**115th December 2020**

Dear Parents and Carers

We sent out a communication last week warning parents of some of the dangers facing our young people.

Whilst for some it raised concerns and worries that you have addressed with us directly, for others it has given information you have been unaware of and may now wish to discuss with your child. We want to ensure that they, with your help do not become victims to outside influences.

We have been given information that in our local area there are individuals supplying E-cigarette liquids that are laced with THC and other noxious substances. Purchasers are not always aware of the dangers.

Thank you for trusting us and for being patient whilst  we were following up enquiries. Our priority is always to respect the dignity of those who have been directly affected and also inform the community of dangers.  There are formal processes that we have to follow in school that are set out in the law. Please be assured that I have taken action to make school safe, but sadly we all need to be aware that it is possible to buy illegal substances from the internet and also very close to the places where we live. This has been a reality for some time.

In the interests of being cautious and protecting our student, we will do targeted bag searches if we have reasons to be worried for a child’s safety.   Please trust that we would do this not because we are trying to catch our children out, quite the contrary, because we are so desperate to keep our community safe.

We have a zero tolerance to drugs and E-cigarettes in school and we ask that you support us with this by talking to your child, checking their online behaviour, being aware who they are talking to online and informing us if you are ever worried.  If your child is going through a hard time, please don’t feel that you are alone.  The old African proverb “It takes a village to raise a child” is very true.   Please feel free to contact us or visit the dedicated area of our school website that signposts to different resources and support groups.  <https://stjosephsbolton.org.uk/wellbeing-support/>

Many thanks for your ongoing support.

Tony McCabe

Headteacher