

Parent Bulletin

Week commencing Monday 8 November 2021 – Week 1

Dear Parents and Carers

I write this week with two important pieces of news. The first is about a change to our school calendar for 2022, and the second is an update on an incident that happened before half term.

You may recall that I told you we have become part of the **Department for Education's Behaviour Hub initiative**. For this, we are linked with Carmel College in Darlington, an 'Outstanding' school where the behaviour and culture truly are outstanding. Colleagues from Carmel spent a day with us and Mr Walsh and I travelled to Carmel before half term. Although our schools are different in context and nature, we were able to find much in common and to gain inspiration and fresh ideas.

I am grateful to those of you who gave permission for your children's views to be heard. Staff members were also surveyed. As a result of all this initial work, we have created a **Behaviour Hub Action Plan**. This is about to be submitted and I will share it with you once it is approved. We have already made great improvements in behaviour and culture, and we want to improve further, so that we can offer the best possible quality educational experience to your children. **In order to create time to implement the next set of changes and improvements, we need time for staff training.**

I am therefore letting you know that we will **change the start and end of the first half term in 2022**. School will return on Tuesday 4 January 2022, but on this day we will be open for staff training only: the school will be closed to students. **School starts for students on Wednesday 5 January 2022**. At the other end of half term, the last day of term will be a full school day (it was previously to have been a staff training day): **Friday 18 February 2022 will be a normal school day for all students**. I hope this change will not cause inconvenience. In summary:

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Tuesday 4 January 2022: | School closed to students |
| Wednesday 5 January 2022: | School starts for all students at 08:45 |
| Friday 18 February 2022: | Last day of the half term for all students |

And now I come to a grim but necessary announcement. Many of you know that on Wednesday 6 October a small group of our students assaulted a member of the local community. Their assault, which was conducted while they were wearing Lord Lawson uniform, was unprovoked and showed an appalling lack of respect and common decency. The attack was filmed on a mobile phone and the footage shared. There can be no excuse for such behaviour, and none of the boys has sought to defend their action. The police were involved.

As Principal, I condemn this behaviour in the strongest possible terms. Students, parents and members of the public have also condemned this incident. After investigating thoroughly, I decided that there was only one suitable punishment: **permanent exclusion**. **Governors have upheld my decisions. These boys are no longer part of the Lord Lawson community.** I have held assemblies this week with every year group on the theme of **Respect**, which as you know is one of our values. All students have been told about the expulsion of this group of boys, and they have been reminded of the respect I expect them to show to one another, their parents, their teachers and other members of the community. Equally importantly, I also urged them to respect themselves. I trust I have your full support in these actions.

With all good wishes,

Yours faithfully

Mr A T Fowler
Principal

Maths ‘Sparx’ Homework

From Friday 5 November, all homework for maths will be set using the online platform ‘Sparx’.

Homework is set each Friday and should be completed for the following Friday. Your child will be given a sheet to write down their questions and answers (including the question code). It is important that your child completes their homework independently so that the system can determine the appropriate level for future questions.

Students have their log in details and can access the platform by using the following link: <https://sparx.co.uk/>.

Should you have any questions please contact me at: djackson@lordlawson.academy.

Regards

Mrs D Jackson
Subject Leader - Maths

Prospective Sixth Form Open Evening: Tuesday 23 November 2021

We are holding an open evening on Tuesday 23 November, 3.30 – 6.30pm, for students and their families to find out more about our sixth form and the subjects that we offer. Students are invited to remain in school at the end of the school day; they will be able to get a tour of the sixth form facilities, find out more about sixth form life and visit subject areas.

At 5pm we will hold a parents’ information meeting. We are holding this both as a live online event and in person in the main hall. The option to attend either virtually or in person is due to the continued presence of COVID in our community. We are encouraging parents/carers to attend virtually in order to protect our whole school community. However, if you would prefer to attend in person, we welcome you into the academy and ask that you wear a face covering during the evening. More information will be sent directly to parents/carers for you to indicate your attendance either virtually or in person.

If you have any further questions please contact Mrs K Hubbard at: khubbard@lordlawson.academy.

Regards

Mrs K Kendall
Assistant Principal

Performing Arts Update

The Performing Arts department would like to thank all parents, guardians and the school community for their support towards our recent academy production, 'Les Misérables - School Edition'.

We are so proud of our cast, their work ethic, attitude to learning and achievement. The cast were an absolute pleasure to work with throughout the whole process and during show week.

We are thankful for all of the lovely feedback we have received and we are very happy that our audience enjoyed the show. On Monday of this week, we enjoyed a final 'Les Misérables' meeting and hosted a celebration evening; the cast received and signed their show posters and reflected on their show memories.

As the production has now come to an end we are launching our new Performing Arts extra-curricular timetable, which begins the week commencing Monday 8 November, details of which can be found below:

Monday

Dance Club: 3.15 - 4.15pm with Miss Brown in the Dance Studio (All students welcome)

Orchestra: 3.15 - 4.30pm with Mrs Gray in PA12 (All instrumental students welcome)

Wednesday

Snowman Audition preparation with Mrs Hall in PA10 (interested students should speak to Mrs Hall to gain more information)

Thursday

The Little Theatre (drama project) with Miss Race in PA11 (Only for invited students due to the limited availability of student places.)

Please be aware that due to the winter weather we have asked all year 7 and year 8 students to bring a clean pair of trainers to every Performing Arts lesson to wear for hygiene reasons.

If you require any further information relating to any of the above items, please do not hesitate to contact me at: sbrown@lordlawson.academy.

Kind regards

Miss S Brown

Subject Leader – Performing Arts

LRC Updates

The following activities are currently being coordinated by the LRC.

National Teen Book Club Work Experience

A great work experience opportunity which is available to our students aged 14 -19 years old. The opportunity is being shared by 'Experience', a programme from Speakers for Schools, which advertises work experience placements with leading companies for 14 - 19 year olds.

This year's book is 'Chinglish' by Sue Cheung, and students must be able to commit to 5 afterschool web-based sessions with authors, participate in the reading group, reading 'Chinglish' with hundreds of other students online, and be able to write their own work with the aim of completing a web-based publication.

Any interested students can find information at:

Book Clubs in Schools (BCiS) - National Teen Book Club

<http://www.s4snextgen.org/students/Opportunities/View/id/2173>

For any additional information students should see Miss Dixon in the LRC. Enrolment for the event must be completed by Tuesday 9 November 2021.

Book Donations

We are currently building a small library of children's and teen books for our tutor rooms, which can be accessed by students throughout the day as well as during reading time.

It is our aim to get all students in our academy reading for pleasure and to purposefully increase their time spent doing this. In order to facilitate this aim, we are asking our students and their parents to kindly donate any used children's and teen books that they no longer require, fiction and non-fiction, to the academy. We would appreciate only books that are in a good condition.

Books can be dropped off at reception – marked for my attention - or students can use the drop boxes in each of the year bases.

Any donations will be gratefully received and would be combined with academy resources for the same purpose. It's also a great way to recycle!

We hope to encourage more and more students to pick up a good book and develop a passion for reading, and we greatly appreciate the support from our parents.

For further information, please contact Miss Dixon at: BDixon3@lordlawson.academy

Scholastic Book Club

Just a reminder that we are once again running a Scholastic Book Club online. To view the latest books on offer please visit:

<https://schools.scholastic.co.uk/lord-lawson-of-beamish/digital-book-club>

Scholastic Book Club is a great way of keeping your child engaged with reading and supporting literacy in the academy. For every £1 spent on books from Scholastic, the academy receives 20p in rewards to spend on new books for our academy library. The book club will run until the 25th November and payment should be made online.

Thank you

Miss B Dixon
LRC Coordinator

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about TIKTOK

TikTok is a video-sharing social media app which lets people create, view and download looping 15-second clips. Typically, these are videos of users lip-syncing and dancing to popular songs or soundbites (often for comic purposes), enhanced with filters, effects and text. Designed with young people in mind, TikTok skyrocketed in popularity in 2019 and has featured near the top of download charts ever since. It now has around a billion users worldwide.

AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Most videos appearing on a child's feed are light-hearted and amusing. However, some clips have been reported for featuring drug and alcohol abuse, themes of suicide and self-harm, or young teens acting in a sexually suggestive way. The sheer volume of uploads is impossible to moderate entirely – and since TikTok Jump's introduction in mid-2021, users can view third-party content outside the app.

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CENSORED

EXPLICIT SONGS

TikTok primarily revolves around videos of users lip-syncing and dancing to music. Inevitably, some featured songs will contain explicit or suggestive lyrics. Given the app's young user-base, there is a risk that children may view older users' videos and then be inclined to imitate any explicit language or suggestive actions.

W&#*!

TIKTOK FAME

The app has created its own celebrities: Charli D'Amelio and Lil Nas X, for example, were catapulted to fame by exposure on TikTok – leading to many more teens attempting to go viral and become "TikTok famous". While most aspiring stars hoping to be 'the next big thing' will find it difficult, setbacks may in turn prompt them to go to even more drastic lengths to get noticed.



HAZARDOUS VISIBILITY

Connecting with others is simple on TikTok – including commenting on and reacting to users' videos, following their profile and downloading their content. The majority of these interactions are harmless, but – because of its abundance of teen users – TikTok has experienced problems with predators contacting young people.

ADDICTIVE NATURE

Like all social media platforms, TikTok can be extremely addictive. It can be hugely entertaining – but that also makes it hard to put down. As well as the punchy nature of the short video format, the app's ability to keep users intrigued about what's coming next means it's easy for a 5-minute visit to turn into a 45-minute stay.

IN-APP SPENDING

There's an in-app option to purchase 'TikTok coins', which are then converted into digital rewards for sending to content creators that a user likes. Prices range from 99p to an eye-watering £99 bundle. TikTok is also connected with Shopify, which allows users to buy products through the app.

Advice for Parents & Carers

TALK ABOUT ONLINE CONTENT

Assuming your child is above TikTok's age limit, talk to them about what they've viewed on the app. Ask their opinion on what's appropriate and what isn't. Explain why they shouldn't give out personal details or upload videos which reveal information like their school or home address. In the long run, teaching them to think critically about what they see on TikTok could help them to become social-media savvy.

MAINTAIN PRIVACY SETTINGS

The default setting for all under 16s' accounts is 'private'. Keeping it that way is the safest solution: it means only users who your child approves can watch their videos. The 'Stitch' (which lets users splice clips from other people's videos into their own) and 'Duet' (where you build on another user's content by recording your own video alongside their original) features are now only available to over 16s. This might clash with your child's ambitions of social media stardom, but it will fortify their account against predators.

LEARN ABOUT REPORTING AND BLOCKING

With the correct privacy settings applied, TikTok is a relatively safe space. However, in case something *does* slip through, make sure your child knows how to recognise and report inappropriate content and get them to come to you about anything upsetting that they've seen. TikTok allows users to report anyone breaching its guidelines, while you can also block individual users through their profile.

ENABLE FAMILY PAIRING

'Family Pairing' lets parents and carers link their own TikTok account to their child's. Through your mobile, you can control your child's safety settings remotely – including limiting screen time, managing their ability to exchange messages (and with whom) and blocking a lot of age-inappropriate content. TikTok's Safety Centre also provides resources for parents and carers to support online safety among families. These resources can be found on their website.

USE RESTRICTED MODE

In the app's 'Digital Wellbeing' section, you can filter out inappropriate content (specific content creators or hashtags, for instance) using 'Restricted Mode'. This can then be locked with a PIN. You should note, though, that the algorithm moderating content isn't totally dependable – so it's wise to stay aware of what your child is watching.

MODERATE SCREEN TIME

As entertaining as TikTok is, you can help your child to manage their time on it in the 'Digital Wellbeing' section. Under 'Screen Time Management', you can limit the daily permitted time on the app (in increments ranging from 40 minutes to two hours). This preference can also be locked behind a PIN. That way, your child can get their regular dose of TikTok without wasting the whole day.

Meet Our Expert

Parven Kaur is a social media expert and digital media consultant who is passionate about improving digital literacy for parents and children. She has extensive experience in the social media arena and is the founder of Kids N Clicks: a web resource that helps parents and children thrive in a digital world.



#WakeUpWednesday

SOURCES: www.tiktok.com



www.nationalonlinesafety.com



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**GET !
INVOLVED!**

Updated PE Extra-Curricular Timetable: Term 1

| | Week 1 3.30 - 4.30pm | Week 2 3.30 - 4.30pm |
|-----------|--|---|
| Monday | Netball: Miss Troughton (Year 7 and 8) Trampolining and Gymnastics: Miss Golby (Year 7 - 11) Rowing: Mr McConway (Year 7 - 11) | Netball: Mrs Halliday (Year 7) Netball: Miss Troughton (Year 8) Trampolining and Gymnastics: Miss Golby (Year 7 - 11) Rowing: Mr McConway (Year 7 - 11) |
| Tuesday | No clubs | No clubs |
| Wednesday | Netball: Miss Troughton and Mrs Halliday (Year 9 and 10) Rugby: Mr Wyllie (Year 7) Fitness Suite: Mr Wallace (Year 7 - 11) Girls Football: Miss Golby (Year 7 - 11) | Netball: Miss Troughton (Year 10) Rugby: Mr Wyllie (Year 8 and 9) Boys Football: Mr Thompson (Year 7) Fitness Suite: Mr Wallace (Year 7 - 11) Girls Football: Miss Golby (Year 7 - 11) |
| Thursday | Boys Football: Mr Cumiskey (Year 8) Boys Football: Mr Earle (Year 9) Girls Rugby: Miss Golby (Year 7 - 11) CNAT Sport Science Coursework Catch-up: Miss Troughton (Year 11) | Netball: Mrs Halliday (Year 9) Boys Football: Mr Earle (Year 9) Girls Rugby: Miss Troughton (Year 7 - 11) CNAT Sport Science Revision: Miss Golby (Year 10) |
| Friday | No clubs | No clubs |