



WELFARE MATTERS

Edition 2 Autumn 2018

Pupil Voice Week

Cyberbullying

Screen Time



What an incredibly busy first half of term we have had here at Langley! With regards to Mental Health and Wellbeing provision offered at school, we are continuing to make great strides forward. This half term saw us recognise World Mental Health Day on 10th October, where we held a whole school assembly raising awareness of mental health in which we focused on the fact that we all have mental health and it needs looking after, just like our physical health. We focused on the importance of talking about problems when they arise and the need to speak to someone. In doing so, we had a really brave set of staff and students who volunteered to talk about issues they had faced and the support mechanisms that they relied upon to help them. Talking about mental health problems was something that I mentioned in my previous newsletter, but it is vital that we all continue to speak up about it.



Cyberbullying and Mental Health Talk

In October, all pupils in Years 6 to 11 received a talk from up and coming music artists who, as well as performing to the students, gave advice on how to stay safe online. The artists, which included Asher Knight, told their personal stories about when they were affected by cyberbullying, how they felt at the time, how they reacted and the outcome of the situation. They also discussed mental

health issues, the causes of mental health problems (stress at school, relationships etc.) describing a time when they have had their own mental health issues and gave advice as to where and who students should turn to for help. This assembly continued our work in bringing mental health issues to the fore and reinforced the importance of speaking up.



Pupil Voice Week

During the week commencing 24th September, we celebrated Pupil Voice Week. We started the week by holding an assembly that demonstrated the power of using your voice for good, hearing the inspiring story of Malala Yousafzai. During form time that week, all students were encouraged to think about how they could use their voice for good and then discuss these with their peers (teachers

were asked to do this too!) One way that students are encouraged to use their voice for good is through contributions to the school council. This year's council is now up and running; there are representatives from each year and house and students should be encouraged to raise any issues/ideas that they have with their council reps, so that their voice can be heard.



Mobile Phone Usage



'Screen 'addiction' is a term increasingly being used by doctors to describe the growing number of children engaging in screen activities in a dependent manner. Whether it's social media, the Internet or computer games, screen time is no longer merely a cultural issue about how children spend their leisure time, nor is it confined to concern over the educational value or appropriate/inappropriate content. It has become a medical issue.' These are the words of Dr Aric Sigman, and expert in this area, having published several medical papers on the issue. Hopefully, you will have seen the flyer informing you of a Parents' Information evening here at school on Friday 23rd November in which Dr Aric Sigman is coming to present on the topic of Managing

Screen Time and Screen Dependency. He will be talking to staff and students in the afternoon, before addressing parents after school. He will explain how recreational screen time may affect cognitive skills, attention, brain development, literacy and academic achievement. He will also help the school to work with you at home by looking at what can be done to prevent problems and improve matters, resulting in school and home delivering a consistent message to the pupils. This is the start of a big change, in terms of rules regarding mobile phones and electronic device usage at school and as such, we look forward to welcoming you on the evening of 23rd November. Please remember to let the school know if you cannot attend.

Mental Health First Aiders and Student Wellbeing Ambassadors

Mental Health First Aiders

As a school, we have undertaken a programme of developing staff skills in dealing with mental health and wellbeing issues. Giving staff the necessary tools and resources to assist students who suffer from these issues is another vital piece of the jigsaw in improving our provision of support for those students who suffer from mental health and wellbeing related problems. Current members of staff that are Mental Health First Aiders are:

- Mr P Clark**
- Mrs L McRobert**
- Mr S Townly**
- Miss N Goddard**
- Mrs F Lambert**
- Mrs C Hay**

Over the coming academic year, we are looking to increase the number of staff who are trained and we will see this list expand dramatically!

Student Wellbeing Ambassadors

As part of our ongoing commitment to improving the provision of wellbeing for students at the school, we have also appointed six Year 13 students as Wellbeing Ambassadors. This group of students all have a passion for helping other students and are keen to provide help and support where necessary. These Ambassadors have undertaken 'Listener' training with our School Counsellor and will be shortly setting up their own listening service for students who simply would like to talk to other students. I firmly believe that this is another really positive addition to helping to improve our provision and I look forward to working with this group in the coming months.



Anti-bullying

This week is anti-bullying week; I led an assembly that explored the lasting impacts that bullying can have on a young person and also centred on the concept of 'choosing respect'. This involved outlining to students that, as individuals, we choose our behaviours and that we should always choose to be respectful in all our dealings with each other. In form time this week, I have asked tutors to have discussions with their tutees about bullying and what can be done if they, or someone they know, is being bullied. However, it is also important that you, as parents, talk to your child about bullying, although I recognise, that it is not always easy. BullyingUK, an organisation set up to help schools, parents and students deal with the issue of bullying, recommends the following to parents in relation to discussing this difficult issue:

Keep it general

There is no need to make the initial conversation about bullying too formal or complicated. When you are busy making the dinner or watching a storyline, you could bring up a bullying scenario and ask your child what they think. This will be a good starting point to discuss bullying

in general and in more depth. Explain to your child in simple terms what bullying is. Although there is no legal definition, it is usually defined as repeated behaviour, which is intended to hurt someone either emotionally or physically, and is often aimed at certain people because of their race, religion, gender or sexual orientation or any other aspect such as appearance or disability. Ask your child what they would do if they were bullied, how they would react and what they would want to happen, this can be a great way to let them know what steps to take, such as confide in someone they trust, collect screenshots or keep a diary of incidents. They may also want to talk about bullying they may have seen at school.

Communication is key

Keeping up with what is going on in your child's life can help you spot where a situation might arise or if there is an issue, your child might be dealing with, without telling you. Taking an active interest in what your child gets up to can give them lots of reassurance, even if they don't show it! Try to keep up with how they are feeling, who their friends are, their social media or

online activity and what is happening at school. This can really help to strengthen the bond between you and help your child feel confident and want to confide in you about their life and their world.

Are you worried your child is being bullied?

Children often find it hard to talk about bullying because they may feel humiliated, ashamed or they might be scared of reprisals. You may see signs such as anxiety to go to school, saying they are ill, bruises that are unexplained or they may isolate themselves socially or online.

If you suspect that your child is being bullied, asking your child outright may not get them to open up to what is happening. You know your child better than anyone else, so trust your instincts about taking the best approach. They may not be ready to talk about it, so take small steps and let them know that you are there for them and can help them no matter what. Reassure them that you won't jump in and take action without discussing it with them first. This can go a long way to getting your child to confide in you.

