

February 2018

Dear Parent / Carer

C-Card Scheme at Chellaston Academy

Over the last few years, all schools have begun to work more and more with professionals from a range of outside agencies and providers. A series of government initiatives has promoted the development of multi-agency working. The aim is clear – to respond to the changing society we live in, and to provide maximum support appropriate to all pupils.

Here at Chellaston Academy, we have responded to this national trend. We have seen for ourselves the increasing range of pressures which our young people face, and we are committed to providing not only an outstanding education, but also the very best care and support that our students may need.

The establishment of our School Health support service has enhanced what we are able to provide for our students. Through a referral system by our Student Support Manager, Mrs Burdis, students can access a fully qualified School Nurse. This is an opportunity for students to be able to get advice and information with regard to their own health and emotional wellbeing and they can also get advice and support from Mrs Burdis herself, who will then decide if a referral to an appropriate external agency for that student is needed.

Along with access to the School Health Service, the Student Support Service will help to keep Derby City young people safe and consequently Derby City schools are being asked to consider becoming part of the C-Card (Condom Card) scheme.

The C-Card scheme was developed to safeguard young people who are already, or are thinking about becoming, sexually active. Young people have a rigorous confidential and professional consultation with either the School Nurse, or in the case of Chellaston Academy, Mrs Burdis and are then issued with a C (Condom)-card and condoms. This card has an expiry date, and needs to be re-activated when it expires. This ensures young people are continuing to get sexual health information and support.

The C-Card scheme works to extremely strict legal guidelines. This involves the following Fraser Guidelines, which state that health professionals are only permitted to provide sexual health services to young people if the following applies:

1. The young person understands the advice that is being given.
2. The young person cannot be persuaded to inform or seek support from their parents, and will not allow the worker to inform the parents that contraceptive advice is being given.
3. The young person is likely to begin or continue to have sexual intercourse without contraception.
4. The young person's physical or mental health is likely to suffer unless they receive contraceptive advice or treatment.
5. It is in the young person's best interest to receive contraceptive advice and treatment without parental consent.

You may have reservations about condoms being issued in school, and we hope the information below will alleviate any concerns you may have:

Aren't you encouraging under age sex by giving out condoms?

No. Although the legal age for sex is 16 years, we know some young people will have sex or be considering sex for the first time at a younger age. We want to protect those young people from unwanted pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and enable them to seek good sexual health information and support from a health professional.

As a parent/carer, surely I have a right to know if my child is having sex?

The Fraser Guidelines as mentioned earlier, do encourage young people to talk to their parents or carers that they are seeking sexual health advice. However not all young people feel confident to do this for whatever reason. The rules around confidentiality apply to everyone, including under 16's. If a professional has any safeguarding concerns about a young person accessing the C-Card Scheme, they would take appropriate action, as they would with any other safeguarding concern.

I don't want condoms being dropped around the school floors/being blown up/having water in them etc. What message does that send?

It often takes courage for a young person to access sexual health services. Experience in other schools shows this does not tend to happen. If inappropriate use of condoms does occur, the school will take the appropriate action.

I do hope you will support the school's introduction of the C-Card scheme. The scheme also runs successfully within Derby College and other venues around the city.

The C-Card scheme is supported by Derby City Council, Derbyshire County Council and Derbyshire Community Health Services Foundation Trust. The School Nurse service is provided by Derbyshire Healthcare Foundation Trust.

If you would like to discuss this issue further please contact, Deborah Burdis, Student Services Manager at Chellaston Academy.