

## *The Marsh Mail*

The start of the New Year has provided us with the opportunity to refresh behaviour expectations and set ambitious educational goals with our students. As part of this we have re-emphasised the importance of being responsible members of the College community.

We know that the teenage years are important ones for young adults to develop their own sense of personal identity and independence. As with other key childhood developmental stages, adolescence is characterised by testing boundaries, experimenting with risk-taking and forging connections with others.

Significant advances in technology have dramatically changed our students' means of being able to communicate and has transformed the experience of being a teenager. While this has created many benefits that were not afforded to previous generations, it has also made the teenage years more challenging to navigate. The fear of missing out is more acute when you can view others' social lives in real time. The pressure to be connected and seek others' approval is much enhanced. As is the opportunity to behave in a way that causes others upset or harm.

Internet Safety Day, which is recognised on the 5<sup>th</sup> February, has the theme 'Together for a better internet'. The day seeks to raise awareness of online safeguarding issues but also more widely to spark a national conversation about using technology responsibly, respectfully, critically and creatively. Our student Digital Leaders play a key role in this.

One of our key expectations at LVC is to behave in a caring way to contribute to a safe community. This includes students and staff taking responsibility for their own safety as well as noticing and reporting changes or concerns in others, including bullying behaviours.

This duty of care extends beyond the College. The dedicated safeguarding email account ([thinkpink@lvc.org](mailto:thinkpink@lvc.org)) provides an opportunity for community members to contact the College with concerns about children's welfare and to share safeguarding information that poses a risk to children.

We are also working in partnership with the local police to safeguard the College community. Their involvement in drugs education for our January PSHE day is one example of this.