TEACHERS GUIDANCE FOR CREATING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Teaching the students how to talk about and cope with difficult situations can sometimes make some students feel uncomfortable or upset; therefore, it is important to create safe environment in which they feel relaxed and that they can be open.

The following suggestions may help to create a safe environment. You may choose to use all or some of them dependent upon the class in question.

• Use the Teenage Cancer Trust Safe Environment Contract to set out some ground rules for the class. The contract suggests:
  - That all discussions of a personal nature to be kept within the room.
  - That they must be sensitive to how the issues raised affect others in the room.
  - That if a discussion does become personal, the teacher may curtail it, but that they will be available for the student to discuss the issue with at an arranged time.
  - That any concerns of a personal nature be directed to the school nurse.

• You may choose to request that no personal information be shared during the lesson to avoid upset or over-sharing. It is likely that students will divulged despite this, but they will understand when you shut conversations down.

• Students may have lots of questions, some of which they might feel that they do not want to share with the class. You may wish to have an anonymous question box to offer students the opportunity to ask these questions that you can then answer for them anonymously. Specific questions could also be directed to this box and then passed on to the School Nurse.

• When raising difficult issues, it is always a good idea to make the contact details and appointment information of any onsite counsellors. If there is no access to teachers then try to appoint a teacher responsible for dealing with the issues so that students have the opportunity to talk through anything that is upsetting them.

Teenage Cancer Trust Safe Environment contract

During the following lesson, we will be discussing the issue of cancer to help us all to better understand the topic, how to discuss it more openly and what to do if we have any concerns about our health. In order that we can all discuss it, we must create an environment that makes everyone feel safe.

Please read the below statements and sign at the bottom of the page to show that you understand what will be expected from you to help us all feel safe.

• I agree that all discussions of a personal nature to be kept within the room. I will not share any stories that anyone tells with anyone after the lesson.
• I understand that cancer will have affected my classmates in different ways and that I need to be sensitive to this during the discussions.
• I understand that it may not be appropriate for me to share personal stories during the lesson and that the teacher may ask me to end it, but will offer me a time to talk about it at the next opportunity.
• I know that I can visit the school nurse or my GP if the session raises any concerns about my own health.
• I know that I can step out of the class to an arranged room if I get overwhelmed by the lesson and that a member of staff will come and talk to me.

Signed:...........................................................................................................................................

Date:..............................................................................