Pershore High Safeguarding Newsletter

February 2024

We reach the half way through the year point and things are ramping up for the exam groups. Help and advice is available for exam students in school or see the back page of this newsletter. There are also important messages about vaping shared—a topic we know many of you are concerned about. Included is an update of what has been going on in school this term as well as some great activities and opportunities available for all. Finally the Police have asked that we highlight the law around E-Scooters - see this information, plus updates on further support from the Police.

Always remember we are here to help —just get in touch.

Who is on the Pershore High Safeguarding Team?

The Designated Safeguarding Lead: Fiona Lovecy

Email: fl@pershore.worcs.sch.uk

Who else can help?

Please talk to or email your child's tutor, pastoral manager or Head of House. They will be able to help or seek further advice for you.

Don't forget the 6th Form Team! Dedicated support for pastoral, social and emotional needs, plus academic help from Zoe Starkey, 6th Form Lead and Cassie Waters 6th form Deputy Lead.

Vaping

All schools are recognising the challenges in the growth of the number of children vaping in schools. Pershore High has a policy of a total ban on smoking and vaping in school grounds and buildings. Vaping is illegal for under 18s and we also are concerned about the damage to the health of children. We have a ladder of sanctions for vaping offences all the way to a risk of exclusion. Staff have the right to search a student they believe has a vape. Students have also shared that many of them dislike other students vaping and want it to stop.

We recognise that it is on the rise. A recent survey by the anti-smoking group ASH found that 20.5% of children aged 11 to 17 had tried vaping, up from 15.8% in 2022. We ask that parents support the school in ensuring their children do not bring vapes to school or use them and report any concerns to House teams so they can be followed up directly. If you are aware of shops selling vapes to children you are encouraged to let school know or report it yourself to Worcestershire Trading Standards. We are particularly concerned about illegal foreign vapes which have been proven to have poisonous substances in them. The student council is developing a campaign which they are launching in assembly after half term. Staff have been deployed to increase the monitoring of toilets during breaktimes to enforce the school policy on this matter.

HARMONY AT HOME

Worcestershire County Council have a whole range of resources available to support families that are experiencing conflict. Issues within families are known risk factors– for poor child outcomes, especially when it is ongoing. The resources will help also with conflict with children, providing tips and advice and plenty of useful signposting to other sources of support. Addressing difficulties early on can prevent escalation.

There is also a section for parents that are co-parenting for separated parents.

Click here for the Harmony at Home Page

Relate Worcestershire also provide a mediation service.

In addition services are provided by the Family Mediation Service.

What's been happening in school?

- We are currently undertaking a repeat of the safety survey from last year. This helps to inform our community partners as well as the school about student's feelings about safety in school and the community and leads to actions to improve students security
- Over 80 Year 9's have benefitted from the Blues Programme, run by Action for Children, developing wellbeing approaches for themselves
- Sian Gray, our Youth Mentor, has developed a gym project, supporting youngsters in using the gym at Pershore Leisure Centre
- For the first time since before COVID we have been delighted to welcome back the Be You project run by Steve Boycott, an inspirational leader.
- All students have recently had assemblies and activities reinforcing key messages on reducing sexual harassment in school and also developing awareness of the risks of sexting and sexual violence.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR CHILD

SOLIHULL APPROACH

Don't forget you have free access to a series of excellent, well—recognised parenting courses, online. Easy to access and meeting a range of needs—including understanding the teenage brain!

Click here. Password PARENTSROCK

West Mercia POLICE

Would you like to know more about the local Safer Neighbourhood Team's activities and their work in the local community? You can easily have more information on what is going on in Pershore and the area by signing up to the Neighbourhood Matters website which provide regular alerts to events, advice and Police action on a Community Level.

Use this link to find out more.

You may have also heard of the Police notification service - Street Safe. Use the link to report any concerns you have anonymously. This may include vandalism, poorly lit streets, abandoned buildings or someone following you or verbally abusing you.

NEIGHBOURHOOD MATTERS

Sharing of Nudes or Semi-nudes (sexting)

There are still regular incidents of our young people sharing images. In some cases and for many reasons these images may be shared which causes great distress and worry and even longer term mental health difficulties. Advice is available from Internet Matters on how to protect your child from this click here. Also be aware that Childline / IWF have the Report Remove which is a free tool that allows children to report nude or sexual images and videos of themselves that they think might have been shared online, to see if they can be removed from the internet.
We recommend parents monitoring phones regularly.

Community Activities

Wednesday: 5:30pm-6:30pm, Dodgeball (School Years, 5,6,7)
Wednesday: 6:30pm-7:30pm, Dodgeball (School Years, 8,9,10,11)
Wednesday: 7:30pm-8:30pm, Small Sided Basketball (School Years, 8,9,10,11)
Friday: 6pm-7pm, Girls Football (School Years, 7,8,9)
Friday: 8pm-9pm, Boys Football (School Years, 9,10,11)

Quick sign up at: www.pandesports.com

P&E SPORTS
www.pandesports.com

Half Term Kids Eat Free!

Tesco Café—kids eat free when a paying adult presents their Clubcard and spends 60p in the café. (During half term)

Greene King Pubs—Kids eat free all day with the purchase of an adult meal. Monday to Friday only.

Asda Café—Kids eat for £1 all day, every day. Mo adult spend required. Plus free baby food pouches for children under 18 months old with any purchase. (All year)

Morrisons—Kids eat free all day, every day with every adult meal over £4.49. This is all year.

Beefeater—Two children get free breakfast for one paying adult.

Brewer's Fayre—up to 2 kids (under 16) eat free, unlimited breakfast with the purchase of any adult's breakfast.

Dobbies—For every purchase of an adult breakfast or lunch kids eat free. Every day.

More offers: Click here

Be Healthy

A few thoughts on the use of sugar. We have a number of students that bring an excessive sweets into school, plus eating sugar ladened food for lunch or snacks.

The daily recommended amount for an 11 year old is 7 cubes or 30 grams. The effects of too much sugar on children:

- **Lead to a build up of harmful fat in the body**
- **The fat can cause weight gain and serious diseases like type 2 diabetes, heart disease and some cancers.**
- **It can lead to painful tooth decay—plus it can be a challenge to get a dental appointment!**

A reminder that sugar can also affect the behaviour of some children and can lower concentration - not great on a daily basis in school!

Be Safe

Pershore High School has been asked to remind parents about their campaign against electric scooters. This campaign is in reaction to community concerns about dangerous use of E-Scooters.

The law is clear:

- E-Scooters are illegal to use on roads, pavements, cycle lanes and pedestrian only areas.
- The only place they can legally be used is on private land.
- A small number of cities and towns have a legal, rental scheme running for E-Scooters as a trial.

If caught using one a £300 fine can be issued. They may also be seized by the police. E-Scooters are class as motor vehicles under the Road Traffic Act 1988. They would need users to have a licence, insurance and tax, as well as a number plate and lights to be used legally,

More information is available on this Government Guide Sheet.

Benefits, debts, budgeting and welfare support

Managing finances such as paying bills and planning for the future can be difficult.

Benefits: It's often difficult to know which benefits you're entitled to. The Money Advice Service has a list of all the different types of benefits to help you to find out if you could be claiming something. There is also advice on what to do if your benefit changes and where to go and get help and advice about benefits at the Department of Work and Pensions.

Budgeting: Managing your money through a budget is a good way to make sure you don't go into debt and make your pounds go further. Money Helper Service has lots of advice and budget templates to help you draw up a budget that works for you.

Struggling to pay your **Council Tax?** Apply online for Council Tax Support

Need to apply for **Free School Meals?** Click here

Domestic Abuse Help

It is known that incidents of domestic abuse can increase by 38% over the holidays—please seek help if you need it:

Women's Aid 24hr Helpline 0800 980 3331 Male Domestic Abuse Helpline 24hr 0800 014 9082

Exam Season

12 TIPS TO BEAT EXAM STRESS

1 Have a Routine
Knowing what you're doing every day will make it easier

2 Take Regular Breaks
Breaks help reduce fatigue & retain information, take 2 minutes to stretch or 20 minutes to nap, it can make a big difference

3 Drink Water
Keep hydrated to avoid tiredness & keep away from sugary & energy drinks

4 Do Something You Like
Take a little time for your hobby, play your instrument, play football, read your favourite book, watch your weekly programme

5 Exercise Regularly
Can help you refocus & improve mood, a 15 minute walk or run in a green environment can help you relax

6 Eat & Sleep Well
Eat regularly & avoid too much sugar. Stop revising at least half an hour before bedtime & try to get at least 8 hours sleep. A good night's sleep improves learning & memory

7 Meditate & Breathe
Every morning close your eyes & use 5-10 minutes to do breathing exercises. Focus on inhaling and exhaling to avoid stressful thoughts, it will come easier with practice

8 Be Realistic
It's hard to concentrate effectively for more than 45–50 minutes. Don't cram your plan with too many topics, you'll feel disappointed when you aren't able to cover everything

9 Be Positive
It can help with better mental health & performance. Imagine an Olympic athlete & how much self-belief they need to compete. A portion of that could make a difference

10 Talk About It
If it's getting too much, talk to a friend, your parents, a teacher, don't keep it in. Talk to friends & teachers about tough topics. If you want to speak to someone independent about your stress contact ChildLine.

11 The Night Before
Lay out your uniform & everything you need for the exam the night before. Sleep early to wake up fresh the next day. Eat a good breakfast & smash it!

12 Acceptance
Stop thinking about finished exams as there is nothing you can do about them. It's not the end of the world if you've not done as well as you wanted. There are always solutions. You are more than just an exam grade

One last tip - try not to get too distracted by your phone, work in some time to check social media if you have to but don't count it as a break.

GOOD LUCK!

Being Prepared and Exam Support

As exam season approaches we are aware students are working very hard to revise and prepare. Preparation is about a healthy balance of school work and relaxing or exercise, not forgetting plenty of sleep! We hope this guide provides some pointers.

We will also continue to provide help and support sessions in school including exam stress guidance. Some anxiety is normal and acceptable but if you are concerned about burnout or there is excessive anxiety (which may not be apparent in school) please contact the relevant Head of House or the 6th Form Team.