

Parent Newsletter

10th November 2023

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I hope this newsletter finds you well and adjusting to the shorter days - it certainly feels like we are now well and truly into autumn and, as is always the case in this half of the autumn term, we have a very busy period coming up. If you have not already done so, I urge you to have a good read through Paul Hoskins' Newsletter, published last week, which outlines much of the activity and explains how we manage, organise and rehearse our large scale projects. I am much looking forward to seeing you at some of our forthcoming events. The main purpose of this Newsletter is to introduce you to new colleagues who will join the School in January in some significant posts. These appointments were made some time ago but we are unable to share the details until all of the statutory checks and other paperwork has been completed. But I am delighted to be in a position to do so now.

Life After Purcell: Sixth Form Course

I am pleased to share with you the content of our upcoming "Life After Purcell" course for Sixth Form as they start to look ahead to a time when they have to manage their own lives without the "safety net" of school to fall back on. The

point of this short course is to explore some important issues around keeping safe and healthy. It will be delivered by a mixture of exceptional external facilitators alongside specialist Purcell Staff and has been put together by our

incoming Director of Boarding and Senior Mental Health Lead, Jane Mitchell.

The full programme is detailed on the following page.



Name of Speaker and Organisation	Date and Time	Theme	Year Group
Dick Moore	Thursday 25th January 08.30am-9.40am	Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Internationally recognised speaker and mental health campaigner Dick Moore will talk about the power of emotions, anxiety, stress, coping strategies and his top 10 tips.	Yr 12 and Yr 13 79 pupils
Carol Morgan Residential Medical Practitioner	Friday 2nd February 4-5pm	Physical Health Matters A talk on important health matters such as registering with a GP/dentist; accessing services including contraception and sexual health services, using pharmacies and health centres, help in an emergency, for self or others, including injuries and accidents.	Yr 13
Jane Mitchell Director of Boarding and Senior Mental Health Lead	Thursday 15th February 08.40-9.40am	Staying Happy and Healthy Workshop on taking responsibility for my wellbeing. Dealing with stress with a focus on exam stress.	Yr 13
Schools Consent Project	Friday 1st March 3.45 -5.15pm	Consent A workshop with lawyers to enable understanding of the law around sex and consent in order to make informed and sensible decisions whilst normalising conversations around consent.	Yr 13 2 groups
DSM Foundation Drug Education Charity	Friday 15th March 3.45 - 5.15pm	Drugs and Alcohol Education A presentation on drugs of abuse, alcohol, smoking and vaping, risk and risk management; festivals and parties; emergencies; keeping yourself and friends safe.	Yr 13
Hilary Austin School Nurse	Thurs 1st, 8th 15th, 29th February 08.40-9.40am	CPR British Heart Foundation course on CPR.	Yr 13 in tutor groups of 9



Staffing Appointments

At the end of this term we will say goodbye to Avison Houseparent and Head of Science, Dr Margaret Brookes along with Mr John Brookes (Assistant Houseparent, Avison and Head of PE) and Mrs Annette Cooke (Assistant Houseparent, Avison), all of whom retire. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all for their exceptional service to the school and wish

them all health and happiness in whatever, and wherever, they go on to. We've taken this opportunity to recast the roles ever so slightly so, unlike Dr and Mr Brookes, the incoming Avison staff will not share their role with teaching responsibilities, but will be solely focussed on the pastoral care of the students. Although it might appear that we are moving from three to

two staff, there is in fact no reduction in staffing within the House. We are also excited to have appointed a new full time Head of Science, and our new incoming Head of PE and Physical Wellbeing will take responsibility for sport and recreation across the whole school (both curriculum PE and active recreation). They all introduce themselves below:

Mr Simon Cope, Houseparent, Avison House

It gives me great pleasure to introduce myself to you as the new Houseparent of Avison House. My name is Simon Cope and I am currently a teacher of Economics and Sport at St Albans School.

My boarding experience is vast and I am incredibly excited to be joining Avison House. I attended Haberdashers Monmouth School in South Wales as a Boarding Student. I had an incredible Housemaster who instilled a love of education, music and sport into his students. I received Grade four Double Bass and was in the Choir which I absolutely loved. Upon finishing at Monmouth, I went to Australia to be an Assistant Boarding Tutor at Knox Grammar School. This was an incredible opportunity and one which I loved. It was this experience that really instilled my passion for leading a boarding house. Upon graduating from the University of Exeter in Business and Economics, I worked as a Boarding Tutor at Beechwood

Park School, Hertfordshire. I was then offered the position of Housemaster in an International School in Lausanne, Switzerland, which I absolutely loved. The school was very multicultural and it was a fantastic environment to lead my first Boarding House. I left Switzerland as I wanted to qualify as a teacher. I moved to Bristol, where I worked at Collegiate school as a teacher of Business Studies, French and Games. Leaving Bristol, I worked at a large Independent Boarding School in Sussex where I was a Boarding Tutor, teacher and Head of Rugby.

I am passionate about Boarding and being a role model. It is important to provide a family-like environment in a boarding house and ensure that the student's well being is prioritised. I would hope to teach the students about my favourite composer Ludovico Einaudi and speak about the many amazing bands that the UK has produced over the years. I have to admit, I am a

fan of Oasis, Coldplay and The Beatles. I will look to develop your child's confidence in many different ways and, hopefully, to inspire them in all that they want to achieve.

I will endeavour to email you all within the first week of my appointment to update you on how things are going and how your child is. If you do have any questions for me, please don't hesitate to email the school and I will get back to you as quickly as I can. It is a tremendous school and a tremendous boarding house. I very much look forward to getting to know your child and you as parents.

Ms Karla Hawkins, Assistant Houseparent, Avison House

As a lifelong learner and a global citizen, I've had the privilege of accumulating more than two decades of invaluable international education experience in places including Bangladesh, the Middle East, Beijing, Zimbabwe, and California. I take pride in holding a Bachelor of Arts in English and Communications, complemented by a second Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, with a dual major in Developmental Psychology and Abnormal Psychology. My educational journey has been further enriched by the attainment of a Postgraduate Certificate of Education and a Masters of Science in Positive Psychology and Coaching Psychology. My true passion resides in the world of psychological research and its practical applications within the realm of education. It's my heartfelt commitment to infuse this knowledge into my role within pastoral care and all my interactions within the school community.

I firmly believe that every child enters our educational space bearing a unique identity, shaped by their diverse backgrounds and life experiences. As an educator, it is my responsibility to craft a nurturing and inclusive learning environment that can adapt to their diverse needs, fostering their mental, social, and emotional growth. I hold the firm conviction that a safe learning environment, built on trust, creativity, and respect, empowers students to become advocates for themselves, to push their limits, to challenge assumptions, and to blossom in self-confidence. In all my interactions with students, I bring a positive attitude, an open heart, and unwaveringly high expectations.

My passion for working with young people and guiding them to thrive academically, emotionally, and socially is unwavering. The role of Assistant Boarding House

Parent presents a unique and gratifying opportunity to continue making a positive impact in the lives of students, extending beyond the confines of a typical school day. My dedication to making a lasting difference extends not only to the lives of my students but also to future generations. I am committed to living a mindful, intentional, and sustainable lifestyle, making choices that are kind to our planet and following eco-friendly practices. Some of my most cherished moments are centred around sharing good food with friends and family, savouring precious moments with my children, taking leisurely walks, or simply basking in a sunbeam with a cup of coffee in the company of my well-travelled feline companions. I look forward to meeting the Purcell School community and specifically the students of Avison house, who I am very excited to work with.

Mrs Anna Mehta, Head of Science

As a passionate biologist, I have strived throughout my career to pass on enthusiasm and love of the natural world. Since graduating from the University of Liverpool in Zoology, I have gained a vast array of experience not only in education, but also in many other skills. From scientific research in the heart of the Amazon jungle, honing diving skills to track whale sharks and the effects of El Nino in the Seychelles, a World Challenge

trip to Nicaragua and Costa Rica, and many coastal ecology field trips around the United Kingdom, I strive to share opportunities and pass on my love of learning. I have 23 years of teaching experience in two different London schools. In the classroom I purposefully create a space where students feel happy to explore and develop their knowledge and understanding whilst I support their absorption of the content.

Having married an old Purcellian, music has always, and continues to play a huge role in my life. I have two young daughters who play musical instruments and this brings so much enrichment to our family. I am truly looking forward to getting to know every individual and can't wait to engage and guide them through science. Being able to watch talented young people grow and learn is incredibly exciting.

Mrs Hannah Noonan, Head of PE and Physical Wellbeing

My name is Hannah Noonan and I will be joining The Purcell School as the new Head of PE and Physical Well-Being. I achieved a first class honours in Physical Education BA (ITT) with QTS at St. Mary's University. I have developed a breadth of experience working in a range of educational settings with some of my roles including Head of Girls PE, Director of Sport, NQT Coordinator and Lead Practitioner of Teaching

and Learning. My belief is that Physical Education lies at the heart of any school. My aim is to deliver a curriculum that allows all students to develop a healthy mindset, and understand the importance of maintaining their physical and mental well-being alongside the demands of their academic and musical studies. I very much look forward to working alongside such a talented group of pupils who understand the

importance of hard-work, dedication and self-belief. I am extremely competitive in everything I do. I have had the opportunity to perform at the top level in my sport and I know the importance of having a supportive network around you in order to achieve your goals. I can't wait to be a part of your journey.

With all good wishes



Paul Bambrough
Principal

