

Summer Term 1 Newsletter

Safeguarding, everyone's responsibility

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Incel Culture – Parent's 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.

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?
- Is it fair to blame one group of people for our personal difficulties?
- How do you decide whether something you read online is trustworthy?

Manosphere

The 'Manosphere' is a loose collection of online anti-feminist, misogynistic, pro-men communities, this includes Incels.

It also includes:

Men going their own way (MGTOW): who believe in 'pilling', male separatism and that society has been 'corrupted' by feminism

Men's rights activists (MRA): some of whom consider men to be 'victims of feminism'

Pick-up artists (PUA): who believe success with women can be achieved through methods of psychological manipulation.

On the next pages find a guide to the hidden language of emojis used online and how to approach this with your child.



Understanding the Hidden Language of Emojis

Netflix's *Adolescence* has recently shone a light on something crucial for parents, educators, and mentors — a coded language young people are using online that often goes unnoticed by adults. What seems like harmless emojis may actually have deeper, and sometimes concerning, meanings.

Here's what to watch out for:

-  **Red Pill** – Used in certain male-dominated online spaces to signal a belief that they've 'woken up' to hidden truths about women and society. Often linked to toxic and misogynistic ideas.
 -  **Blue Pill** – Represents someone who's considered 'blind to the truth,' still believing in mainstream ideas about relationships and gender.
 -  **Dynamite** – Known as an "exploding red pill," this symbol points to someone who's become even more extreme in these views, often tied to incel culture.
 -  **Kidney Bean** – Another emoji linked to incel groups, sometimes used mockingly towards women.
 -  **100 Emoji** – Connected to the so-called "80/20 rule," the belief that 80% of women are only attracted to 20% of men.
 -  **Black Hole** – Used to express feelings of depression, hopelessness, or being drawn into negative online spaces.
 -  **Tornado** – Represents chaos or feeling overwhelmed, sometimes tied to mental distress.
 -  **Frog** – Often linked to extremist meme culture and, in some cases, connected to the controversial Pepe the Frog symbol.
 -  **Eagle** – Frequently seen in far-right spaces as a symbol of extreme nationalism.
 -  **Skull** – While often slang for "I'm dead" (meaning something is funny), in some contexts it can hint at nihilism or darker themes like self-harm.
-      **Heart Colours** – These aren't always just about love!
-  = Love
 -  = Lust
 -  = "Are you interested?"
 -  = Interested, but not romantically or sexually
 -  = "You'll be okay"

How Can Parents Stay Informed and Support Their Children?

1 Start with Curiosity, Not Conflict

Instead of jumping to conclusions, ask open questions: “Hey, I read something about emoji meanings changing. Have you heard of this?” Keeping the tone casual can help build trust.

2 Create a Safe Space for Conversation

If your child feels they’ll be punished for sharing, they’re less likely to open up. Make it clear you’re there to listen, not just to criticise.

3 Learn Together

Ask your child to explain their digital world — what certain symbols mean, who they follow online, and why. Understanding their perspective can help you connect.

4 Encourage Critical Thinking

Help your child question what they see online. Ask things like: “Why do you think this group believes that?” or “Who’s benefiting from this message?” This empowers them to think critically rather than just following trends.

5 Open Dialogue Over Secret Surveillance

Instead of quietly monitoring their activity, make online check-ins a normal part of family life. This builds trust and keeps conversations flowing.

6 Talk About Manipulation

Explain how some toxic groups use flattery or ‘insider knowledge’ to make young people feel special or important.

7 Boost Real-World Confidence

Kids who feel valued, supported, and confident in everyday life are less likely to seek validation in dangerous online spaces.

The digital world moves fast, but staying informed and maintaining open conversations can make all the difference.