Nemo sibi nascitur:

Our values of ***community****,* ***aspiration*** *and* ***opportunity*** *enable every individual to grow and flourish*

Supporting Student Wellbeing

February 2025

Welcome to the Spring term newsletter. In this edition, we will be focusing on the tricky issue of mobile phone use amongst teenagers. We are delighted that Dr Anne Lane, a Clinical Psychologist and fellow parent, has provided some helpful strategies for families to try to manage screen time at home. We are also pleased to share some information about Place2Be's *Children's Mental Health Week* and a national library initiative called *Reading Well*.

We hope you find this newsletter helpful and encouraging as we work together to ensure the wellbeing of your child is always a top priority. Please do not hesitate to reach out to your child's form tutor, in the first instance, if you have any concerns or comments. Full details of the school's pastoral team can be found on our website.

“OUR BIGGEST RULE… ”

What screen time rules do clinical psychologists use for their own kids? Anne Lane, Clinical Psychologist, asked colleagues who work (and live) with teens how they manage in their homes.

NB: all of them admit getting the balance right is a 'struggle' – and all of them mentioned no 2!

1.Keep their worlds real! Screens can shrink kids’ worlds: Excess screen time erodes confidence, making them avoid real-life challenges. To keep my kids grounded, I prioritise real-world activities: sports, clubs, family time, shared meals and even TV together (on an actual TV!). Our oldest has a part-time job, which boosts his confidence. Staying connected to reality opens up their lives, their experiences and their resilience.

2. Expect pushback. Limiting devices comes with resistance. Kids get frustrated, even angry - that’s the nature of addiction - tech or otherwise. Instead of avoiding the conflict, I know it’s coming and I stay firm. This can definitely be stressful, but kids settle when you’re clear and sturdy - and the long-term benefits outweigh short-term frustration.

3. No social media before 16. Social media is deeply problematic for teens. Girls often fall into comparison traps or get socialised into mean, aggressive behaviours. There’s also lots of poor quality and misleading info on mental health. Equally boys encounter violent or extreme content. Our rule? No social media before 16. It’s non-negotiable because the values and relationships it promotes are so harmful to kids’ development

4. But everyone else has it…

Kids love the ‘everyone else has it line, and it presses on parents’ fears. But trying to keep up with others isn’t helpful. We’ve learned to stick to decisions that work for our family. Kids adapt and grow - and they realise plenty of other parents have even stricter rules.

5. No phones in bedrooms. This is a big one! Good sleep is essential, especially for teens. Phones in bedrooms ruin sleep and fuel poor mental health, anger, difficulties with concentration and low mood. In our house, phones stay in shared spaces. When my kids use them, they aren’t isolated in their rooms - and their sleep isn’t competing with a screen.

6. Parental controls alone won’t cut it. Teens are tech-savvy; they’ll bypass controls. That’s why we don’t just rely on them. At night, phones are collected and locked away until morning. It’s simple but effective in keeping boundaries clear.

Children's Mental Health Week 2025

Place2Be's theme for 2025 is focus is **Know Yourself, Grow Yourself**, with the aim to equip and empower children and young people across the UK to embrace self-awareness and explore what it means to them. They want children and young people to discover how getting to know who they are can help them build resilience, grow and develop. A 30 minute film has been produced and can be accessed here: https://youtu.be/Llac2vJlH7o

The video was created by Roman Kemp and his celebrity friends and has been edited under the supervision of a Clinical Lead from partner charity SHOUT. Content includes:

- Personal message from Roman Kemp and what mental wellbeing means to him
- Advice from Dr Ranj on his grounding technique and why having a healthy mind is important
- Interviews with TV's Dr Punam
- Interviews with young people to hear their own personal experiences with mental health
- Harry Kane encouraging young people to ask for help and how physical exercise helps him
- Music from Tom Grennan with a performance of his single HERE

Why not grab a cup of tea, settle down and watch this with the young people in your home?

Reading Well

Reading Well for teens suggests recommended reading and digital resources to help teenagers understand their feelings and boost their confidence. Teens and health and wellbeing experts have chosen the books to help manage emotions and cope with difficult times.

The booklist is targeted at teenagers (13 - 18) and includes a range of reading levels and formats to support less confident readers and encourage engagement.

Look for the Reading Well for teens books in your local library – they're free to borrow. Many titles are also available to borrow as e-books and audiobooks. Find out how to join the library and access books, e-books and audiobooks via your local library website.

Sources of Support

Who to talk to at school:
Your child's form tutor would normally be the first point of contact, however, we recognise that students develop strong working relationships with various trusted adults across the staff body. Our school matron and pastoral support base team are available too. Aside from offering 1:1 support, Mrs Craigie, School Matron, is available for those students who have been bereaved. Bespoke Group Work is sensitively undertaken as the need arises and numbers allow. Please contact Mrs Craigie directly if you would like more information about this.

Additionally, there are many external sources of support that you and your child can access:

Safe Space Information Pack - secondary age young people
Resources from Safe Space to help secondary age young people with their emotional and mental wellbeing. Covering a wide range of subjects, including anger, anxiety, self esteem and mindfulness, with links to many agencies.

Signpost Counselling
Signpost is a counselling provision that supports children and young people aged 10 - 25 years across Hertfordshire.

Lumi Nova digital therapy
Lumi Nova is a fun digital therapy for children aged 7 - 12 years, to help them manage fears and anxieties.

Just Talk
Just Talk signposts young people to free, self-referral services.

Elevate Education
Elevate is an award-winning organisation that has been working with Parmiter's School. Join them for an exclusive webinar series where they will show you – as parents and carers – how to best support your child through school. The focus is on time-management, self-motivation and exam preparation.

Nessie
Nessie is a voluntary sector therapy organisation that focuses on helping children and young people (0 – 25 years) thrive. They offer free webinars and workshops for parents/carers.

Get the right help at the right time

early help, brighter futures

Need advice and support for your family?

- Relationship support
- Parenting Advice & Courses
- Emotional & Mental Health
- Staying healthy
- School attendance/anxiety
- Money advice
- Services for Young People
- SEND Local Offer
- Search local services
- and much more

Families First
Early help, brighter futures

SCAN

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Visit Hertfordshire's Families First website:-
www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/familiesfirst