



From Deputy Head Pastoral: Mark Hindley & Head of Wellbeing: Paul Gooding

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Dear Parents and Carers

### Andrew Tate

No doubt you will have heard of the recent arrest of the social media influencer, Andrew Tate. The purpose of us writing to parents and carers is to raise awareness of his influence on young people and to offer advice on how we can address this.

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#### Who is Andrew Tate?

Andrew Tate is a social media influencer who is particularly appealing to young men from age 11/12 upwards. As the Sunday Times magazine put it: "to his millions of young fans he is the epitome of manhood, success and wealth." His lures seem quite rational and reasonable initially - exercise, be positive, take control of your own destiny, work hard and you can buy fast cars and a glamorous lifestyle - but his opinions soon branch out into extremes of misogyny, prejudice, and statements such as "depression isn't real."

Do please listen to this recent BBC Sounds episode from **1hr 33mins to 1hr 43mins** as it helpfully sets the context for the culture that young men find themselves in today and why Andrew Tate has been so appealing to so many.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m001h3rb>

This is echoed in this article from the FT.

<https://on.ft.com/3XvCQTf>

We would also recommend the book "*Of boys and men*" if you want to take a deeper dive into some of the issues raised.

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Boys-Men-modern-struggling-matters-ebook/dp/B0932J3834>

#### What is the School's Approach?

Rest assured, at Abingdon our RSE (relationships and sex education) programme of study is geared up to tackle such misogynistic ideas but we need to continue to work with parents and carers to stay up to date in this important area and to continue to work together. Our aim is to communicate a positive narrative about being a human being. For example, we deliberately underpin our RSE provision by encouraging students to adopt a posture of being *kind* and

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*respectful* towards others, a theme that runs across all key stages and is tackled in an age-appropriate manner. We embed content on issues such as positive masculinity, healthy vs unhealthy relationships, consent, pornography. We hold up aspirational male figures whenever we can - for example by marking "International Men's Day" - and address difficult topics - such as challenging "rape culture" - both in RSE lessons as well as in workshops, tutor periods, section assemblies and lectures. A key strand in combating the ideology of Tate is to direct young people towards positive role models and in PSHCE lessons we have been highlighting the work of the Cardiff men's football team [HERE](#) as well as Marcus Rashford MBE [HERE](#). We recently had a 6th form lecture where we interviewed a professional boxer who is working with disadvantaged young people in north London, again highlighting the importance of a positive narrative of masculinity.

Last term, the Peer support leads produced an excellent presentation for students (the slides are attached [HERE](#)) to combat Tate's views in order to mark *International Men's Day*. We are also currently working on a joint student project with SHSK 6th form students to put together a series of podcasts and videos to be used in upcoming RSE/PSHCE lessons.

For more information please refer to our Relationships and Sex Education Policy [HERE](#). If you have any particular concerns about your child on these issues do please raise these with your child's Housemaster or Tutor in the first instance.

### **What should we do at home?**

As ever, the best advice we can give when addressing complex issues is to have open, frank, two way conversations with your children about these issues.

A real danger is to immediately stigmatise young men for finding Andrew Tate appealing. If the conversation starts laced with judgement then your child will be defensive, closed, and will continue to watch Andrew Tate, but just without you knowing, and without a different perspective being offered, they will feel "cancelled".

Therefore rather than starting: "Andrew Tate is appalling - why on earth do you watch this dreadful misogynist?", try to use open ended questions - "Andrew Tate seems to be everywhere, but I've never seen any of his stuff. What is he saying that is so appealing?" Hopefully that will start a conversation. Ask what he says that seems to make sense, and then discuss why he stirs such controversy. If your child feels that they are telling you info, and educating you about their world, that is a more powerful way to start a conversation than them feeling preached at and lectured, and at the moment a lot of young men feel the latter about Andrew Tate.

Hopefully this will open up topics that can then be talked through in a non-judgemental way.

Finally, we would add three very important pieces of advice:

1. It is important that your child hears a range of voices and perspectives. Having a more contemporary voice is also very influential - is there a cousin, a family friend, who is in their late teens/twenties who they look up to who would discuss these issues as well?
2. We would always advocate side by side conversations. Sitting opposite someone often feels confrontational to teenagers, so find those moments when you are side by side to raise these issues - in the car, on a walk, doing a chore together. They are much more likely to open up and tell you what they really think if they don't have to look you in the eye!
3. Your child is not too young to talk about difficult issues. An example is the recent news stories about pornography being accessed by 9 year olds. We know that Andrew Tate has been seen by all our pupils from the 1st Year upwards: social media means that children

are exposed to all of these issues at a young age, so do talk to them so that there are balanced, adult voices in their spheres of influence.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us at school. There is always your child's tutor and housemaster, or [mark.hindley@abingdon.org.uk](mailto:mark.hindley@abingdon.org.uk) (Deputy Head Pastoral) or [paul.gooding@abingdon.org.uk](mailto:paul.gooding@abingdon.org.uk) (Head of Wellbeing) or [andrew.crisp@abingdon.org.uk](mailto:andrew.crisp@abingdon.org.uk) (Head of Middle School).

**Please find below more detailed information/advice to help with the conversations at home.**

Yours sincerely,

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Deputy Head Pastoral

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### **Appendix: useful stimulus materials for parents and carers**

Here is some further information, from "[Bold Voices](#)", to help parents and carers in working through this issue with their child:

*Tate models himself as the 'alternative to woke culture' - it's important to not engage with this 'us vs. them' discourse, where challenges to sexism and misogyny are perceived as a threat to masculinity. Instead, we want to create a space where we can critically discuss these issues without anyone feeling as though they're going to be 'cancelled' or having to double down on their views to defend themselves.*

### **Tips for conversations at home**

- *Body language and tone - keep the discussion light, casual and friendly. Consider changing the space and change your body language (foster a sense of equality).*
- *Try striking up the conversation in a space without direct eye contact, when driving, walking the dog or watching TV to avoid feelings of confrontation.*
- *Centre empathy and challenge - all views are welcome but we must all be open to being challenged.*
- *Don't stoke a cancel culture.*
- *Avoid the "bad apple" view and move towards collective responsibility.*
- *Little and often - less intense, less awkward, less pressure!*
- *Come back to this topic: this is a stimulus and can be used as a template for how to have and continue these conversations into the future.*
- *Discuss healthy alternatives to current role models and narratives around masculinity.*
- *Be proactive, not reactive - bringing up the conversation organically rather than in reaction to a comment or event will set the tone as being objective and minimise defensiveness.*
- *Don't panic or react with shock - prepare yourself emotionally - it might be shocking or enraging to hear some views coming from teenagers, however reacting with shock or anger can shut down conversation.*
- *No right or wrong narratives - inspire agency by offering information and letting them think about it critically, setting up the space as a conversation and not a debate.*
- *Don't ban social media - this misses the fact that social media is a vehicle and not a root cause.*
- *Name It*

- Explain concepts like misogyny, call out homophobia etc.
- Situate the issue in a wider culture
  - Where else do we see views like this?
  - What are the consequences of these views being so pervasive?
- Ask Questions (with open answers)
  - Have you heard of him?
  - What do you think?
  - What do your friends think?
- Address the connection between language and action
- Leave the conversation open
- This conversation should be had many times over... ask more questions, bring it up again, allow space for confusion, reflection, and changing minds.
- **Model Empathy** Weigh up different perspectives, consider how people may feel about certain statements or views.
- **Model Critical Thinking** "I can see that he's appealing in some ways, he makes lots of money, but have you thought about the ways in which he's harmful? What is the downside of the expectation that men should make lots of money?"

### **Other questions to ask:**

- What could be negative about aspiring to make lots of money, date lots of women, never feel emotions?
- Have you heard of misogyny before?
- Where else are we seeing messages like these? Think about media and pop culture.
- How does it make you feel?
- How do you think it makes other people feel?
- Is there a chance someone hearing these messages would take them more literally than you?
- Does that change how you feel about it?

### **Background information and quotes from Andrew Tate**

\*Warning symbol next to quotations which are especially explicit. (indicated by \*)

"The masculine perspective is you have to understand that life is war. It's a war for the female you want. It's a war for the car you want. It's a war for the money you want. It's a war for the status. Masculine life is war. If you're a man who doesn't view life as war, you're going to lose. Society's expectations of men is much higher than the societal expectations of females."

"The hallmark of a real man is controlling himself, controlling his emotions, and acting appropriately regardless of how he feels."

"I have everything every man has ever dreamed of. I got a big mansion, I got super cars, I can live anywhere I want, I got unlimited women, I go where I want... I do anything I want all the time. So, I'm an amazing role model."

\*\* "Females are the ultimate status symbol... People think I'm running around with these h\*es because I like sex. That's nothing to do with the reason why I'm running around with these b\*tches. I got these b\*tches just so everyone knows who the don is."

"I think the women belong to the man."

"Depression isn't real."

*\*\* "It's bang out the machete, boom in her face, and grip her by the neck. Shut up b\*tch." "[I am] absolutely a misogynist."*

*"I'm a realist and when you're a realist you're sexist. There's no way you can be rooted in reality and not be sexist."*

*"[Women are] intrinsically lazy."*

*"[There is] no such thing as an independent female."*

*"If I have responsibility over her, then I must have a degree of authority [...] You can't be responsible for a dog if it doesn't obey you."*