



LYDIARD PARK ACADEMY

Dear Parents/Carers

Over recent months, the media have reported ongoing concerns regarding social-media influencers, not solely, but in particular when it comes to their potential impact on boys and young men.

During assemblies this term we will be discussing the following;

KS3 - a focus on how people influence us.

KS4 - a focus on echo chambers and filter bubbles and the importance of pupils checking multiple news sources to ensure they are getting complete and objective information.

Current advice is that we don't directly focus on multiple individuals, as this is often what they want, but we will mention specific people within the Powerpoint presentation. One individual that we are aware that some pupils are talking about is Andrew Tate, and to support parents we have included some information within this letter.

Andrew Tate, describes himself as "absolutely a misogynist".

Who is Andrew Tate?

Andrew Tate is an American-British former professional kickboxer turned internet personality. He is a self-described 'success coach' and has a subscription-based online marketing programme called 'Hustler's University' with over 100,000 subscribers. Tate has recently seen a rise in online notoriety due to a string of controversial comments and behaviours, such as:

- Saying that rape victims put themselves "in a position to be raped" and "must bear some responsibility", claiming most do this for advancement in 'opportunity'.
- Leaving the country amid rape allegations, suggesting it was 'easier to evade charges' and that it was 'probably 40% of the reason' he moved to Romania.
- Claiming mental illness makes people 'weak' and that depression 'isn't real'.
- Promoting gendered violence and misogyny on his podcast and posts about relationships (e.g. "It's bang out the machete, boom in her face, and grip her by the neck...").

These behaviours and more have led to his accounts being removed from social media platforms like TikTok, Facebook, and Instagram for violating policies on "dangerous organizations and individuals." This followed a successful campaign by UK-based advocacy group Hope Not Hate to remove him from all major platforms.

It has become clear that a number of our students are familiar with Andrew Tate and the opinions he supports. Whilst some of Tate's posts appear to focus on well-being and mental



Principal:
Vice Principal:

Mr G. Pearson
Miss S. Hesten

Grange Park Way, Grange Park, Swindon, SN5 6HN
Tel: 01793 874224 Fax: 01793 876274
ask@lydiardparkacademy.org.uk



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health, as you can see from the quotes above, they are interspersed with deeply misogynistic, sexist, homophobic, and violent material. Given the nature of his views, he does not represent a positive role model for boys or young men of any age and yet many still have questions about Tate's messages and his values.

Why are children and young people interested in this behaviour?

There are many reasons why a child or young person might begin to show interest in this kind of harmful content online.

- **Glamorous lifestyle.** Many of the influencers or personalities conveying these harmful behaviours appear to be sitting in the lap of luxury and fame. Some are actors, wealthy businessmen, even high ranking political figures. These people seem successful, inspiring, and confident in their beliefs.
- **Fast fame.** The controversial nature of these behaviours seems to automatically make unknown names into trending hashtags on social media platforms. In posts attached to these ideas, the sudden rise to fame is often addressed by thanking their followers for their 'loyal support'.
- **Isolation and loneliness.** Children and young people who feel isolated, rejected, and ostracised are particularly vulnerable to this type of content. A newly discovered set of ideologies could make sense of their world while offering them a place of acceptance and new friends.
- **Looking for advice.** A topic or insecurity that a young person needs help with could inspire them to begin vulnerably searching for an answer on social media. Some of these personalities claim to be motivational speakers and are lauded by those they have 'helped' with their wisdom and advice.
- **Keeping up with peers.** Young people may seek out dangerous online personalities such as Andrew Tate, in a bid to appear 'informed' amongst friends or older siblings who might view this type of harmful content in a form of unhealthy entertainment.

It is important to note that our children and young people are still growing in their emotional, physical, and mental maturity. If they are engaging with content that promotes harmful behaviours (such as misogyny), it does not mean they fully understand or agree with what is being said (even if they claim they do). This also extends to exhibiting harmful behaviour.

Potential Risks

When considering the impact that harmful behaviours may have on children and young people, it's important to highlight these potential risks:

- Replicating or engaging in the behaviour in order to 'fit in' with peers.



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- Low self-esteem when comparing themselves to 'successful' personalities.
- Being the victim or perpetrator of cyberbullying.
- Having an emotional reaction to harmful content online.
- Damage to their reputation that could impact relationships and future plans.
- Views and beliefs being negatively influenced or 'nudged' in the wrong direction

LPA staff are vigilant and will share and respond to any concerns they have about students who we believe are potentially being influenced by inappropriate and offensive views. In addition, all students receive Relationships & Sex Education as part of our planned PSHE curriculum which addresses issues such as misogyny and gender stereotypes. We also promote diversity, inclusivity, mutual respect and tolerance through our tutor programme and assemblies.

At a time when so many people think it acceptable to use social media for spreading provocative and inflammatory untruths, it is more important than ever that home and school work in partnership to challenge this and other forms of hate speech. To help give you the best care and support in possible situations where harmful online content is being used or presented, we suggest the following advice:

- **Stay calm.** If the child or young person in your care is exhibiting these behaviours or being targeted by them, the best thing you can do is realise that there is a problem that they need your help with. Approach them with gentleness and love, even if you dislike their behaviour.
- **Talk to them.** Ask them to explain what happened, and give them space to tell you in their own words. It may be emotional or embarrassing to discuss, but being able to talk through complex feelings in a supportive environment will help them.
- **Be honest.** It can be hard, but consider how your own actions (or those of family members or friends) might be affecting this behaviour. This may present in shouting, teasing, pressure, or even bullying, and could affect their coping mechanisms.
- **Identify help.** It's important that children and young people have someone they can turn to for help, even if that person is not you. Talk to your child about the Trusted adult they have in school, we will be doing the same. Every tutor has time allocated during the week to spend with tutees, contacting home or adding rewards, a young person can request a meeting with their tutor during this time.

The pastoral team have undertaken NSPCC training titled 'Managing sexualised behaviour in secondary schools' and have since led whole staff training. We have also led assemblies to pupils outlining what would constitute harmful sexualised behaviour and what to do if they felt uncomfortable with any situation.

The websites below can also offer further advice and guidance:



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- **NSPCC**
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/inappropriate-explicitcontent/distressing-content/>
- **YoungMinds**
<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/about-us/our-policies/social-media-guidance/>

- **CEOP**
<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/parental-controls/>

Yours sincerely,

Sophie Hesten
Vice Principal



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