

PURCELL PARENT NEWSLETTER

6th October 2023

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Our usual pattern for newsletters is that we average about one every half term. However, there seems to be a lot to communicate this half term, so here's another, largely focussed on wellbeing related matters.

Let's All Talk Mental Health

At The Purcell School we believe in working closely together with parents to fully support the wellbeing of our young people. We are delighted to tell you about this extremely valuable resource for parents and carers who are trying to find answers, guidance and support for children who are currently struggling with their mental health. We are therefore very pleased to be able to offer full access, completely free of charge to all **Let's All Talk Mental Health** resources to our parent community as part of our commitment to each student's health and wellbeing.

Let's All Talk Mental Health is a webinar series aimed at helping the parents, carers and educators of teenagers with mental health challenges to understand the issues, learn how to offer support and find out more about routes to help. With one-to-one interviews and anonymous audience Q & A sessions with leading experts, therapists and psychologists, **Let's All Talk Mental Health** aims to help with what can be one of the toughest roads to travel

for any parent. The platform features live interviews as well as an extensive library of pre-recorded talks with some of the UK's leading clinicians.

What you can expect from Let's All Talk Mental Health:

- Expert insight
- Practical advice
- Help to better understand the issues
- Tips to navigate the right routes to treatment
- Find out more [here](#)

We now offer full access to the 2023/24 series of over 30 annual webinars, starting on 2nd October, which can be viewed live and then on-demand throughout the year.

There is also a library of over 30 invaluable talks and other resources all of which can be viewed anytime from now.

Coming up LIVE in October:

- Overcoming Teen Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) , Mon 9th Oct, 8pm
- Moving forward with Teen ADHD; Learning Difficulties,

Mon 16th Oct, 8pm

- Social Anxiety in Teens, Mon 30th Oct, 8pm

To register for any of these programmes, please use this unique link [here](#) to receive your free subscription for the academic school year.

You will receive a confirmation email within a few minutes and a further email from CONTRAST with your joining instructions, (please check your junk folder for this link). Initially, follow the link, add your email (ignore suggestions for work email; use the same email as your original registration). If you want to protect your anonymity for audience Q&A's, then please add an alias in the First/ Last Name field upon initial registration. If you experience any problems with access, please contact hello@letsalltalkmentalhealth.co.uk who will be happy to help you. Once you have registered [here](#) is an easy access link to the hub.

We really hope that you will find the expert advice helpful.

Halloween Social

On Tuesday 31st October we will be hosting a Halloween Fancy Dress Social for all of our students. From 18:30-20:00 Years 7 and 8 will be enjoying games, food and fun. Then from 20:00-22:00 Year 9-13

will have their opportunity to participate. Please could day students let their houses know, BEFORE the half term break, if they are planning to attend. Hopefully everyone will have a chance to organise a costume

over the half term break as there will be prizes for the best dressed student!

Winter Clothing and Footwear

As we head into more autumnal weather, after such a relatively mild September and October, please can you ensure that your child returns to school with appropriate clothing and footwear to deal with whatever the weather might throw at us! Though we

are a small campus, there is an inevitable need to move around outside and between buildings, and both younger and older students also enjoy the opportunity to be outside on the fields and courts. Warm clothing, waterproof outerwear (coats or jackets) and at least

two pairs of shoes or trainers are therefore essential. Those with only one pair of trainers are likely to get very damp feet indeed - and we want to avoid any health issues that come with that!

End of Exeats and Half Terms - Collection and Return Times

Please can I remind parents of the published timings for exeats and half terms, as given on the school website?

[Term Dates 2023-24](#)

At the start of half-term holidays and exeat weekends: students may leave after their last lesson of the day. Please be aware that there is no access to the school site (and the main buildings and

boarding houses are locked) from 18:00.

After holidays, half term holidays and exeat weekends: boarders should **return to school no earlier than 18:00 and no later than 21:00**, unless indicated otherwise. School supper is not available on the evenings immediately preceding the start of term, or half term nor on the evening

of the final day of an exeat, so returning boarding students should have supper before returning to school, or bring something with them to eat in the evening.

At the end of full school terms: school finishes for all students at 13:00, at which point students may be collected or leave the site. Please be aware that there is no student access



to the school site, including main buildings and boarding houses after 15:00.

In general, this means that students can be collected from **3.40pm** on the Friday of an exeat or half term - **and not earlier**. The only students who may leave earlier than 3.40pm, are older students who have completed ALL their musical and academic commitments

Too Ill for School?

We often get queries from parents and guardians asking whether their child(ren) are well enough to attend school and with the change of season it seems timely to share some advice.

for the day.

The window for boarders to return on the Sunday evening following an exeat, half term or full term holiday is between **6-9pm - and not earlier**. The boarding houses and main school buildings are not publicly staffed across exeats and half terms, enabling the residential pastoral staff to have a welcome and necessary

break from their pastoral work. This means that there are not staff available to supervise students who return to the school campus prior to 6pm, and you will understand, I am sure, that we cannot allow access to the school or boarding houses before that time, for reasons of safeguarding and health and safety.

Please find a link [here](#) to the NHS website which has some useful tips and guidance on common illnesses and when to keep your child(ren) off school.

Please continue to email our

onsite medical team with any queries (medical@purcell-school.org) and always report your child(ren's) absence via absence@purcell-school.org before 8am.

Speed Limits on Campus

It is wonderful to welcome so many parents to concerts, parents' meetings, and other functions, and it is lovely to see so many parents of day students coming in person to collect their children at the end of each day. It is vitally important to observe the speed limits around the campus, if you are using a

vehicle - and this is especially important as the school grows bigger. At this end of the school year, we have lots of new students, and some of these are very young. You will doubtless see them rushing from place to place as they get used to all their different activities and commitments! They may not be as observant

of parent (or staff) cars as they should be, and it is imperative that we, as adults, do all we can to minimise the risk for all. So please, if you drive or park within the school grounds, take particular care, and observe the **5mph speed limit** at all times.



Parent “WhatsApp” or Chat Groups

As part of the Purcell community, it is understandable that groups of parents might wish to keep in touch with each other via a chat group of some kind. Whilst such groups are entirely private affairs over which a school has no authority or jurisdiction, many schools increasingly find that conversations, often based on half information and/or misunderstandings shared within such groups, are having a significant and negative impact on the experience and wellbeing of young people in school. In particular, comments taken out of context, or communicated poorly within such a group can sometimes end up being passed on to students which, in some circumstances, can cause anxiety and distress to the young people concerned.

Such groups also place a school in a difficult position because such groups are private communications and do not fall under a school’s jurisdiction: a school cannot (nor should not) attempt to police, arbitrate or monitor such communication. Yet, in cases where concerns are raised with a school about the content of such conversations and/or the conduct of the participants of such groups there is, increasingly, an expectation that the school will act on the basis of submitted information drawn from such groups. It is my view that such groups, whilst nice to have for social purposes, are absolutely not the right vehicle for the raising of concerns nor for attempting to solve a problem which may be felt to have emerged in school. If any parent has concerns

about their child in school, the best person to discuss this with is the appropriate member of the school’s staff. Not only are we best placed to be in possession of the whole picture (or be able to find it), but by raising the concern with us, we then have the authority to make the necessary interventions to address the concern - something we have no authority or ability to do within a private forum. It is not my place to advise parents what groups they should or should not belong to, but I would strongly urge against the use of such groups for school business. They are not reliable vehicles for information and they tend to cause more problems than they solve. Please talk to us directly if you have concerns or are in need of information.

With all good wishes



Paul Bambrough
Principal

