

Dear Parents and Carers

As we approach half-term I am writing to congratulate our Year 11, 12 and 13 students on the way they have approached the end of January exams. The maturity they have shown is commendable and we look forward to finding out their improved grades, and the rewards they will receive, before the February half-term.

I am pleased to say that the results of the second feeling safe survey that was held on Thursday 11th January stated that 96% of our students feel safe all or most of the time. This is a great achievement and staff will be working hard with the 4% of students that have reported not feeling safe.

You will have read the Ofsted monitoring visit report, which is very positive, with the only areas of concern remaining the attendance of the students and consistent assessment practices in lessons.

In terms of attendance, thank you for working with us to improve attendance which is now at 90%. Persistent absence has also improved with 1 in 4 (25%) of our students missing more than 10% of sessions (this was 1 in 3 or 33% last October). 25% is the national average persistent absence figure and to achieve this is an important milestone in our attendance journey. It also shows that by working in partnership together we will improve the opportunities of our students because if they are not in school they cannot learn.

In terms of ensuring we have a more consistent approach to assessing our students all staff start the lesson with 'Do Now' tasks which checks the ability of students to retrieve the knowledge from the previous lessons. At the end of every assessment staff all analyse the papers question by question so they can then spend lessons 'Filling the Gaps' in their knowledge. If you speak to your child they will be able to refer to the 'Filling the Gaps' lessons which occur in every subject across the Academy after assessments.

We look forward to the next Ofsted monitoring visit although, as during the first monitoring visit, inspectors will be unable to change the grade given in their final report unless the visit is converted to a graded inspection. Hopefully in the spring term we will have some good news and be able to approach the rest of the year with some much needed optimism.

Kind regards

Liz Furber
Executive Principal

Dear Parents and Carers

A very belated happy new year to you, which I realise is rather strange when a twelfth of the year has already gone.

There are usually several topics that I consider writing about but, as I think about those, the one that dominates most is Ofsted. As I compose this (on 22nd January), there are two significant events happening today around Ofsted. The first is the resumption of inspections after a break of a few weeks while senior officials in Ofsted have considered how they respond to the Coroner's comments following the death of Ruth Perry. That has involved, among other things, mental health awareness training for lead inspectors.

The other significant event today has been the publication of our latest monitoring visit inspection report, a process which happened well before Christmas. Yet again, it has taken two months to publish a report that we responded to very quickly. One thing that the government has not changed is the single word judgement. My own view, and that of the vast majority of education professionals, is that the failure to change this is both unhelpful and misleading.

If you look at the Ofsted site, our headline still says 'inadequate'. One of the reasons for that original judgement, exactly 12 months ago now, was that safeguarding was deemed to be ineffective. If you read

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the latest report, the inspectors clearly state, in bold print 'safeguarding is effective', and yet the judgement remains 'inadequate'.

If you read the other text headlines, Ofsted say 'leaders have made progress to improve the school' and 'the school's improvement plan is fit for purpose', and yet the judgement remains 'inadequate'.

As you read through the remainder of the report, it is very difficult to find many negative comments among those that are so positive. And yet the judgement remains 'inadequate'.

You will know that we have mounted a legal challenge to the inspection outcome of 12 months ago and are awaiting the outcome of that.

In the meantime, I can assure you that everyone connected with the Academy continues to work extremely hard to ensure your children receive the best possible education and outcomes we can give them.

Best wishes

David Fraser
Chair of Governors

Lost Property

As we approach half term, please encourage your children to check lost property for any items they have misplaced. All lost property will be displayed before half term so that items can be claimed.

Any unnamed items that are not collected will be disposed of during half term.

Looking Ahead

19th February
Half Term

11th to 22nd March
Y11-Y13 Mocks

26th March
Y9 Vaccinations

26th March
Y11 Parents' Evening
(face to face)

27th March
Y11 Parents' Evening
(virtual)

1st April
Easter Holiday

15th April
First Day of Term

SAVE THE DATE

Thursday 4th July
Year 11 Prom

NEW **CHILDREN'S SERVICES**
SKILLS4SUCCESS
WELLBEING **FOR TEENS! AGES: 16-19**

February Half Term 2024

Leighton Buzzard Youth Centre, LU7 3FU

Monday 19th February - Wednesday 21st February

10:30am - 2:30pm

£60 (this includes all resources)

We can meet your young person online before the event and send them social stories and venue photos if needed.

To book, contact Ebony at: ebony.willis@autismbeds.org

Topics Covered:

- Positive thinking
- Mindfulness
- Journaling
- Confidence
- Sensory
- Stimming
- And more

Central Bedfordshire Council
www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Tenancy Sustainment Team

Housing Advice Drop-ins

Central Bedfordshire Council's Tenancy Sustainment team provide advice and guidance to our housing tenants on a broad range of issues including:

- Applying for welfare benefits
- Working out a household budget
- Managing debts
- Maintaining your home
- Moving to more appropriate accommodation
- Signposting to other organisations

We are a friendly, non-judgemental team with experience in helping people and will work with you to create a plan - giving you the information and knowledge you need to manage things yourself.

If you would like to meet with one of our team to discuss any budgeting, benefits, or housing related issues, please speak to one of the staff at the Childrens Centre and they will book you in.

We will be attending the centre on the first Friday in every month.

1st December, 5th January, 2nd February, 1st March, 5th April

Appointments available from 9.30-1.00.

For information about our service please go to our website and search for Housing/Supporting our tenants.

From the Chaplain

Focus verse:

"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen." *Ephesians 4 v29*

One of the most helpful things we can do for each other is to encourage and congratulate when things go well. Conversely, it can be incredibly damaging to talk negatively to, or about, others. Let's explore why.

My initial thinking is that by "unwholesome talk" the Bible is referring to gossip or criticising others. Everyone likes a bit of gossip don't they? Maybe, maybe not. But what are the consequences of gossip?

Well they are manifold. The first, and possibly the most obvious, is that if you are someone who shares gossip with others without checking the factual correctness of what they've seen, read, or heard, then you are likely to be someone who cannot be trusted. Also, even if what information you've learned is factually accurate it may not be appropriate or your place to share it, so it suggests a lack of sound judgement. In addition it could demonstrate a spitefulness about your character; that you might appear to be willing to share things about others regardless of its accuracy. It reveals a lack of ability to keep confidences. Furthermore it suggests an insecurity which suggests you want to hide your own struggles and focus on others. And these are to say nothing about your reputation, potential legal or libellous issues, the negative energy you are letting off, or the fact that it could actually be really unkind and you can seriously damage someone else.



So what about building others up? Well this is about encouraging – but it doesn't mean telling inaccuracies, for



instance when someone has tried really hard at something but it still fails to hit the mark we don't need to lie and say it was really good when it may well not have been. We can, however, say things like, I can see you put a lot of effort into that, or that was brave of you, or similar. I

think we have a problem if we feel we have to tell falsehoods in order to say something positive or uplifting about someone else. But encouragements don't always have to be words; they can be a simple smile, a wave or some sort of interaction which indicates that you have recognised and acknowledged someone else. That in itself, in our techno-lonely culture, can be incredibly uplifting.

And finally there's the good old adage which says, "If you haven't got anything positive to say, don't say anything!". It's along similar lines to this quote often attributed to Abraham Lincoln, "Better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak and to remove all doubt".

Once again the Bible comes up trumps with good sound practical advice as none of this is rocket science. Speaking is powerful. It can be a force for good or a force for bad. Maybe it's time to consider how we use our words?

Prayer:

Loving heavenly Father,

It can sometimes be so easy to find ourselves talking unkindly about other people. Please help me to remember that everyone has value and we should look to find the positive in others. I'm sorry for any times I may have spoken out of turn about others and/or caused them hurt. Amen.



Revd. Tim Davis; School Chaplain

Academic Calendar - 2023/2024

School Holiday						Bank Holiday						Pupil Day						Training Day																					
September 2023										October 2023										November 2023										December 2023									
Mon		4	11	18	25		Mon		2	9	16	23	30		Mon		6	13	20	27		Mon		4	11	18	25												
Tue		5	12	19	26		Tue		3	10	17	24	31		Tue		7	14	21	28		Tue		5	12	19	26												
Wed		6	13	20	27		Wed		4	11	18	25		Wed		1	8	15	22	29		Wed		6	13	20	27												
Thu		7	14	21	28		Thu		5	12	19	26		Thu		2	9	16	23	30		Thu		7	14	21	28												
Fri	1	8	15	22	29		Fri		6	13	20	27		Fri		3	10	17	24			Fri	1	8	15	22	29												
Sat	2	9	16	23	30		Sat		7	14	21	28		Sat		4	11	18	25			Sat	2	9	16	23	30												
Sun	3	10	17	24			Sun	1	8	15	22	29		Sun		5	12	19	26			Sun	3	10	17	24	31												
January 2024										February 2024										March 2024										April 2024									
Mon	1	8	15	22	29		Mon		5	12	19	26		Mon		4	11	18	25			Mon	1	8	15	22	29												
Tue	2	9	16	23	30		Tue		6	13	20	27		Tue		5	12	19	26			Tue	2	9	16	23	30												
Wed	3	10	17	24	31		Wed		7	14	21	28		Wed		6	13	20	27			Wed	3	10	17	24													
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Fri	5	12	19	26			Fri	2	9	16	23			Fri	1	8	15	22	29			Fri	5	12	19	26													
Sat	6	13	20	27			Sat	3	10	17	24			Sat	2	9	16	23	30			Sat	6	13	20	27													
Sun	7	14	21	28			Sun	4	11	18	25			Sun	3	10	17	24	31			Sun	7	14	21	28													
May 2024										June 2024										July 2024										August 2024									
Mon		6	13	20	27		Mon		3	10	17	24		Mon	1	8	15	22	29			Mon		5	12	19	26												
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Sun	5	12	19	26			Sun	2	9	16	23	30		Sun	7	14	21	28				Sun	4	11	18	25													

Academic Calendar - 2024/2025



School Holiday	Bank Holiday	Pupil Day	Training Day			
September 2024						
Mon	2	9	16	23	30	
Tue	3	10	17	24		
Wed	4	11	18	25		
Thu	5	12	19	26		
Fri	6	13	20	27		
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October 2024						
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Sun	6	13	20	27		
November 2024						
Mon		4	11	18	25	
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December 2024						
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Tue		3	10	17	24	31
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January 2025						
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Thu	2	9	16	23	30	
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Sat	4	11	18	25		
Sun	5	12	19	26		
February 2025						
Mon		3	10	17	24	
Tue		4	11	18	25	
Wed		5	12	19	26	
Thu		6	13	20	27	
Fri		7	14	21	28	
Sat	1	8	15	22		
Sun	2	9	26	23		
March 2025						
Mon		3	10	17	24	31
Tue		4	11	18	25	
Wed		5	12	19	26	
Thu		6	13	20	27	
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Sun	2	9	16	23	30	
April 2025						
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Wed	2	9	16	23	30	
Thu	3	10	17	24		
Fri	4	11	18	25		
Sat	5	12	19	26		
Sun	6	13	20	27		
May 2025						
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Tue		6	13	20	27	
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Thu	1	8	15	22	29	
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Sat	3	10	17	24	31	
Sun	4	11	18	25		
June 2025						
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Wed		4	11	18	25	
Thu		5	12	19	26	
Fri		6	13	20	27	
Sat		7	14	21	28	
Sun	1	8	15	22	29	
July 2025						
Mon		7	14	21	28	
Tue	1	8	15	22	29	
Wed	2	9	16	23	30	
Thu	3	10	17	24	31	
Fri	4	11	18	25		
Sat	5	12	19	26		
Sun	6	13	20	27		
August 2025						
Mon		4	11	18	25	
Tue		5	12	19	26	
Wed		6	13	20	27	
Thu		7	14	21	28	
Fri	1	8	15	22	29	
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