

Useful Websites



There are many overlaps between girls and boys and how they deal with emotions. However, in the area of friendships, boys and girls are often inclined to respond differently when things go wrong.

For boys and girls the issues are different; where girls struggle with friendship issues, boys are more likely to experience problems with poor motivation, poor self-expression, protecting themselves against loss of dignity and being the odd one out.

With this in mind St John's uses the 'Boys Speak Up' programme.

The 'Boys Speak Up' programme looks to address boy's issues in the following ways:

Anger

The things in life that make boys angry are often universal; Boys get angry at parents who they feel can be inclined to 'nag', teachers who they feel can be inclined to be unfair, other boys who make comments and remarks and siblings who invade privacy. Once the boys realise that they all get angry at the same issues, it makes them feel more integrated with their peers.

Therefore, our Boys Speak Up sessions involve getting boys to express their anger, using accurate words to describe their feelings. We start by asking boys to spend some time writing down what they are angry about in the secure and certain knowledge that as soon as the time is up they will fold their paper and put it in the shredder. Writing down your feelings is very different from talking about them and the fact that the paper is guaranteed to be destroyed allows the boys to vent fully in the extreme. The exercise is genuinely cathartic.

Restriction of Online Gaming

Auditing the amount of online gaming boys spend each week can reveal that in some cases, boys can spend upwards of 40 hours a week online. Reflecting this back to the boys is often enough to get them to change their habits.

Lifestyle Audit

Looking at lifestyle choices including sleep, food and exercise, can be an opportunity to find out which boys are behaving self-destructively and to encourage them to make better choices.

Banter

One of the most corrosive aspects of boy behaviour is banter. It must be acknowledged that banter is a normal part of young people's social interaction, but it can easily become inappropriate and hurtful. We discuss this openly with groups of boys and get them to reflect on how the language used in banter can have a negative effect.

Boys Speak Up is an approach; it is not a curriculum entity or an assessable course. We find that it helps to support the boys as they navigate their way through the senior school years.