



ABINGDON

From Head of Wellbeing: Paul Gooding

10 January 2020

Dear Parents

**Sabina Gray: Parents' Presentation on Drugs and Substances
Monday 2 March 2020, 7pm – 8.15pm**

Following Sabina Gray's talks to Middle and Upper School boys on Wednesday 25 February, she returns to speak to parents about drugs and substances on Monday 2 March at 7pm in the Amey Theatre. The recent Channel 4 Dispatches documentary on County Lines highlights the significance of this issue particularly around Oxfordshire.

To book a free place please click on the link below.

<https://abingdonschool.savoyssystems.co.uk/AbingdonSchool.dll/TSelectItems.waSelectItemsPrompt.TcsWebMenuItem 1428.TcsWebTab 139634.TcsProgramme 784928>

Here is a little more information from the speaker's webpages.

Crack and heroin addiction, crime, prison and rehab - this was Sabina's life for fifteen years. After experimenting with drugs as a fourteen year-old, she never imagined things could spiral so quickly out of control.

Her first experiences felt like harmless fun at the time. Weed, pills, LSD – these drugs were at the centre of her social life at a highly regarded public school, but she didn't know that she was developing a problem. By the age of seventeen, it was already too late – she had become a daily crack and heroin user.

For the next decade and a half, her entire existence was dedicated to the pursuit of drugs - that meant a life on the periphery of society, perpetually in and out of police stations and courtrooms, and eventually prison. She abandoned all morality, stole to feed her habit, her relationships with friends and family completely broke down, and she was eventually at death's door - she knew something had to change.

Now a drugs awareness speaker, Sabina talks to schools throughout the UK about the causes and consequences of her experience, and addresses the wider issues that lead young people into substance abuse and addiction.

Central to her talks is the importance of self-awareness and communication. Drug awareness is nothing without that self-awareness: it allows us to better protect ourselves against the causes – the circumstances and personal issues – that allow drugs to creep into our lives. That's more important now than it has ever been. We live in an age where self-image is

Abingdon School, Park Road, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, OX14 1DE

Tel: +44 (0)1235 521563 Fax: +44 (0)1235 849079

www.abingdon.org.uk

constantly under scrutiny on social media, and differences are seen as imperfections and publicly vilified: in this context, young people are even more vulnerable to the anxiety, self-doubt and depression that can lead to substance abuse and addiction.

Sabina talks openly and honestly and has been noted for her direct, informal and relatable style. She says the things that would have made her think twice before following the path that would lead to addiction.

As a schoolgirl, Sabina underestimated the power of drugs, and many other young people will have the same perspective. The aim of her talks is to change those perspectives, to spark debate and to help others to avoid the mistakes she made - to encourage young people to be both drug-aware and self-aware.

Yours sincerely

Paul Gooding – Head of Wellbeing
paul.gooding@abingdon.org.uk
01235 849156