

St. Martin-in-the-Fields High School for Girls and Sixth Form (co-ed)

11-19 Church of England Academy Founded 1699



SAFEGUARDING UPDATE FOR FAMILIES

I wanted to update you on some safeguarding issues that have been raised with us recently from a variety of sources including our students. We know that you take these matters as seriously as we do and so we want to share this new advice to with you to support any discussions you have with your daughter.

The following advice came from Andrew Hall, Specialist Safeguarding Consultant:

Social media posts about 'Blue Whale': He urges us all to be part of protecting young people from a viral suicide game called The 'Blue Whale' this story is not true but is , is permeating almost every news area recently. Please help to make it clear to young people that it is not true.

Thirteen Reasons Why: is a controversial film aimed at older teenagers on the popular streaming service, Netflix. Launched recently it is based on a book by Jay Asher published in 2007. The story concerns a high-school student who takes her own life, and has left 13 cassette tapes she has recorded explaining why. The film has become controversial because of its explicit portrayal of the character's death and that this could lead to other similar deaths. In the UK there are strict guidelines about suicide in drama, but Netflix operates outside those rules.

Media guidelines from The Samaritans explain that "over-simplification of the causes or perceived 'triggers' for a suicide can be misleading and is unlikely to reflect accurately the complexity of suicide."

It has been brought to our attention that students may have watched this film or knows of it. To support you with challenging these concerning media posts please read the guidance on this from the Samaritans. In addition, Penny Patterson, Senior Inspector for Quality Assurance in the London Borough of Havering has written a Blue Whale advice sheet which can be downloaded from our website. Please go to key information and into the safeguarding section to read these documents We want to keep you informed about issues as they arise and ensure that through our wellbeing programme, we address the key concerns that affect some young people in our society today.

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