

Statement from Dulwich College: Equality and Respect
29 March 2021

Current situation

Following the sexual abuse and harassment allegations raised by pupil testimonies on the 'Everyone's Invited' website and in an Open Letter (from a former pupil to the Master, 19 March 2021), Dr Joe Spence said:

'The behaviour described is distressing and entirely unacceptable; we condemn it unreservedly.

Whilst we cannot comment on anonymous testimonies, any specific and evidenced allegations will be addressed, and we will involve external authorities where appropriate.

Dulwich College as a united community of pupils, staff and parents will play its part in addressing the societal problem of the objectification of women and the fact that women and girls are feeling unsafe and disrespected on our streets and in our institutions. As a boys' school the first thing we must do is listen to what women and girls are telling us about their experiences and their concerns, but we also have a particular part to play, as educators of boys, in making a difference.

We believe the great majority of Dulwich College students - current and former - are considerate and respectful towards others, and they must know that our faith, confidence and pride in them is undimmed. Our ethos is one of respect and support for others in all we do and we are, as a school, committed to gender equality and to the elimination of discrimination on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, race, age, disability or religious belief. We make that statement to everyone who applies to work here and we want to live up to it.'

Our priorities

Our three priorities in relation to present allegations and investigations are:

- to engage sympathetically on behalf of those who have suffered abuse or harassment, investigating all allegations, internally or by passing cases on to the relevant authorities;
- to support all our pupils and staff, ensuring they know we will continue to listen to their concerns and work in their interests;
- to commit to an Equality and Respect plan of action, building on the outline endorsed by the Governors on 25 March and announced to parents and former pupils on 26 March 2021.



Immediate actions

We commit to the following actions, building on outline themes endorsed by the Governors of Dulwich College on 25 March 2021:

- Working with victims and reporting alleged perpetrators to the authorities - *underway*;
- Dealing with historic allegations of abuse - *underway*;
- The commissioning by the Governors of Dulwich College of an Independent Enquiry into the allegations emerging from the Open Letter of 19 March 2021 and associated testimonies – *terms of reference and enquiry lead to be confirmed no later than the first day of the Summer term*;
- The commissioning by the Governors of Dulwich College of a review of the Safeguarding Culture of Dulwich College - *terms of reference under negotiation with a potential provider*;
- Continuing to review our Wellbeing education – *benchmarking and sharing best practice and resources with other schools, starting Summer 2021*;
- Tackling the pervasive misuse of social media – *working with various trusted agencies, starting Summer 2021*.

Actions since 2016

Since 2016 we have implemented many changes in regard to safeguarding at the College.

In addition to the appointment of new pastoral leads and extensive staff training, we have revised the Wellbeing curriculum and introduced or revised policies, as indicated below.

Pupils are now taught about digital awareness, consent and are encouraged to reflect on issues of equality at a younger age.

The Pastoral and Wellbeing teams meet regularly to review topics to be covered each term, and the curriculum allows flexibility for teaching to be reactive if we become aware of issues impacting our pupils at a local or national level.

Since 2018 form tutors have delivered Wellbeing lessons and undergone training in tackling conversations around issues such as online safety, everyday sexism and LGBTQ+. Our work is enhanced through our engagement with bodies like Digital Awareness UK, The Good Lad Initiative (now Beyond Equality) and the Breck Foundation.

Significant changes and additions have been made to College policies since 2016 including our Safeguarding Policies. A standalone Low-Level Concerns Policy has been introduced, a new Online Safety policy and a Wellbeing policy that considers Relationships and Sex Education and Social Moral Spiritual and Cultural Education and Fundamental British Values. Significant changes have been made to the ICT Acceptable Use Policy, Safeguarding, Anti-Bullying, Equal Opportunities and Supervision of Children policies.

We have trained designated safeguarding leads in each of our five schools ensuring all pupils have a recognised and familiar person they can approach if they are concerned for themselves or others.

For all of these interventions, we recognise the importance of reviewing and having inspected by independent authorities all that we do in relation to safeguarding, pastoral care and Wellbeing education in order to help bring about lasting change. This work has started.