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Schools' Forum held at Godolphin School as part of UN campaign

2nd December

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Schools' Forum held at Godolphin School as part of UN campaign



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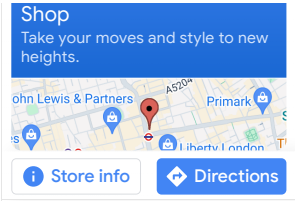
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A SPECIAL schools' forum was held this week with the aim of stimulating conversations about action to stop violence against women

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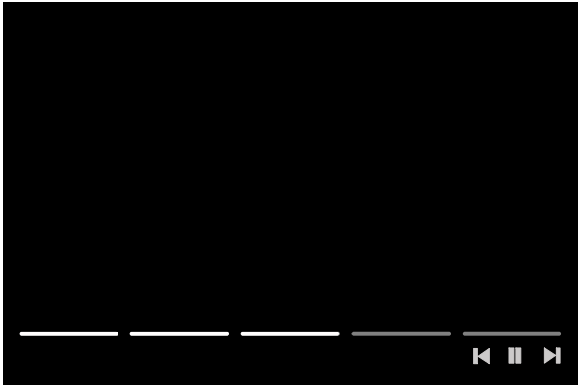
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Salisbury Soroptimists has been working with Safer and Supportive Salisbury on its project Making our City Safer including action on stopping violence against women.

The Schools' Forum held on November 29, at Godolphin School was another part of this project, engaging local young people in dialogue about what action can be taken to prevent violence against women.

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It is part of the United Nations' 16 days of activism known as Orange the World.

Young ambassadors from five schools attended and will take back to their school's ideas and conversations from the afternoon.



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Chris Green (Image: Salisbury Soroptimists)

The afternoon began with Chris Green, who founded White Ribbon campaign encouraging men to take a pledge: "Never to perpetrate, never excuse and never to stay silent about violence against women."



He has now founded Male Allies Challenging Sexism (MACS) to continue the work.

The second part was looking at behaviours and whether they should be part of a healthy relationship or not. This took the form of pinning the examples on a washing line, grading them from healthy to unhealthy with a 'depends' grey area in the middle.

The third talk was about the toxic effects of pornography, which is accessed either intentionally or accidentally by more than half of teenagers, rising to 80 per cent among 16-17 year olds.

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Pornography affects relationships in many ways, often making real sex seem less enjoyable, suggesting what is filmed is normal, and causing doubts of self-image.

To finish the afternoon a film by L'Oreal on bystander training was shown. This encourages people to be active and not stand by while unacceptable behaviours are taking place.

After the film the young ambassadors were invited to meet various organisations involved in keeping people safe, which included MACS, Alice Ruggles Trust, FearLess, Wiltshire Constabulary, Street Pastors and STARS.



The aim of the forum was to stimulate conversations about action to stop violence against women. It's not a just women's issue, men are the perpetrators and they can do much to help.

They can start by taking the White Ribbon pledge and joining others such as the Welsh Rugby team, Fulham and Wolves Football Clubs and other individuals who have already done so. You can get accreditation for your workplace or sports team as well as taking the pledge as an individual. There are 60,000 men who have taken the pledge in UK, but shouldn't there be many more? Can you be one of them?

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