

Marsh Mail

The national press has been dominated by very sad news of teenagers whose lives have been tragically cut short as a result of knife crime. Sometimes it is tempting to believe such issues happen elsewhere; that extreme anti-social behaviours are restricted to other parts of the country and are not relevant to our own communities.

While less rural areas may be more prone to criminal behaviours, this does not make villages such as Linton immune to them.

Young people have always been susceptible to risk-taking behaviours. The adolescent brain is in the process of regulating thrill-seeking impulses. Meanwhile, the transition to adulthood creates greater independence and opportunities that may compromise children's safety and wellbeing.

At Linton Village College, our PSHE (personal, social, health and education) curriculum helps students to develop an appreciation of how their bodies and minds work. We encourage our learners to be reflective and self-aware as well as educating them about potential harmful influences in order that they can keep themselves and others safe and healthy.

In recent months we have developed stronger educational links with Cambridgeshire Constabulary. Our students have benefited from police sessions entitled 'What's the Point?' including an appreciation of the facts and consequences of carrying weapons. The police have also contributed to input about County Lines (gangs that target young people to take and sell drugs across county borders). It is important that our children are aware of practices that seek to exploit them and entice them into being involved in criminal behaviours.

Peer pressure has become more sophisticated and significant with the development of technological communication and mobility. Research into the rise in online grooming, facilitated by social media platforms, has coincided with a spike in adolescent mental health issues.

The African proverb 'it takes a village to raise a child' is particularly relevant at the moment. More than ever, our young people need responsible adults in their communities to keep them safe and prevent them from seeking acceptance by more dangerous means. Reporting concerns to the College (thinkpink@lvc.org, the police www.cambs.police.uk/report/Report-Shared/Report-a-concern) and students' families is integral to this.

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