



From Head of Wellbeing: Paul Gooding

15 January 2021

Dear parents

On Thursday 21 January the Sixth Form will be having their half-termly lecture. As we are working remotely, this lecture will take place online.

The speaker is [Isla von Trich](#) and she will be talking about relationships and pornography. This is an important topic under the new “*Relationships and Sex Education 2020*” government guidance and I hope that students find her talk interesting and informative.

Isla has provided an excellent guide for parents [here](#) which contains lots of useful websites, suggested books and videos. I hope that these are helpful for you and aid you in future discussions at home on this key topic.

I’m also copying below the relevant section from the Deputy Head Pastoral’s pastoral letter to parents, which was sent out last term, on this topic.

Pornography, and its effects, is an issue that concerns us greatly as a school, and is an increasingly worrying aspect of the modern world.

In 2017 PornHub had its 10th anniversary: it is now the 44th biggest website in the world with 75 million users, with 75% of its use being on mobile technology. Below are links to two articles that discuss the infographics PornHub published to promote that anniversary. We do not link to these articles lightly, as the normalisation of much they discuss concerns us greatly, and the casual way that there are links on to other articles from Men’s Health e-magazine raises real issues. The second article is also interesting, and worrying, for the way in which it presents the information: there is a glamorisation of pornography, and as such we have included it not only for the chilling statistics it contains, but also because of its subliminal messaging, and the ethical - or unethical - stance it adopts. Please be aware that they use graphic and explicit language and references. However, we have included them as they give a very frightening insight, both in terms of statistics and approach, to a very live issue in today’s world, and what they discuss is worryingly everyday for most teenagers, but a world away from what might be seen as mainstream 20 years ago. We have also included these articles as they are not marginal newsfeeds or websites - BuzzFeed and Men’s Health are very mainstream - the boys might even consider them to be relatively conservative and establishment. We feel these are issues that we shy away from at our peril.

<https://www.google.co.uk/amp/www.menshealth.com/sex-women/pornhub-most-popular%3Famp>

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<https://www.google.co.uk/amp/s/www.buzzfeed.com/amphtml/benhenry/this-is-how-porn-has-changed-in-the-last-10-years>

<https://fightthenewdrug.org/2019-pornhub-annual-report/>

This TED talk looks at the worrying changes in the nature of pornography:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DBTb71UzPmY>

There are also some very accessible documentaries on this topic that I would recommend to you, and excerpts of which we use in our PSHCE lessons:

Porn on the Brain (Channel 4 by Martin Daubney, an ex-Loaded magazine editor.)

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=porn+on+the+brain+documentary&view=detail&mid=249843191231B03FE1AF249843191231B03FE1AF&FORM=VIRE>

or https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1WxsY9zgrt4&has_verified=1

There is also a very interesting, quite explicit, TED talk by Cindy Gallop that she gave back in 2009:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FV8n_E_6Tpc

Our realisation of the dangers and effects of porn means that it is something which we deliberately address in PSHCE, with a particular focus on discussing it in the context of body image, sexual identity and understanding what makes for a healthy relationship.

Given all this, it is imperative that we are clear with the students to help them to realise that pornography is something that contains potential problems and is generically exploitative. Teenage students are at an age when they are curious yet vulnerable, and at an age when we need to protect them from establishing damaging habits.

Thank you in anticipation of your support in helping boys navigate through this key topic.

Best wishes

Paul Gooding

Head of Wellbeing

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