

Monday 30 November

Dear Parents/Carers

Staff Training Days

Last week the Trust hosted two very successful Training Days for its staff and others.

On Thursday, the Trust's staff were joined by colleagues from local schools for a key note address followed by a question and answer session given by **Tom Bennett** on Culture and Behaviour in Schools. Tom Bennett is one of the leading authorities on Culture and Behaviour in schools. In his role as the government's leading Behaviour Adviser, the so-called "Behaviour Tsar", Mr. Bennett advocates that good behaviour has to be taught, setting out very clear routines, practising them and reinforcing them. In his address, Mr Bennett highlighted the importance of everybody working together to secure consistency in respect to culture and behaviour, making expectations clear to children and young people. In the best schools and academies, parents/carers are engaged actively in this process because they understand the reasons for these expectations.

Mr Bennett's session was quite inspirational: in his address, Mr Bennett stressed how essential it was for consequences to always follow breaches of the behaviour code. Most of us, he argued, conform because of our wish to avoid consequences.

I have asked Mr Detheridge and Mrs McMorn to build on it by launching the "Great Cultural Debate" with staff, parents/carers, pupils/students and governors in the weeks ahead.

This debate is timely because whilst most Wootton Upper School pupils are able to maintain the Trust's high standards, there has been an increase in pupils not managing their temper, or responding very rudely towards staff. It is simply unacceptable for our staff to have to deal with this and/ or other pupils to be impacted by it. Please do contribute to the debate once it is launched by giving us your views.

The second training day was devoted to work on ensuring that the Trust continues to develop remote learning – including learning on Teams, as well as high quality work on Show My Homework set for pupils/students who cannot attend face-to-face lessons. The Trust is in the process of approving its Blended Learning Policy; we will publish this once it has been approved.

More and more schools recognize the value of putting one or two of their training days at this time of the academic year. The autumn term is the longest one, almost fifteen weeks long and the end of November and beginning of December is almost always the period when staff and student absence is highest.

Covid 19 and school/college closures

We have been fortunate so far in that only very small numbers of pupils/students have needed to self-isolate because they have been close contacts with a positive case, or indeed they have had a positive test themselves and by working together I hope this remains the case. Last Friday afternoon, the government issued new guidance for schools.

This guidance stipulates that if – in the last resort - any school/college is required to “close” due to the pandemic, it should remain “open” to Year 11 pupils and Year 13 students and pupils/students in other year groups it is preparing for GCSE or A level examination in the summer of 2021. Additionally, the school/college should remain open to vulnerable children and children of “essential” workers.

Our staff is here to help, please treat them with respect.

The Trust takes its responsibility for the wellbeing of pupils/students seriously; similarly, the Trust takes its responsibility for the wellbeing of its staff equally seriously. Wellbeing is a key issue the Trust.

Whilst the very large majority of pupils/students/parents/carers and others are respectful, sadly, there have been a small number of instances where individuals including, on occasion, parents/carers or their relatives have been abusive or threatening towards staff, when they have visited, or telephoned; this is not acceptable.

Our staff work hard to respond to all concerns, but teaching and other commitments mean that our staff – like staff in all schools/colleges and other public services - will not necessarily be available immediately a telephone call is made or an email is sent.

Therefore, the Trust is developing a Zero Tolerance notice. I have included a draft notice in this letter. If you would like to comment, please do so. The Trust will publish the final version of the notice and display it on its websites and in the College/School Reception.

DRAFT - Zero Tolerance Notice

Wootton Academy Trust staff must be able to come to work without fear of abuse or harassment or threats of violence [from students/pupils or their parents/carers or other relatives].

Wootton Academy Trust has a zero tolerance attitude towards abuse or harassment or threats of violence and violent behaviour.

Violent, threatening or abusive behaviour including shouting and swearing will not be tolerated by the Trust. Pupils/students who act in such a manner will be dealt with using the school/college Behaviour Policies.

WAT staff will be advised to end any telephone conversation where individuals are abusive or harassing or threaten violence by disconnecting the call.

Individuals who act in such a manner in person on site will be asked to leave the premises: the police may be called and the individual may be banned from visiting the school/college.

It is really important that everybody models excellent behaviour as an example to pupils and students.

Our staff is here to help you, please treat them with respect.

Speakers for Schools live broadcast with Gareth Southgate

Mrs Ashby, Head of Careers and Connolly Foundation Coordinator has asked me to bring to your attention the following talk given by the England Football Manager and the entertainer, Sharky.

In this event, England football Manager and author of *Anything is Possible*, Gareth Southgate, is joined by Youtube gamer and entertainer, Sharky, to reflect on the experiences and lessons of Gareth's career. He will share how young people can thrive and make the most of their lives, by being brave, being kind and following their dreams. The talk will be webinar style and so attendees will not have their cameras or microphones on. There will be a Q+A chat function where students can ask their questions, which will be moderated by Penguin staff.

Gareth Southgate has had a playing career spanning 500 senior appearances. He has represented England 57 times, captained both Aston Villa and Middlesbrough to League Cup final success, and is currently England manager of the senior men's team. His new book 'Anything is Possible', is about how to achieve your dreams and ambitions.

Would your students like to submit their questions for Gareth?!

We are working with our schools' network to provide your students the chance to ask their questions for Gareth on camera! Would your students be interested in submitting their questions for Gareth via video? Let us know at inspiration@speakersforschools.org and we can share next steps and permissions etc.

Date: Tuesday 1st December

Time: 16:00 – 17:00

Speakers: Gareth Southgate, England Football Manager and Sharky, Youtube Gamer & Entertainer

[CLICK HERE TO JOIN](#)

Teen Brain Matters Parent/Carer Workshop

Teen Brain Matters is a free two-hour workshop for parents developed by Professor John Coleman exclusively for Bedford Borough Council. This workshop brings together the latest understanding of neuroscience and development psychology. During this workshop, parents will learn more about the changes their children are going through in adolescent brain development to help them motivate and support young people in an emotionally healthy context.

Tickets can be booked via Eventbrite and numbers are limited. Details below:

Monday 7th December, 7pm to 9pm.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/teen-brain-matters-for-parents-tickets-125311996555>

Other Parent/Carer workshops

Bedford Borough Council has also asked us to bring to your attention two sessions in a series, one on **bereavement** [Wednesday 2 December and alternatively on Wednesday 16 December] and the other on **low mood, self-harm suicide** [Wednesday 13 January and alternatively on Wednesday 27 January], being delivered remotely in partnership between CAMHS and CHUMS for any parent or carer in Bedford or Luton.

Please see the two posters sent home last week for more information

New Appointments

Over the last few weeks we have welcomed to the Trust the following colleagues:

- ❖ Mr T. Hussain – Teacher of Religious Studies [part time]
- ❖ Mr K. Durcan – Pastoral Support Officer at WUS
- ❖ Mr C. Jackson - Pastoral Support Officer at WUS
- ❖ Mrs C. Cain – Safeguarding Officer at WAT
- ❖ Mrs. C. Toseland - Teacher of Psychology [part time]

In January, the following colleagues will be joining the Trust:

- ❖ Mrs S. Chick - Assistant Principal [Director of Science] with additional responsibilities within the Trust's Teaching and Learning Team.
- ❖ Mr S. Mercer - Teacher of Physics at Wootton Upper School and at Kimberley College.
- ❖ Miss C. Harrington -Teacher of History
- ❖ Mrs. C. Pulchalski -Teacher of Drama with responsibility for vocational Performing Arts courses

Some parents/carers will remember Mrs Chick; previously Mrs Chick worked for the Trust when she played a very significant role securing the successful opening of Kimberley College.

Departures

We say thank you and good luck to **Mrs L. Blunt**, Library Assistant who left the Trust at the end of November after thirteen years dedicated service.

In December we say good bye to **Mr G. Lewis**, Assistant Principal [Research and Development]. Mr Lewis will be moving to a post of Vice Principal at an academy in Kettering in January. We wish him every success and thank him for his contribution to the senior leadership team over the last four terms.

Maternity Leave

- ❖ Mrs E Hassan, Pastoral Support Officer has now started her maternity leave
- ❖ Mrs Graham, Head of Drama is due to start her maternity leave shortly.

Term Dates

Last teaching day of Autumn Term	Friday December 18 at 2:30 pm
First teaching day of Spring Term	Monday January 4 at 8:35 am
February half term	Monday 15 February to Friday 19 February inclusive
Last teaching day of Spring Term	Friday 26 March at 2:30 pm
First teaching day of Summer Term	Monday 12 April
May Day Bank Holiday	Monday 3 May
May/June half term	Monday 31 May to Friday 4 June inclusive
Last teaching day of Summer Term	Friday 16 July

First day of Autumn Term 2021 **Wednesday 2 September**

Other key dates

GCSE exam timetable 2021

GCSE exams will run from **Monday 24 May** 2021 to **Friday 2 July** 2021.

GCSE exams will begin with an early English language Paper 1 on Monday 24 May and mathematics Paper 1 on Tuesday 25 May.

Then the rest of the exams will continue after the May half-term from Monday 7 June.

GCSE results day 2021

Friday 27 August

A level exam timetables 2021

A level exams will run from

Monday 7 June 2021 to **Friday 2 July** 2021.

A level results day 2021

Tuesday 24 August

Yours sincerely



Michael Gleeson
Executive Principal
Wootton Academy Trust

Help and Support for Pupils and Students and their families

Provider	Details
<p>NHS</p>	<p>NHS is here to support your mental health during the coronavirus pandemic, as well as your physical health.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ It is important to note that if you are really struggling with your mental health and it is disrupting your everyday life seek professional help and talk to your GP. If you need urgent mental health support, call 111 option 2. ❖ If you are concerned about the mental health of your child, please contact your GP or check online self-referral options for under 18 years olds at: www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression ❖ If you're experiencing stress and anxiety, you can get further information, including how to self-refer to psychological therapies at: www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression ❖ Every Mind Matters aims to help people take simple steps to look after their mental health, improve their mental wellbeing and support others. To learn more about how to look after your mental health and create your own action plan, visit: https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters
<p>Kooth</p>	<p>www.kooth.com</p> <p>Kooth provide online mental health and wellbeing support to young people via any internet accessible device. Kooth provides an opportunity to interact in a supportive way with other young people as well as receive support from qualified counsellors.</p>
<p>Samaritans</p>	<p>Telephone: 116 123 (24 hours a day, free to call)</p> <p>www.samaritans.org</p> <p>Provides confidential, non-judgemental emotional support for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair.</p>
<p>Mind Infoline</p>	<p>Telephone: 0300 123 3393 (09:00-18:00 Monday to Friday)</p> <p>Text: 86463</p> <p>www.mind.org.uk/information-support/helplines</p> <p>Mind provides confidential mental health information services. With support and understanding, Mind enables people to make informed choices. The Infoline gives information on types of mental health problems, where to get help, drug treatments, alternative therapies and advocacy.</p>
<p>SANEline</p>	<p>Telephone: 0300 304 7000 (16:30-22:30)</p> <p>www.sane.org.uk/what_we_do/support/helpline</p> <p>SANEline is a national out of hours mental health helpline offering specialist emotional support, guidance and information to anyone affected by mental illness, including family, friends and carers. It is a confidential service for those aged 16 or over.</p>
<p>The Mix</p>	<p>Telephone: 0808 808 4994 (11:00-23:00)</p> <p>Crisis Support Text Service: Text THEMIX to 85258</p> <p>www.themix.org.uk/get-support</p> <p>The Mix provides judgement-free information and support to young people aged 13-25 on a range of issues including mental health problems. Young people can access The</p>

	Mix's support via phone, email, web chat, peer to peer and counselling services.
Childline	<p>Telephone: 0800 1111</p> <p>www.childline.org.uk</p> <p>Childline is a private and confidential service for children and young people up to the age of 19. You can contact a Childline counsellor about any topic – no problem is too big or too small.</p>
Elefriends	<p>www.elfriends.org.uk</p> <p>Elefriends is a supportive online community where you can be yourself. Elefriends is run by Mind and provides an online space where you can be yourself.</p>
SHOUT	<p>www.crisistextline.uk</p> <p>Text Service: Text SHOUT to 85258 to text with a trained Crisis Volunteer who will provide active listening and collaborative problem solving.</p> <p>Shout provides free, confidential support 24/7 via text for anyone in crisis.</p>
Think Ninja	<p>https://www.healios.org.uk/services/thinkninja1</p> <p>A free app for 10-18 year olds which provides an opportunity to understand fears relating to coronavirus, isolation struggles and how to stay connected to family and friends, worried about personal health and the health of family members, mental strength and coping techniques to use during the pandemic.</p>
Young Minds	<p>Telephone: 0808 802 5544 (09:30-16:00 Monday-Friday)</p> <p>https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/parents-helpline/</p> <p>A source of support for parents and carers who are worried about the mental health of their child.</p>
Family Lives	<p>Telephone: 0808 800 2222</p> <p>http://familylives.org.uk/</p> <p>Support to anyone parenting a child.</p>

Wootton Academy Trust operates:
Wootton Upper School & Arts College
Kimberley 16-19 STEM College
Registered in England and Wales
Company No. 7740758

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