

BT/nd

January 2017

STUDENT WELLBEING UPDATE

Dear Parents & Carers,

As we approach the end of Term I thought I would write to you and let you know about the work we have been doing in school to support students as well as some of our future plans. We take student wellbeing very seriously and lots of work is underway right across the school to support all students to thrive and learn effectively. This letter gives an update of just some of the areas of focus.

Parent Talk Workshops

Parentalk got off to a great start this week. This is a six week course for parents of teenagers that's been organised by a group of past and present parents, using the popular [Care for the Family](#) resources. 125 parents from Cherwell, Cheney and Wheatley Park schools booked to come, and there were others on a waiting list. Parents really value meeting up to talk over some of the challenges of the teenage years. There were many good conversations during the evening and lots of laughter, as well as the excellent video material. This is the second time the course has been run and we hope it will become a regular feature of the school year.

Pornography & Online Safety

CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection) tells us that nowadays most teenagers (and many younger children) have watched pornography, seen it without wanting to, or been affected by it indirectly. **The Naked Truth** is an organisation which gives parental guidance on phones, filters and digital dangers. The Parent Talk team have arranged for them to run a workshop here at Cherwell on **Tuesday 28th March** for parents and carers of Cherwell, Wolvercote and Cutteslowe schools. As well as equipping us to support children who are exposed to pornography they will also teach us practical ways to keep our youngsters safe online generally.

Mobile Data

With more and more young people owning smart phones these days we have noticed that a few are using data roaming to circumnavigate our WiFi restrictions. This does pose a safeguarding concern and I would be really grateful if you could support us in asking them not to do this during the school day or by applying parental restrictions to stop them from doing so.

Student Safety

We have been continuing to give safety messages to students in assembly & tutor time, our advice is intended to be practical and sensible and is particularly relevant in these darker winter months. As they grow more independent safety is so important and we must not assume that they have thought everything through. We will keep giving appropriate and relevant safety messages throughout the year. The link below shows you what we have been talking to them about recently.

<https://www.cherwell.oxon.sch.uk/perch/resources/studentsafety.pdf>

Drug use and the prevention of addiction

Mandy Saligari is a former addict, now a therapist. She has been on T.V. recently giving therapy to celebrities and is a former pupil of St Edwards School. She is a forthright and dynamic public speaker and is passionate about helping people to live healthy addiction free lives. Mandy is a highly respected as an established expert who has considerable experience in giving talks at schools on early intervention, addiction, coping with emotions and self-esteem. Mandy is coming to Cherwell on **Monday 20th March** to speak to Yr10 and also do an evening presentation for any parents or Sixth form students who would like to attend. I will write to you separately about this after half term.

Year 8 Self-harm Workshop

Self-harm is an unfortunate reaction to pressure for some young people. Pegasus Theatre are returning to Cherwell on **Wednesday March 8th** perform a play called ***Under My Skin*** designed to raise awareness of this issue and provide alternative methods of coping with their worries. The performance will be followed by a Question and Answer session attended by our school counsellor and school Health Nurse. Students will also receive follow up lessons in their Social Wellbeing lessons. If you are worried that your son or daughter may be harming themselves, please do contact us at school as we will be able to help. I have included two links here that provide useful information for parents and carers to help you keep your children safe.

<http://www.getconnected.org.uk/mental-health/self-harm/?qclid=CMGX-vDLmswCFUORGwodu8ICIA>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/self-harm/>

Mental Health

I am very pleased to share with you the news that we are able to have a PCamhs (Primary Children & Adolescent Mental Health) counsellor Bev Ainslie working with our Pastoral and Counselling teams on site each week for half a day.

Some of our Year 11 students are taking part in Mindfulness sessions every fortnight to help them cope with exam stress and similarly Sixth formers are regularly attending Tai Chi.

In order to broaden the support available to young people and, crucially, to address mental health issues before they become too severe, we are planning to train staff in Mental Health First Aid which teaches people how to identify, understand and help a person who may be

developing a mental health issue. In the same way as we learn physical first aid, Mental Health First Aid teaches how to recognise those crucial warning signs of mental ill health. More to follow on this soon.

Wellbeing Workshops

I am working with Jo Bowd our School Health Nurse and Matt Barnard (Lead Counsellor) to organise Wellbeing workshops for Y9 and Y10 focussing on Risky behaviour and the Teenage brain, Sex and Relationships Education, Mental Health and Drugs and alcohol awareness. These will take place later this year and will be facilitated by colleagues from the Fire service, The Police and School Health Nurses from across the city. We will also aim to include a Yoga, Tai Chi or Mindfulness session into these days in order to introduce them to students as excellent ways of managing stress levels.

Considerate Students

We are lucky to have such fantastic students and relationships continue to be really positive between all members of the community. Behaviour in between lessons and at lunch and break tends to be good and our student body is largely harmonious. We rarely have big 'incidents', students get into lessons quickly and there is a purposeful, busy feel. We have been working with students to sharpen up on some areas:

- To walk on the left rather than down the middle of corridors
- To avoid pushing and shoving especially in crowded areas where it can be intimidating to others
- To stop the casual use of bad language even between friends – if they wouldn't say these words in front of you – don't say them anywhere!
- To line up quietly outside classrooms.
- To put their litter in the bins

We are ambitious for them in all aspects of their lives and are taking the opportunity to talk about our social responsibility to conduct ourselves properly in public and communal spaces and to understand the impact our behaviour can have on others. We are exploring this idea in Drama and Social Wellbeing lessons as well as tutor time and assemblies. As always, we would be really grateful if you could continue these discussions at home.

I hope that you have found this update useful and that you will contact me if you have any comments, questions or ideas. More information about the E-Safety evening in March will follow soon.

Best wishes

Barb Timms

(DEPUTY HEADTEACHER)