

## Information on Harmful or Abusive Online Behaviours

It is not difficult to imagine harmful or abusive behaviours being present on social media. We know this is a factor for some parents as they manage their children's engagement with media growing up. Working with each other we can continue to educate and inform young people about ways they can engage respectfully and keep themselves safe.

Parents will be aware of our work on both [Online Safety](#) with parental guides, advice on Apps and useful links. In addition, our [Action Against Bullying](#) including an increased focus this year on sexualised and racialised language and some students have attended workshops exploring issues around this topic.

What can be challenging is the presence of popular online personalities or influencers who become well-known and even famous for exhibiting this behaviour over online platforms. The influencer Andrew Tate and his recent arrest have garnered more publicity however, we know that this represents a larger issue in our world (both online and offline) in how harmful behaviour like misogyny, violence against women and minorities, and sexual misconduct is dealt with and portrayed online.

- We have researched and collated available advice for parents so you can decide for yourself what you want your response to be at home.

### Who is Andrew Tate?

Tate is an American-British former professional kickboxer turned internet personality. He is a self-described 'success coach' and has a subscription-based online marketing programme called 'Hustler's University' with over 100,000 subscribers. Tate has recently seen a rise in online notoriety due to a string of controversial comments and behaviours, such as:

- Saying that rape victims "must bear some responsibility".
- Leaving the country amid rape allegations, suggesting it was 'easier to evade charges'.
- Claiming mental illness makes people 'weak' and that depression 'isn't real'.
- Promoting gendered violence and misogyny on his podcast and posts about relationships.

These behaviours and more led to his accounts being removed from social media platforms for violating policies on "dangerous organizations and individuals." More recently he has been back on Twitter and despite his recent arrest his team are still posting. Before being banned, Tate had millions of followers on TikTok, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. Below we look at why this might be, using the AI behind these sites.

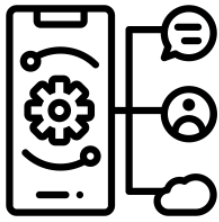
### Why are children and young people interested in this behaviour?

A child or young person might begin to show interest in this kind of harmful content online because.

- **Glamorous lifestyle.** Many of the influencers or personalities conveying these harmful behaviours seem successful, inspiring, and confident in their beliefs.
- **Fast fame.** The controversial nature of these behaviours seems to automatically make unknown names into trending hashtags on social media platforms.
- **Isolation and loneliness.** Children and young people who feel isolated and rejected, are particularly vulnerable to this type of content, offering a place of acceptance and new friends.
- **Looking for advice.** A topic or insecurity that a young person needs help with could inspire them to begin vulnerably searching for an answer on social media.
- **Keeping up with peers.** Young people may seek out controversial online personalities, to appear 'informed' amongst friends or siblings who might view this type of content in a form of unhealthy entertainment.

*Children and young people are still growing in their emotional, physical, and mental maturity. If they are engaging with content that promotes harmful behaviours, it does not mean they fully understand or agree with what is being said (even if they claim they do).*

## How are children and young people exposed to this behaviour?



There are several ways that young people may be observing harmful behaviour. It's important to be aware of what they are, to regularly check-in with how each may be having an impact.

**Algorithms:** Social media platforms use built-in AI (artificial intelligence) to generate content based on posts users have previously interacted with. This is used to try and keep users scrolling on the platform for as long as possible.

**Other Adults:** Jokes, suggestive comments or arguments (even within healthy, consenting adult relationships) might be interpreted incorrectly by young people who weren't meant to see them. It is important adults model empathy and consideration, weighing up different perspectives calmly.

**Popular Media:** Actors and actresses from their favourite shows may be starring in more adult productions that are easily accessible through streaming services, TikTok, Instagram, or YouTube.

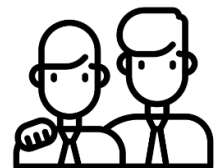
## Common Advice for Parents/Carers

- **Check their online content:** Set parental settings for younger children and for all ages, talk to them about what they are viewing, see their social media timelines and discuss what they do if they see more extreme or unpleasant content.
- **Don't ignore the subject:** The worst thing we can do is do or say nothing (or very little). Open the conversation so you can guide in a way that informs and educates. If you see your child laughing about or speaking positively about Tate, don't just tell them to stop talking about it. Instead, try to explore why they see it positively and what they think is funny about it.
- **Stay calm.** If your child is exhibiting or being targeted these behaviours, the best thing you can do is realise that they need your help. Approach with gentleness and love, even if you dislike the behaviours.
- **Talk to them.** Ask them to explain and give them space to tell you in their own words. It may be emotional or embarrassing to discuss, but being able to talk through complex feelings in a supportive environment will help them. Approach with curiosity and non-judgment and then explain why Tate's content is problematic (in language that is age appropriate).
- **Identify help.** It's important that children and young people have someone they can turn to for help, even if that person is not you.



## What College can do to help:

- **Approach a trusted member of staff.** If you become aware of a situation involving harmful content with your child, it's important to notify College as well as taking steps outside College.
- **An ethos of respect and consideration.** We will continue to encourage an understanding that no one is perfect and sometimes others will hurt our feelings, but that doesn't mean anyone should engage in harmful behaviour. We can help each other to be kind online and offline, even when we disagree.
- **Allow room for discussion.** Students may want to talk about what they've seen online. College gives space to their conversations in appropriate forum. This may provide a route to education around empathy and impact of these behaviours and actions. This includes....
- **Reporting routes.** Clear routes of reporting if students feel they are subject to harmful behaviours in person or online. The more we know, the more we can respond to the whole picture, continue to educate
- **Promote positive role models and educate:** We are committed to educating and introducing students to a range of role models who are committed to positivity, empathy and mutual understanding. We will continue to run workshops that challenge these issues and give guidance for both boys and girls.



## Further Support:

- **NSPCC:** <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/inappropriate-explicit-content/distressing-content/>
- **Young Minds:** <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/about-us/our-policies/social-media-guidance/>
- **CEOP:** <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/parental-controls/>