Dear *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

I’m writing to you as a parent of one of your students in Year\_\_\_, my need to contact you being prompted by the advertisement for a diet brandwhich is displayed prominently outside of the school. The positioning of the poster may well suggest to some that the school is promoting that organisation or, at least, giving tacit approval to its message which, to me, is rather alarming.

There is much recent, respectable research suggesting that an increasing number of young people are becoming so anxious about their appearance and feeling insecure about their body, that it’s a serious threat to their well-being and health. Studies show body image issues are now impacting children as young as three years old, and recent data shows the number of pre-teens diagnosed with anorexia has doubled in the last decade.

Of course I support the need to educate our children about the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and to give them the desire and ability to make healthy choices, which is why it’s so important to create an environment free from body ideals and potentially negative messages promoting one type of body over another.

There’s a persuasive body of evidence to show that children who feel good about their body (regardless of what it looks like) are more likely to engage in health promoting behaviours, and it’s these behaviours we should encourage rather than focusing on using weight as a measurement of health.

Please do not be offended by this letter as I do not doubt that the school also has the well-being of its pupils as its highest priority. I must, however, register my concern and offer a different perspective.

You may find the resources and workshops offered by The Body Happy Organisation CIC useful in learning more about this issue, which is an important subject when it comes to both wellbeing and safeguarding, as well as the empowerment of young people. They are a social enterprise dedicated to promoting positive body image for children and create workshops and resources for teachers and parents. You can find out more at www.bodyhappyorg.com.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Yours sincerely

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