empower staff to actively promote the safeguarding and wellbeing of children by responding to suspicions and rumours.

**Safeguarding in the curriculum:**
Relationships and sex education: provide opportunities for learning that equips all children with knowledge, understanding and skills related to personal privacy, respect and consent
Online safety: encourage a culture across the curriculum that promotes safe online behaviours and develops children’s attitudes, skills and knowledge to enable them to navigate social media and the virtual world.

**Review policies and procedures:**
Be sure that your safeguarding statement is available to the whole school/setting community. It should set out your intention, implementation and how leaders and governors measure the impact.
Review your reporting frameworks and policies regarding allegations of sexually harmful behaviour between pupils and from adults Establish a culture which does not blame or shame victims/survivors. Children should not feel ashamed or to blame when making disclosures, so careful consideration must be given to your approach
Consideration should be given in your safeguarding and behaviour policies regarding children who have had allegations made against them. Put in place well thought out support and wellbeing action plans before, during and after investigations take place Enhance your training offer to ensure leaders, governors and all staff and volunteers have the expertise to respond to the signs, symptoms, and patterns typical of adult, peer-on-peer abuse and harmful sexual behaviours

Policies should include clear processes for dealing with concerns, complaints and allegations

**Partnership is key:**
Check that all pupils, parents, and carers know who the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and deputies are and communicate contact details clearly and regularly
Make certain that staff understand and implement your safeguarding policies and procedures – communicate and train regularly, provide space and opportunities for professional dialogue
Develop relationships and networks with other organisations that provide specialist services for victims and survivors of abuse Ensure that anyone concerned about the safety of a child or young person knows how to make a Request for Support via the [Surrey Children's Single Point of Access (CSPA)](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/childrens-social-care/contact-childrens-services)
Signpost to other support organisations, so pupils, staff and parents/carers know where to seek support outside of the school environment. This may include Childline, the NSPCC Helpline, the Surrey Children's Single Point of Access (CSPA), Contextual Safeguarding Network

I hope this information is helpful but, as always, if you have any concerns or would like more information please reach out to the School Relationships Team.

[Here is a short video produced by Paul Bailey, Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership Development Manager](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NQnFlRwAuoo), in which he shares his thoughts on protecting children in response to the Everyone’s Invited Website.

While I’m writing, I also want to take this opportunity to thank you once again for your continued efforts in this extremely challenging year. I don’t underestimate the difficulties you have faced and continue to face and I want to share my sincere thanks and admiration for your commitment to ensuring children are learning, safe and secure.

With my very best wishes for an enjoyable and safe summer term.

Rachael Wardell

Executive Director of Children, Families and Lifelong Learning

Surrey County Council

Useful Resources/Links :

[Surrey Children's Single Point of Access (CSPA)](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/childrens-social-care/contact-childrens-services) - If you are concerned about the safety of a child or young person you can contact the Surrey Children's Single Point of Access (SPA).

[NSPCC – No One Noticed, No One Heard](https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/2013/no-one-noticed-no-one-heard) – This research assists us to reflect and improve our practice through the childhood experiences of abuse of young men and women and how they disclosed abuse and sought help.

[NSPCC – Let children Know your listening](https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/2019/let-children-know-you-re-listening) – These evidence informed resources assist us in our practice to ensure children always feel listened to.

[PSHE Association](https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/) – A range of PSHE expertise and resources to assist in the delivery of PSHE.

[CEOP Think U Know](https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/) – A comprehensive toolkit of resources from the National Crime Agency - CEOP that supports the children’s workforce to deliver education and raise awareness of online child abuse and exploitation

[DfE Publication: Teaching Online Safety in Schools](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teaching-online-safety-in-schools) - This DfE guidance, due for review this year, outlines how schools can ensure their pupils understand how to stay safe and behave online as part of forthcoming and existing curriculum requirements.

[Surrey Healthy Schools](https://www.healthysurrey.org.uk/professionals/healthy-schools) – an evidence based approach and Self Evaluation toolkit for schools to co-ordinate, develop and improve provision to support personal development, behaviour, teaching and learning and leadership and management in line with Ofsteds Framework for Inspection, the Surrey 2030 Vision and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Additional materials;

[Everyone’s Invited – Response and Actions - Safer Schools (oursaferschools.co.uk)](https://www.oursaferschools.co.uk/2021/03/30/everyones-invited/)

[Helpline for people who have experienced sexual abuse in education settings launched | NSPCC Learning](https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/news/2021/april/sexual-abuse-in-education-helpline-launched)

[Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/719902/Sexual_violence_and_sexual_harassment_between_children_in_schools_and_colleges.pdf)

[Sexual abuse Archives - Free Social Work Tools and Resources: SocialWorkersToolbox.com](http://www.socialworkerstoolbox.com/category/cse/sexual-abuse/)

<https://www.thesurvivorstrust.org/FAQs/rasasc-guildford>

[Stop abuse together (campaign.gov.uk)](https://stopabusetogether.campaign.gov.uk/)

[Abuse - Fearless Professionals](https://www.fearless.org/cy/professionals/resources/abuse)

[Disrespect NoBody | Relationship Abuse | What is Relationship Abuse?](https://www.disrespectnobody.co.uk/relationship-abuse/what-is-relationship-abuse/)

[Rape and sexual assault - Victim Support](https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/crime-info/types-crime/rape-and-sexual-assault/)

And some conversation starters (albeit from America)

[Talking to Your Kids About Sexual Assault | RAINN](https://www.rainn.org/articles/talking-your-kids-about-sexual-assault)

[The Healthy Sex Talk: Teaching Kids Consent, Ages 1-21 | Talk With Your Kids](https://www.talkwithyourkids.org/lets-talk-about/healthy-sex-talk-teaching-kids-consent-ages-1-21.html)

[Contextual Safeguarding Network – Beyond Referrals - Harmful sexual behaviour in schools: a briefing on the findings, implications and resources for schools and multi-agency partners](https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Final-Briefing-final-Beyond-Referrals.pdf) – This research briefing paper presents findings from a two-year study into harmful sexual behaviour in English schools, Beyond Referrals Two. It builds on an initial two-year study (2017-2019) into multi-agency enablers and barriers to addressing harmful sexual behaviour in schools

[DfE Publication : Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and college](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/719902/Sexual_violence_and_sexual_harassment_between_children_in_schools_and_colleges.pdf)- This is advice is focused on child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment at schools and colleges. The advice covers children of all ages, from the primary through secondary stage and into colleges. The advice sets out what sexual violence and sexual harassment is, how to minimise the risk of it occurring and what to do when it does occur, or is alleged to have occurred.

HM Government [Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy 2021](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/973236/Tackling_Child_Sexual_Abuse_Strategy_2021.pdf)

SCC dedicated webpages – Covid-19 Information for School Leaders: <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/emergency-planning-and-community-safety/coronavirus/school-leaders>