



Safeguarding and Health Bulletin

May 2026

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to our half-termly safeguarding and health bulletin, sharing our safeguarding themes for each term and what we hope will be useful resources for awareness and discussions at home. Please keep reading for:

- Staff training
- Understanding the manosphere: safeguarding against online misogyny
- How we can help, at home and at school
- Health messages from the school nurse

Staff Training

This half-term's refresher training for staff focused on how we can best support pupils to recognise the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships, both within their friendships and as they grow older and begin to form more intimate relationships.

Understanding the Manosphere: Safeguarding Against Online Misogyny

Recent media coverage, including Louis Theroux's *Inside the Manosphere*, has highlighted online spaces where some young people may encounter harmful messages about gender, relationships and masculinity.

Some families may have seen or heard discussion about the programme, which explores how online influencers can normalise misogynistic attitudes by presenting them as motivational or aspirational.

Understanding the "manosphere"

The "manosphere" refers to a loose network of online communities and influencers that can promote harmful beliefs, including:

- Negative or hostile attitudes towards women and girls
- Ideas that women are inferior or should be limited to traditional roles
- Claims that men are "victims" of feminism or social change
- Links between masculinity, dominance, and control over others

These messages are often embedded within content about fitness, motivation, dating, or "self-improvement," making them appear appealing or credible at first glance.

Why this is a safeguarding concern

Research and national guidance highlight that:

- Exposure is often repeated and subtle through social media algorithms
- Beliefs can shift gradually over time without conscious awareness
- Content may escalate towards more extreme viewpoints
- In some cases, this can contribute to harmful attitudes towards women and girls

Potential impact on young people

For adolescents, particularly those developing identity and belonging, this content may:

- Shape views about gender roles and relationships
- Encourage association between masculinity and dominance
- Normalise disrespectful or controlling behaviours
- Distort understanding of consent, equality and healthy relationships
- Influence offline peer interactions and attitudes

While not all exposure leads to harm, the cumulative effect of repeated messaging is a key concern.

What the Louis Theroux documentary highlights

The programme illustrates how:

- Influencers can reach large youth audiences through short-form video content
- Algorithms can amplify and reinforce specific worldviews
- Young people may encounter increasingly extreme content unintentionally
- Online personas can package harmful ideas in relatable or persuasive formats

63%

of young men watch masculinity influencers

1/3

of Gen Z men and boys think a wife should obey her husband

1 in 6

6 to 15-year-old boys have a positive opinion of Andrew Tate

Statistics shared by The Children's Society within the article
'Protecting young people from misogyny and the manosphere'
13 March 2026

Signs your child

may be moving towards harmful beliefs:



They're **secretive or defensive** about devices or online activity.



They **spend much more time online**, especially in certain forums or servers.



They are **fixated on needing to look a certain way**, with particular importance given to jawline, eyes and build (also known as **looksmaxxing**).



They've picked up **new slang that is extreme** or dehumanising.

How We Can Help, at Home and At School

Talk about it

Keep talking about misogyny and online hate even when the news isn't.

Tackle the tough topics before children find out somewhere else.

Ask them to tell you what they know.

Know where they spend time online - ask what platforms they use and what they like about them.

Talk early about healthy relationships - have ongoing, age-appropriate conversations.

Make these conversations a normal part of everyday life.

Understand the pressures

Pressures from social media, friends and society could impact their thoughts and actions.

Show them how and when to seek support.

Challenge the narrative

People who promote misogyny prepare their followers for rejection. Challenge this.

Ask critical thinking questions in a calm and positive way.

Instead of telling a child these ideas are wrong, ask them to talk about their beliefs.

Online misogynistic content can influence attitudes gradually and often invisibly. The most effective way to safeguard young people is through a strong partnership between home and school, working together to provide consistent messages about respect, equality and healthy relationships.

By maintaining open conversations, sharing concerns early, and helping young people critically reflect on what they see online, we can jointly support them to navigate digital spaces safely and develop positive, respectful views of others.

Questions to ask your child help promote critical thinking about misogynistic beliefs: (internetmatters.org)

What do you find interesting about what the influencer/community says?

What personal experiences does the influencer have to support their beliefs? What experiences do you have?

What do the girls at school think about all of this? Have you spoken to them about it?

Where do you see your beliefs leading you in the next few years?

In the communities or through the influencers you follow who share your beliefs, are there any parts you don't agree with? Why or why not?

Tell me about the influencer or communities you follow most who share these beliefs. Where do they come from? How you similar to them? How are you different?

Are there any ways to approach the issue to help people on both sides reach a positive solution for all? Why do you think people are talking so much about it?

Health Messages from the School Nurse

Sexual health is an important part of overall wellbeing, alongside mental and physical health. It is not only about contraception or preventing infections, but also about helping young people develop the knowledge, confidence and emotional awareness to make safe, respectful and informed choices within relationships.

We recognise that conversations around relationships and sexual health can feel sensitive or uncomfortable for families at times. However, open and calm communication can play an important role in helping young people feel secure, informed, and able to navigate relationships respectfully and safely.

When thinking about healthy relationships, you may wish to gently encourage your child to reflect on:

- Whether they feel comfortable expressing their own boundaries and choices
- Whether any decisions they make are genuinely their own, without pressure or expectation
- Whether they feel free from coercion or influence they are unsure about
- Whether their relationship allows space for time together that is not focused on sexual activity
- Whether consent, contraception and potential outcomes have been considered and discussed

If your child would like additional support or advice, they are welcome to speak with the school nurse or contact schoolnurse@exeterschool.org.uk.

Further information, confidential advice and support is available via Devon Sexual Health (NHS): <https://www.devonsexualhealth.nhs.uk/>