

PRESS RELEASE

Victoria College Respond to Safeguarding Partnership Board Report

The Victoria College community warmly welcome the publication of the report by the Safeguarding Partnership Board, which was commissioned to examine the handling of allegations of misogyny, sexism and sexual abuse raised by older students at Jersey College for Girls in early 2021. At Victoria College we take any such allegations incredibly seriously and we wholeheartedly support students speaking up against, and thereby shining a light on, such language and behaviour. Whilst the report deals with the responses of the Colleges to the anonymous testimonies, it is important to remember what caused these students to come forward. Society must do better, and it is this change that has led to much positive work in the last 6 months, with much more to come.

We are proud that the Victoria College leadership team, wider staff body and representatives from our student community have been recognised in the SPB Report to have responded to these allegations in the manner we did, and that it has been the highest of priorities for our College as we seek to embed sustainable changes. The report also highlights ‘the positive and proactive joint working between JCG and VCJ’ (SPB report) and we remain committed to working in close partnership with not only JCG, but our associated Preparatory Schools, to help tackle this issue. A number of key learning points were made, which will undoubtedly improve policy and provision on this issue for all Island schools.

Gareth Hughes, Headteacher at Victoria College, stated *‘The new Leadership Group in post at Victoria College have begun in earnest a process of embedding a culture of kindness through clear and consistent behavioural policies, a strong focus on parental and student engagement, and a zero-tolerance approach to any form of discriminatory or intimidatory behaviour or language. So much work has been done since March 2021 on this issue and I am hugely encouraged by the positive response from our community. We support the vast majority of the students at our College in their strongly-held view that such behaviour and language is not welcome, and that all children and young people have the right to be safe, to learn, to be themselves and to be happy. Working closely with JCG and other schools to help ensure our students feel confident in our actions and support on what is a crucial issue, remains the highest of priorities.’*

Elise Falla, Head of Student Voice at Victoria College, stated *‘As a UN Rights Respecting School, the safety and wellbeing of JCG and VCJ students is our absolute priority. VCJ unanimously chose Article 2, the right to be free from discrimination, as part of our school charter in January 2021. Therefore, when we heard the allegations many of our students were shocked, saddened and angry. The response of our student leaders was mature, and we are proud of the way that they stepped up to hold uncomfortable and difficult conversations with their peers at JCG. All of our student leaders at JCG and VCJ should be commended for their willingness to confront this challenging societal problem and their hard work in creating a kinder, more inclusive culture.’*

Brian Watt, Chair of Governors stated, *'I am delighted and very encouraged by the understanding and engagement of the Victoria College students in a vital process of cultural change following this review. Fully supported by the new Victoria College Leadership Group, they are embracing a new culture of kindness, with no tolerance of discriminatory behaviour or language. Students and staff are also seeking parental engagement and are working with other schools to help address the very important issues highlighted in the report.'*

The SPB Report states, 'The issues raised through the testimonies had implications for the culture in schools, not only at JCG and VCJ, but for all schools in Jersey'. As we have sadly seen in the national and international media in recent months, and in the recent Ofsted 2021 review into the issue, misogyny and sexual harassment is a prevalent issue in schools and in wider society. We at Victoria College are proud to be at the forefront of tackling these issues, but we recognise that resolving this issue will require a long-term commitment to positive cultural change from all stakeholder groups, not just those in schools. We hope that the positive actions of our schools, working in partnership, demonstrates a collective commitment to such a change and that these provide helpful learning to other Island schools and beyond

A full overview of Victoria College's actions to help effect these cultural changes is available on our website under the Secondary School tab – Culture of Kindness.

Please see a link to the [Jersey Safeguarding Partnership Board](#), where the SPB Report will be available from 0700 on Tuesday 19 October.

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Note to Editors

Our mission at Victoria College is to nurture well-rounded, resilient young men who have the skills, attitudes and values to be successful and make a positive contribution to society.

Since we opened in 1852, we have been providing the highest standard of education to Jersey's boys and young men. We are known for our consistently excellent academic results - but they are just part of the story. At Victoria College, boys thrive and grow in many ways. Ours is a stimulating, friendly environment where they can study to the highest level and be taught by experts.

Beyond the classroom, our rich programme of co-curricular activities include strong sports teams, music programmes and the popular Combined Cadet Force, offer our boys a wide range of exciting ways to join in, belong and challenge themselves.

On average, the College has approximately 660 students, of which 75% come from our Preparatory school. We also welcome students into our secondary school and Sixth Form from all other local schools or from abroad.

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