

Parent Bulletin

Week commencing Monday 20 September 2021 – Week 1

Dear Parents and Carers

As we reach the end of our second week back, we complete the first round of our two-week timetable cycle. Most of our students will have met all their teachers and experienced full lessons in all their subjects. We have been impressed by the smooth and calm start to the term. We hope you have enjoyed talking to your children about their school experiences. It was good to see so many parents and carers in school this week, for the Year 7 Information Evening on Tuesday and for the Year 13 Parents' Evening on Thursday. In the week ahead, we welcome parents and carers of students in Year 11: this is a vitally important Parents' Evening, after a disrupted year, and I encourage you to come.

Mr Walsh and I travelled down to Birmingham during the week for the launch of the Government's Behaviour Hubs programme. As a school, we are fortunate to have a place on this scheme, which offers structured support through a network of schools and high-profile advisers. Our training was conducted by Tom Bennett, the Government's 'Behaviour Tsar'. Tom reminded us that the best schools proactively teach good behaviour, as well as responding to poor behaviour when it happens. We decided to apply to join the Behaviour Hubs initiative, not because behaviour is awful at Lord Lawson – emphatically, it isn't - but because we know it can be better, and that it can be more consistent. We believe that, as behaviour improves further, so all our other improvements in teaching and learning will be more effective.

Our local Lead School in the Behaviour Hub is Carmel College in Darlington. Senior leaders from Carmel are visiting Lord Lawson next week, and they have invited us to visit them shortly after that. Together we will carry out analysis and diagnosis of behaviour at Lord Lawson, which will lead to an action plan. This process will be very detailed, and it will last until Christmas. From January, we will implement our plans, adding to the improvements we are already making. We are interested in the views of parents; Mr Walsh and I will be in touch about this in the next few weeks. I will share the action plan with parents and carers when it has been written.

I want to congratulate our students on their good behaviour during our first Fire Drill of the year, which we held on Thursday. We all know how vitally important it is to be able to evacuate the entire building quickly and safely. All students and staff were out of the building within just over four minutes. Students assembled in their new year group assembly points on the rugby field, next to the new signs. Fire Marshalls took registers and reported to Mr Rayner and Mr Pedlingham. Everything was extremely orderly, which gives us reassurance that we can keep your children safe in the event of an actual emergency.

We are preparing for our Year 6 Open Evening on 28 September. This is an important evening, and we look forward to being able to show the school to prospective parents. I hope you feel that you can recommend our school to other parents – please speak to those you know who are interested in coming to Lord Lawson: word of mouth is the best recommendation. We have a great school community here, with excellent pastoral care, outstanding buildings and facilities, and teaching that is increasingly good. I have a clear vision for the school, and I am well supported by a first-class leadership team. We are continuing to improve the school at a fast pace, and Ofsted has recognised this. We can be confident about recommending Lord Lawson to others.

With all best wishes,

Yours faithfully

Mr A T Fowler
Principal

Sparx Maths

We are delighted to let you know that from Friday 24 September, our students will be completing their maths homework with 'Sparx Maths'. Sparx is an exciting online platform that offers every student a personalised maths homework.

We know you want to support your child's maths progress, and understand how important it is for the completion of all homework. We have outlined the basic principles of Sparx below, to give you an insight into how it works.

How does Sparx homework work?

Sparx personalises each child's homework, creating a weekly set of questions tailored to their level of understanding and learning pace. The questions are designed to be achievable for the student, whilst offering the stretch and challenge learners need to make progress. Please note that it takes two to three weeks for the Sparx system to identify the correct level of your child's ability; therefore, it may initially seem that the homework set for your child may be too easy or a little difficult.

Each week, topics are set by your child's maths teacher, which will make up the majority of the homework questions. Questions from previous topics will also be included in the homework so that students can practice the skills they have already learned.

How can I help my child with their homework?

We appreciate that you will of course want to support your child with their home learning but please try not to help them with a question until they've had a go first. It is **really important that they complete their homework independently**, and that questions are marked as correct. There are support videos they can watch to give them help if they need it. This way, Sparx can make sure your child continues to see homework that's at the right level for them.

Why does my child need to achieve 100% compulsory homework completion?

Sparx Homework is designed to help students get to grips with and understand the concepts and skills they are learning, by ensuring they cover the essential building blocks needed to make progress in maths. Sparx' research (sparx.co.uk/evidence) has shown that an average of 60 minutes a week of this type of personalised maths home learning, leads to clear progress for a student. It is therefore advised that students do their homework as early as possible, so they have the time to complete independently or, if they are struggling, to seek help from their teacher. Homework is not marked as complete until all of the compulsory questions have been answered correctly; so, starting early is key to finishing before the hand-in date.

You can keep track of your child's homework completion in the weekly email you will receive from Sparx.

Awards and Incentives

In order to encourage and engage students to try their best and improve their maths skills, we will be running a weekly leader board focusing on various achievements such as '**total xp earned**' and '**most improved**'. Winners of each class will earn a trophy to call their own for that week, plus a small prize. Runners up will also receive a small prize. Both winner and runner up will also have their names celebrated on our **facebook** page and **parental bulletin**.

We hope you agree that Sparx will play an exciting and important role in helping your child's understanding, success and confidence in maths to grow. However, if you have any questions please contact me via: jbramham@lordlawson.academy ensuring you place 'Sparx' in the subject line.

Mr J Bramham
Teacher of Maths

Year 11: Subject Parents' Evening – Tuesday 21 September 2021

We are looking forward to welcoming our Year 11 parents on Tuesday 21 September for the subject specific parent evening. The evening runs from 3.20 – 6.30pm. If you have been unable to book an appointment with a teacher, you can email them for information on your child. A full list of staff and their email address can be found on our website: <https://www.lordlawson.academy/staff-at-lord-lawson/>

Remember to access 'School Cloud' to check your appointment schedule, book any further appointments, or to make changes: <https://lordlawson.schoolcloud.co.uk/>

Mrs K Hubbard
PA to SLT

873 Scholars Bus – Change to bus timings

We have been advised by Nexus that with effect from Monday 20 September, the scholars' bus **873** will start its route at **7:50am** – this is ten minutes earlier than its previous start time.

Route information can be found below.

Regards

Mrs K Hubbard
PA to SLT

873 SERVICE – DEPARTS SPRINGWELL VILLAGE (School) 07:50

VIA: Springwell Road, Springwell Lane (B1288), Springwell Road (B1296), Springwell Avenue WREKENTON HIGH STREET ALDI(0807), Springwell Road (B1296) Easedale Gardens Wrekenton Row, Rockcliffe Way, EIGHTON BANKS (0815), Sheddon's Hill, Portobello, Birtley Lane, turn and set down in school grounds

ARRIVES LORD LAWSON COMP SCH 08:18

Learning Resource Centre opening times

Our Learning Resource Centre – known to our students as the LRC - is open after school for homework and study. Students may attend to complete homework, reading, work on computers; support with homework is available.

Our opening times are as follows:

- Monday – Thursday: 3:15pm - 4:15pm
- Friday: 3:15pm - 4:00pm

Thank you

Miss B Dixon
LRC Coordinator

The PE department would like to hear from you!

We are interested to know if your child is involved in any extracurricular sports outside school. Please let us know what your child has been up to, as we would love to celebrate their successes.

This week, several of our year 7 students, who play for Birtley Town Junior U12s football team, had a fantastic start to their season, with a 5-2 win last Saturday. Well done to:

- Danny Byers
- Harry Wilson
- Josh Cook
- Kai Green
- Lewis Marshall
- Morgan Ainsley
- Stefanos-Ovoke Oghenerume
- William Morgan-Darnell
- James Allen

If you have anything you would like us to know about, please email:

htroughton@lordlawson.academy

Thank you

Miss H Troughton
Teacher of PE

First Aid Unit Awareness Topic: Teens and sleep - Why they need it, and how to get enough

Is your child:

- Tired of always feeling sleepy?
- Having trouble staying awake in class?
- Finding it hard to get out of bed for school in the morning?
- Have an overwhelming need for a nap as soon as they get home from school?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you are not alone. Many teenagers feel that they are always tired.

Why do teens need more sleep?

Sleep helps to fuel the brain and the body. Teens need more sleep because their bodies and minds are growing quickly. Scientific research shows that many teens do not get enough sleep. To be at their best, **they need between 8 and 10 hours of sleep every day**. While they might not always be able to get this much, it's important to try and get as much as they can.

Why is it important to get enough sleep?

Although getting enough sleep may not seem that big a deal, teens who don't get enough sleep and are overtired are more likely to:

- struggle in school,
- have trouble with memory, concentration and motivation (the desire to accomplish a goal),
- be involved in car crashes and other accidents. Sleepiness (the feeling of wanting or needing to sleep in places and at times when you shouldn't) affects reaction times,
- feel depressed, which can become a serious medical condition.

What causes sleepiness?

Often the reason is obvious, such as too many late nights in a row. Although there are some medical causes of sleepiness, most sleepy teens just aren't getting enough sleep.

How do I know if they're getting enough sleep?

Signs that they need more sleep can include:

- difficulty waking up in the morning,
- trouble concentrating throughout the day,
- falling asleep during classes, and
- feeling moody or even depressed.

Why is it so hard to get enough sleep?

There are many reasons. Some they may be able to control and some they may not. They probably have a very busy life, but they still need "downtime" to relax, unwind and spend time with friends. This usually happens at the expense of sleeping. Many teens also crave the quiet privacy of a late night after parents have gone to bed.

When they think about all the other things they need to do (homework, socialising, sports, part-time jobs, etc.), getting to bed early enough to get 8 to 10 hours of sleep can seem pretty hard.

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Some suggestions that may help:

- **Encourage them to have a relaxing bedtime routine.** Have a light snack (such as a glass of milk) before bed. Try to get them to go to bed at about the same time every night. Keep their room cool, dark and quiet, but open the curtains or turn on the lights as soon as they get up in the morning.
- **They should always fall asleep in their bed.** Encourage them to use their bed for sleeping only. They should avoid doing homework, using a smartphone or tablet, or playing video games while in bed. The ideal is that they are in bed with the lights out for at least 8 hours every night.
- **Napping during the day can make it difficult to fall asleep.** If they do want to nap, keep it short (less than 30 minutes). Definitely don't nap after dinner.
- Do some form of exercise everyday (walking the dog, walking to and from school etc.) but avoid very hard exercise in the evening.
- **Avoid caffeine** (coffee, tea, pop, energy drinks), especially after mid-afternoon. They shouldn't use any products to help them sleep such as herbal products or over-the-counter sleep aids.
- Limit screen time before bed. Using electronic media and being exposed to the screen's light before trying to sleep can make it harder to fall asleep.
- On weekends, no matter how late they go to bed, try to **get them up within 2 hours to 4 hours of their usual wake time.** This is especially important if they have trouble falling asleep on Sunday nights.
- **Make sure they are not trying to do too much.** Do they still have some time for fun and to get enough sleep? If they are having trouble sleeping because they have too much on their mind, ask them to try keeping a diary or to-do lists. If they write things down before sleep, they may feel less worried or stressed.

Many of these suggestions can seem fairly straight forward, but we know as parents how difficult it can be at times to promote these lifestyle changes to our children. However, if they can adapt, then they (and you) will see the benefits.

Mrs K Maynard
Health Unit Team Leader