Partner Briefing
Emerging Online Trend: "School Wars / Red vs Blue"

Purpose of this Briefing

To ensure all staff are aware of an emerging social-media trend encouraging group-based violence between pupils. This briefing outlines key risks, indicators and recommended actions.

Summary of the Trend

A harmful online trend known as *"School Wars"* or *"Red vs Blue"* has begun circulating on platforms such as TikTok, Snapchat and Instagram. Children are encouraged to align with a colour "team" and engage in physical attacks on pupils from the opposing group. Posts often include gang-style imagery, lists of schools and instructions for taking part.

The trend promotes:
- Encouraging physical assaults ("jumping" pupils).
- Use of everyday school items (compasses, scissors, rulers) as improvised weapons.
- Recording and sharing harmful incidents.
- A points-based scoring system (e.g., points for punching, chasing, or stabbing-related content).

These features significantly increase the risk of violence, weapon-enabled harm, peer-on-peer abuse and escalation.

What Staff Should Look Out For

Staff should remain alert to the following early warning signs:
- Pupils discussing "red vs blue", "sides", or scoring systems.
- Increased tensions between groups of pupils.
- Pupils showing or sharing violent online content.
- Sudden changes in arrival/departure behaviour due to fear or peer pressure.
- Evidence of low-level physical confrontations beginning to escalate.

Any of these should be treated as **potential safeguarding concerns**.

Immediate Actions for Staff

- Report concerns promptly via the school's safeguarding procedures.
- Do not investigate independently – pass concerns to the DSL team.
- Monitor pupil interactions during transition times, breaks and after school.
- Challenge harmful narratives calmly and factually when they arise.
- Ensure pupils know who they can speak to if they feel unsafe.

Guidance for DSLs and Senior Leaders

- Review any emerging patterns within behaviour logs or online-safety reports.
- Maintain oversight of any pupil-group dynamics linked to this trend.
- Consider temporarily increasing supervision at known gathering points.

- Communicate with parents/carers as appropriate, offering reassurance and promoting safe online behaviour.
- Liaise with police or safeguarding partners if intelligence suggests risk of organised harm.

Key Safeguarding Messages for Pupils

- Online "trends" can create real-world harm.
- Carrying or using weapons is dangerous and illegal.
- Filming violence is not harmless entertainment—sharing harmful content can constitute an offence.
- Speak to a trusted adult if worried about personal safety, pressure to join a "side", or exposure to violent content.

Whole-School Preventative Approach

- Reinforce online-safety education, critical thinking and responsible digital behaviour.
- Integrate messages into PSHE/RSHE, tutor time and assemblies.
- Encourage open conversations about peer influence and online manipulation.
- Promote safe reporting pathways and visibly role-model calm, de-escalatory communication.

Staff Key Takeaways

- Treat involvement (viewing, sharing, encouraging or participating) as a safeguarding issue, not just behaviour.
- Prioritise the safety and wellbeing of pupils who may feel threatened or intimidated.
- Share any concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the earliest opportunity.
- Stay vigilant—online trends can escalate quickly and unpredictably.

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