



Christleton High School

15th July 2019

Dear Parent/Carer

Christleton High School, together with all other schools in the locality, has made the decision to inform parents and carers about the difficult but important issue of the use of illegal and prescription drugs by young people. I would appreciate you taking a few minutes of your time to please read and digest the contents of this letter.

All schools deliver health education sessions and take their safeguarding responsibilities extremely seriously. However, by coming together as a group, we as Headteachers, wish to highlight this issue in society. By raising health awareness, we know parents, carers and the community will respond in a supportive manner.

My colleagues and I are proud to be Headteachers in Cheshire West and Chester, an area with overwhelmingly wonderful children: polite, conscientious, well-adjusted and sensible. The truth is, there is a societal issue with the use of illegal substances and prescription drugs by a minority of young people. As you might expect, we tend to hear how students fill their time during the evenings and at weekends and are therefore well-placed to being able to comment on general trends.

Within Cheshire West and Chester schools, drugs are extremely rare – much rarer than in the vast majority of schools. Most students absolutely understand the likely consequences of bringing illegal substances into school and would not dream of doing so. There are a number of national help and advice services available, in addition to our local service provided through www.sdp.org.uk. We wish to support parents and carers in keeping children safe in the evenings and at weekends.

Please also be aware of the practice 'COUNTY LINES'. This is a term used to describe organised crime groups who use dedicated mobile phone numbers to supply drugs across an area. These organised crime groups exploit children, vulnerable adults and disabled people through coercion, intimidation and violence, in order to move and store their drugs and money. Dealers also approach our young people and offer drugs 'for free' and as a consequence, they become indebted to the dealers, being forced to deal on behalf of the dealers, in order to pay off their debt. Signs that parents and carers should look for in their children are such things as: having more money than usual; new, expensive clothes or accessories, which they are unable to account for; having multiple mobile phones or SIM cards, meeting with controlling or older people, often accompanied by a significant decline in school results, performance or behaviour. More information can be found on the "Know and See" website (<https://knowandsee.co.uk>).

In common with other schools, we have seen a rise in the number of students presenting with mental health issues, which are connected to illegal and prescription drug use. This is in addition to the long-term effects of drug taking on the body and mind, the consequences of which might not be apparent for years. However, we also know that, quite naturally, many parents tend to be less aware of changing circumstances which may indicate their own children's contact with this issue. The standard line that young people tend to give to their parents on this is along the lines of "Yes, Mum/Dad, there were drugs around at the party but I'm the one who never touches them." It is perfectly understandable why most parents will accept such assurances at face value; however, these conversations require a healthy level of scepticism. Young people from all kinds of different

backgrounds, including many who otherwise behave perfectly well in school and at home, may be coming into contact with illegal/prescription drug use and need our awareness and support.

As we approach the end of term, and with our young people finding they have more free time, it is important that you are aware of these issues. In addition to some useful information given below, please also find attached, 'A Guide to Parental Controls' for your reference.

I wish you and your family a safe and happy summer.

Yours sincerely



A D Stenhouse
Headteacher

FRANK National Drugs Helpline

0300 123 6600

www.talktofrank.com/worried-about-a-child

WDP – Cheshire West and Chester

Chester

Aqua House,
51 Boughton, CH3 5AF
Tel: 0300 303 4549

Opening hours:

Monday 10:00-17:00
Tuesday 10:00-19:00
Wednesday 13:00-17:00
Thursday 10:00-17:00
Friday 10:00-17:00

Ellesmere Port

Unity House,
4 York Road, CH65 0DB
Tel: 0300 303 4550

Opening hours:

Monday 10:00-17:00
Tuesday 13:00-19:00
Wednesday 10:00-17:00
Thursday 10:00-17:00
Friday 10:00-17:00

Northwich

The Old Council House,
Church Road, CW9 5PD
Tel: 0300 303 4548

Opening hours:

Monday 10:00-17:00
Tuesday 10:00-19:00
Wednesday 10:00-13:30 and 16:00-17:00
Thursday 13:00-17:00
Friday 10:00-17:00

Support is available 24/7 on the telephone numbers above.

Fax: 0333 344 5919

Email: cwac@wdp.org.uk