

Our Ref: Safeguarding/PDE/LFo

3rd April 2025

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Re: Netflix 'Adolescence' – Safeguarding Information

We are in no doubt that many of you will already be familiar with the Netflix' recent success 'Adolescence'. The four-part series dramatises, in real time, the impact of knife-crime within a 'normal' family and school setting; delving into the mind-set of Incels* and how our children communicate.

Adolescence has effectively pulled back the curtain for every parent, guardian, educator and more, in relation to how young people may be communicating across social media platforms and their potential hidden language and use of emojis.

As a guide, we have extracted some of this information from recent press releases and have attached them for your reference.

We would stress that not all teens and young adults are either familiar with or using these symbols but, in light of the recent circulation through press and social media we felt it prudent to share these with you.

As always, if you have any concerns about your child/ren please do not hesitate to make contact with the school's safeguarding team.

Yours faithfully,



Mr P Dewes
Vice Principal
Designated Safeguarding Lead

* Incel is a term created from a blend of the words 'involuntary celibate' and describes someone, usually male, who is frustrated by their lack of sexual experiences. They are defined as 'heterosexual men who blame women and society for their lack of romantic success'. [Anti-Defamation League]

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A Guide : What can parents/guardians do?

- Get curious but not combative – Ask open questions, ‘I saw something about emojis and their meanings today – have you heard of this? Keep the conversation light.
- Create a judgement-free zone – If your child feels they will be punished for opening up, they just won’t. Make it clear you want to listen, not lecture.
- Decode together – Ask them to explain their digital world. What do their different symbols mean? Which influencers do they follow? Don’t assume – ask.
- Teach critical thinking – Help them to question online content. Why do you think some groups push this idea? Who benefits? Arm them with questions, not just rules.
- Monitor without spying – Open conversations work better than secret surveillance. Make checking their online spaces a normal part of parenting, not a crisis move.
- Be real about manipulation – Explain how toxic online groups groom young people by making them feel special, included or like they have ‘insider knowledge’.
- Build their offline confidence – The more they feel valued and confident in the real world, the less they’ll seek validation in dangerous online spaces.

Hidden Language of Emojis/Symbols

 **Red Pill** – “I see the truth.” Used in toxic male spaces to mean waking up to supposed hidden ‘truths’ about women and society, often linked to misogynistic ideologies.

 **Blue Pill** – Represents those who are “blind to the truth” or still believe in mainstream views about relationships and gender dynamics.

 **Dynamite Emoji** – An “exploding red pill,” meaning someone is a radicalised incel.

 **Kidney Bean** – A symbol linked to incel culture, sometimes mocking women.

 **100 Emoji** – Tied to the “80/20 rule,” the belief that 80% of women are only attracted to 20% of men.

 **Black Hole** – Used to express depression, hopelessness, or being sucked into negative online spaces.

 **Tornado** – Represents chaos or feeling overwhelmed, sometimes used to indicate mental distress.

 **Frog Emoji** – Associated with alt-right and extremist meme culture, often linked to Pepe the Frog, which has been co-opted by some toxic online groups.

 **Eagle** – A symbol of extreme nationalism, sometimes used in far-right online spaces.

 **Skull** – While often just slang for “that’s funny” or “I’m dead (from laughing),” in certain groups, it can signal darker themes like nihilism or self-harm.

 **Heart Colours** – Not just about love!

 = Love

 = Lust

 = “Are you interested?”

 = Interested but not in sex

 = “You’ll be okay”

Incel Culture

PARENT GUIDE



The recent **Netflix drama Adolescence** has highlighted the troubling rise of incel (involuntary celibate) communities and their influence on young people. As a parent, it is important to understand this online subculture, recognise warning signs, and engage in open conversations with your child. This guide explains incel ideology, key terms, signs to look out for, and conversation starters to help you support your child. You can find further support on our website.

What is an incel?



The term **incel** stands for 'involuntary celibate' and refers to men who believe they are unable to form romantic or sexual relationships despite wanting to. Some incel communities foster resentment towards women, blaming them for their perceived misfortune. These forums (often online) can promote misogyny, victimhood, and, in extreme cases, radicalisation.

Key Incel Terminology

Red Pill – From The Matrix, refers to 'waking up' to the 'truth' of gender dynamics, as incels perceive them.

Chad – An attractive, successful man who is desirable to all women.

Stacy – An attractive woman who is seen as prioritising men like Chad.

Becky – An average woman, often contrasted with a Stacy.

Femoid/Foid – A dehumanising term, implying women are inferior.

Black Pill – Belief that nothing changes with self improvement or effort.

80/20 Rule – A theory suggesting that 80% of women are attracted to 20% of men, fuels resentment.

Andrew Tate – A key promoter of incel ideology.

Signs to Look Out For:

- Low self-esteem
- Use of incel language
- Hostility towards women
- Isolation and secrecy
- Increased frustration & anger



Conversation Starters:

- What do you think makes a healthy relationship?
- Do you think it's fair to blame one group of people for personal difficulties?
- How do you decide whether something you read online is trustworthy?

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