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2 March 2023

All Parents & Guardians
Repton School

Dear Parents and Guardians

In September and then again in November of last year the School received an inspection visit from the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). In this case the visits formed part of what is termed an Additional Inspection - as distinct from the periodic educational quality and compliance inspections which all schools receive. The Additional Inspection was triggered by concerns communicated to the DfE about the School's handling of matters arising from non-recent safeguarding disclosures made by a former pupil who attended Repton in the early 2000s.

We have now received ISI's report and a link to the report can be found below. This document is not a full Educational Quality with Focused Compliance Inspection Report on the academic and pastoral quality of the School like that of February 2020. Instead, inspectors this time were asked to focus solely on our pastoral and safeguarding policies and practices on the first visit, and on the School's handling of the specific safeguarding case mentioned above on the second. This means that no lessons or activities were observed, for instance, and no houses were visited.

I would recommend that you read the ISI report in detail. We were pleased to see that the report concludes that Repton met the majority of standards which were the focus of the initial inspection (pupil behaviour, bullying, health and safety, supervision of pupils, provision of information and complaints). Speaking personally, I attach particular weight to the assessment that pupils feel able to express concerns where they have any and are confident that action will be taken, that pupils speak of their respect for each other and their teachers, that incidents of bullying are taken seriously and dealt with effectively and that pupils feel safe and unthreatened whether on the school site, in boarding houses or on school trips.

But it is important that I draw your attention to the fact that there are some areas which ISI identified on the second visit as not meeting the standard and which require continued work from the School in order to become fully compliant with the regulations. Our focus now is ensuring that we do always assess risk rigorously and incorporate wide-ranging external reviews and targeted staff training into our safeguarding provision. It is important that the message that abuse can happen anywhere is embedded firmly within our thinking and planning. We accept ISI's report in full and we must learn from this judgement.

As you know, we pride ourselves on the pastoral care in place for your children and the standards of safeguarding we maintain in the daily life of the School. Work has already begun to address the areas noted by the Inspectors and we continue to build on the progress we have already made in establishing a safeguarding culture ever more alert to the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

You may recall from previous communications that we separated the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Head Pastoral roles last September (with Mrs Sally Lees new in post as Deputy Head Safeguarding) to give added emphasis to the central importance of Safeguarding. This term, as you will have read in the Headmaster's letter of 23 January, the School has further strengthened the safeguarding team with the appointment of Mr Neil Lowther as Director of Safeguarding Compliance. Mr Lowther's 20 years of experience within both the police - Adult and Child Protection and Safeguarding including operational and strategic lead responsibility for criminal investigations, Domestic Homicide and Adult and Child Safeguarding Reviews in a multi-agency environment – and Derbyshire Children's Services will, without doubt, be of great benefit to our community. Recently, Mr Lowther was the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Manager in the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership and is therefore well versed in all aspects of safeguarding children.

Because the School has been judged not to have met all the standards relating to this very important area of education it is the case, automatically, that the standard on leadership and management has not been met. This is because it is the task of the Governors and the School's senior leaders to ensure that all standards are met. The Repton community - senior leaders, classroom teachers and non-teaching staff – have been given additional and important safeguarding instruction from national safeguarding experts, Mrs Joanna Nicolas and Mrs Kate Richards, in order to strengthen further our understanding and commitment to keeping your children safe, which will be augmented through additional training this term and into the summer.

The Governors and the Senior Management Team remain dedicated to ensuring the highest standards in every aspect of school life and we will redouble our efforts to ensure this is the case. It is important however, to note two things: first, the management of the specified safeguarding case which was of concern to the ISI was transparent at all times, with the relevant statutory agencies and the police informed at every turn and consulted in shaping the School's decisions, and secondly, the fault on the School's part was not the absence of risk assessment but the need to approach risk assessment in a more robust manner.

I understand that many of you will have questions about these events and, whilst you will understand that I am not permitted to discuss the details, I will respond to any general concerns you might have.

[Link to ISI Additional Report](#)

Yours sincerely



Mark Shires
Chair of Governors