

Dear Parent/Carer

### Healthy relationships update from the working party

You may recall that the Healthy Relationships working party wrote to you earlier in the year to introduce ourselves, and to outline our aims and objectives this year. Fostering positive, healthy relationships between our students is a priority for us at LVC and we pride ourselves on our respectful learning environment. However, sadly the national campaign '[Everyone's Invited](#)' and the [Ofsted review into sexual abuse in schools](#) has shown that many young people, mainly but not exclusively girls, are subjected to unwanted, sexualised harassment from their peers. In response to this, a number of teachers and support staff have formed a working group to ensure our students are given clear information, guidance and support about what constitutes a healthy relationship, and to ensure they know what to do if they experience something which makes them feel uncomfortable.

You are an important part of our school community, so we wanted to update you on the actions we have taken in this area so far, and our priorities for the future. Since our last update to you in October:

- All staff completed a training activity provided by the organisation UK Feminista about sexual harassment in schools. A staff working party has established, representing a number of teachers and support staff, to focus on promoting healthy relationships at Linton. As part of their PSHE lessons, students were introduced to the term "sexual harassment" and what to do if they are witness it.
- All students, staff and parents/carers were given the opportunity to complete a survey about their views and experiences of healthy relationships at Linton. A key finding from this survey was that 24% of students reported being called a "sexist term" while at school, with the words "gay", "slag" and "slut" being identified as the phrases used most frequently. This was often described as "jokey" or "banter" by students.
- We then conducted interviews with a range of students who volunteered to share their views with us in more detail. These students echoed the observation about the use of sexist language. Positive feedback from the surveys and interviews has been that almost every single student who responded knew who to speak to if they were concerned about peer or peer abuse or sexist language.

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- We have launched a fortnightly tutor time session to discuss healthy relationships with students explicitly, in a safe and supportive environment.

In response to these findings, we will focus on educating students about the harm sexist language can cause, particularly using the tutor time programme and PSHE lessons. This will include exploring the protected characteristics, and the deeper meaning and connotations behind sexist terms, so students understand why they can be hurtful and should not be regarded as “banter”. We are also developing our approach to addressing sexist language as a staff body, by working together to ensure we are consistent and confident in our approach to sexist language when it is heard at Linton. Furthermore, we are working with the students to raise awareness about sexist language, including a possible “awareness week” in the summer term.

We believe that promoting healthy relationships is a whole community project, and therefore are keen to work closely with parents and carers to hear your views and enable you to shape our response to these findings. If you would like to be part of a parent/carers panel to work with us more closely on this, please add your name [here](#). We hope to meet with this panel over the next term to hear your views and ideas.

It has been very positive to see from the surveys that for most of our students, Linton is a positive, supportive environment and we have been incredibly impressed by the responsible, caring and reflective attitudes students have shown in these discussions. We look forward to communicating with parents/carers more in due course about these and further steps we are taking to expand our education about healthy relationships at Linton, and are grateful for your support.

Yours faithfully

The Healthy Relationships Working Party

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