



2<sup>nd</sup> May 2018

Dear Parents,

## Managing the Anniversary of the Manchester Arena Attack

Last year the country was shocked and saddened by the terrorist attack at the Manchester Arena. Many young people were affected and as a community the aftermath of the attack was an extremely difficult time. As the anniversary of the attack is fast approaching, we are aware that this may create strong emotional reactions for a number of our young people.

Although we identified students that have been directly affected by the attack, and are continuing to work with external agencies to ensure that there is a discrete system in place to support and monitor them, there may be other students that may be affected that we are not currently aware of. We have raised this concern with staff but would also like parents to consider how we can collectively best support our young people.

For example, there may well be young people who were initially unaffected but may experience difficulties many months after the event. These reactions may become apparent for the first time around the anniversary and people may experience one or more of the following common reactions to having been involved in the attack:

- Troubling thoughts, memories and mental imagery
- Disturbed sleep and/or nightmares
- Disturbed appetite, with either a marked increase or decrease in feeling hungry
- Sadness, despondency and apathy
- Irritability and anger
- Guilt and shame
- Emotional numbness
- Increased watchfulness or “jumpiness”
- Increased anxiety
- Poor concentration

It is important to remember that this is a normal response and not something which should be responded to with undue concern or worry as they may well pass. It may be helpful around the anniversary for parents to consider and share the following advice:

*Outstanding education at the heart of the community*

- It is okay to feel upset, guilty, angry or worried around the time of the anniversary and to have an increase in trauma responses
- Neither ignore nor dwell on intrusive thoughts, images or memories, but rather just notice that they are there. Remember that they are just thoughts and allow them to pass of their own accord.
- Spend time with loved ones and close friends, resisting any temptation to isolate yourself from others.
- Keep active, by visiting the gym, going for a run or talking regular walks, ideally in the company of colleagues, friends or family
- Plan relaxing and comforting things to do and how you might manage if you are upset
- Keep in your usual routine
- Try a “digital detox” by switching off social media alerts on laptops, smartphones and tablets for at least some of the time around the anniversary

We have attached a copy of a leaflet produced by the ‘Manchester Resilience Hub’, the NHS service set up after the attack to support those affected, which details how support can be accessed by adults and young people. The Tarleton Academy website also contains information under the ‘Parents’ and ‘Students’ sections as well as signposting to relevant support.

For Year 7 students formerly from Tarleton Community Primary school, Mr Upton has extended an invitation to an information event for parents, which will be held at TCP at 6.00pm on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> May. The event will be run in partnership with the Manchester Resilience Hub and will focus on how parents can effectively support their children. We have forwarded a copy of the letter sent by Mr Upton to the parents of the former TCP students so they can decide if it would be beneficial to attend.

If you do have any concerns about your child please do not hesitate in the first instance to contact the pastoral team at Tarleton Academy (Miss N Daly for Years 7 & 8 and Mrs J Fairhurst for Years 9, 10 & 11).

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours Sincerely,

*M Cunniffe*

Mr M Cunniffe