



St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Executive Head: Mrs Clare Tickel

Head of School: Mr Simon Thomas

Diocese of Plymouth



5th May 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

As you will be aware from previous newsletters and safeguarding articles sent home, in the South West of the UK, **including all areas of Dorset**, there is a significant rise in county lines drug crime. County Lines is a police and cross county border initiative to track and prevent the large amount of young people, some as young as 8 years old, who are being criminally and sexually exploited by gangs. The reference '**County Line**' is the mobile phone line used to take the orders of drugs.

These gangs proactively recruit young people to drug run in and around the South West, as well as outside the area. The gangs and criminal networks use extreme violence and intimidation towards these young people, which result in these young people feeling trapped and scared. They also train these young people to become recruiters and future gang members. As well as criminal exploitation, young people, in particular girls, are also being sexually exploited by these gangs.

The charity Escapeline are providing workshops in schools designed to help young people gain greater awareness of grooming, recruitment, gangs, peer pressure, drugs and other dangers, including personal experience of an ex victim of county lines.

Understandably we do lots in school to raise awareness on staff training days throughout the year and now St Mary's have been fortunate to secure workshops, on May 23rd, for our children in Years 3,4 and 6 to further raise awareness; Year 5 have already recently experienced and benefitted from this workshop. We are delighted to be able to invite you, as parents and carers, in to school with the offer a workshop on the same day at 3:30pm.

We look forward to welcoming you in to school for this informative workshop, please sign in to school at the front office.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs C Tickel

Executive Headteacher