

Parental Communication & Engagement



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Message from Headteacher

It's been a busy week for Year 11 with their Mocks starting this week. They have got off to a great start and we have been really impressed with the maturity they have demonstrated during exam conditions.

On Wednesday, some of our Year 10s went to see a performance of 'A Christmas Carol' at the Birmingham Rep. On Thursday, we also had the Birmingham Rep Theatre in school undertaking some workshops with some of our budding dramatists in Year 9.

Two of our Year Netball 8 Teams took part in a tournament this week. Our A team won the whole tournament which was fantastic and our B team came 4th which was an amazing achievement considering they had not played a competitive game before! Our Year 8 girls also played in a football tournament last night. They played 4 games where they won 3 and lost 1. We are hoping to come second in the whole league. The sporting talent at Dormston is just brilliant!

Our School Production tickets of 'Grease' have also gone on sale this week. The show promises to be amazing so please come along and show your support!

We are looking forward to speaking to our Year 10 Parents'/Carers' at our Virtual Parents'/Carers' Evening on Thursday 12 December 2024. Don't forget that our on-line booking appointment system for this, closes on Wednesday 11 December 2024 at 3.00pm!

Best wishes.

Mrs Sutton
Headteacher

Key Letters/Information Sent Out Recently

The vast majority of all letters are now emailed home and we use electronic reply slips as much as possible. The criterion for 'selected student only' opportunities are based on various factors depending on its focus. Unfortunately, we are unable to allow every student the opportunity to be involved with every activity which we understand sometimes causes disappointment. If you require more details about the selection process for any opportunity please contact the event organiser.

- All Parents/Carers - Well-being for All Sheet - Autumn Term 2 - 2024.

Events/Reminders

- Year 11 Mock Exams Week 2 - WC 9 December 2024;
- FoDC Cake & Coffee Evening - Monday 9 December 2024 at 5.30pm;
- School Choir Visit to Ridgeway Court Care Home - Tuesday 10 December 2024;
- PSHE - Thursday 12 December 2024;
- Christmas Dinner Opportunity - Thursday 12 December 2024;
- Year 10 On-line Booking System Closes - Wednesday 11 December 2024 at 3.00pm;
- Year 10 Parents'/Carers' Evening - Thursday 12 December 2024.

Updates

FoDC Cake & Coffee Evening - Monday 9 December 2024 at 5.30pm?

FoDC are looking to increase their membership and are holding a Cake & Coffee Evening on Monday 9 December 2024 at 5.30pm. If you are interested in coming along to find out more please complete the link in the below flyer or contact Mrs Otton on kotton@dormston.dudley.sch.uk



**WE ARE
HIRING!**


Friends of
Dormston Community


Join Us

Position:
Parent Teacher Association

Friends of Dormston Community

Do you want to get more involved in school life? Would you like to join a group of like-minded parents in order to contribute towards supporting Dormston School and its place in the local community? If the answer is 'Yes' then why not get involved with Friends of Dormston Community as we are currently recruiting new members!

Our main aim is to help develop a sense of community which has Dormston at its heart and to raise funds for the school. By joining you can:

- help your child settle in;
- understand how your child's school works;
- develop relationships and friendships;
- help organise exciting events.


PTA

Interested?

Fill out the form and join us for our Coffee & Cake Evening on Monday 9 December 2024 at 5.30pm to find out more.

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=SdytGq2PpkG2xjy5y4_0X_MdAPSAjelDoc_5nyzUI5dUMEU0UEQ2WjxvjYzTENVR0gxVzM2WDdDSS4u


everyone's
welcome

'Have yourself a FoDC Christmas' - WIN your Christmas Shop on FoDC!

Fancy winning a £100, £50 or £25 voucher for the supermarket of your choice to make your Christmas this year that extra bit special/cheaper? Then why not buy a ticket for our FoDC Christmas Raffle. Tickets are £1.00 each and are available on ParentPay now. Raffle closes on Friday 13 December 2024 at midnight. Winner announced and E-Voucher provided to winner shortly after. Good luck!

School Production Tickets - ON SALE NOW!



Hey all you Pink Ladies and T-Birds! Great news:

GREASE TICKETS ARE ON SALE NOW!!

<https://www.seaty.co.uk/dormstongrease/>

Get them while you can and come support the kids (and staff!) 🧑🧑

Winter HAF

Please see below details of how you can register for FREE Winter Activities that are on offer for students who are in receipt of Free School Meals.

WINTER HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES

DUDLEY HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES PROVIDES FREE ACTIVITIES IN THE SCHOOL HOLIDAYS FOR CHILDREN AGED 5-16 WHO RECEIVE BENEFITS RELATED FREE SCHOOL MEALS.

TO SIGN UP:

1. Register on the Dudley HAF website. Register as soon as possible as you must be registered to book activities.
2. Once Free School Meal (FSM) status has been verified by Dudley Council, you will get an email with login details.
3. Once winter bookings are open, you can login and book up to 4 sessions for each of your children.

<https://www.dudleyholidayactivities.org.uk/register>

SCAN ME

Sutton Croft DUDLEY HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES Dudley Council Dudley

Mental Health & Wellbeing Apps

Further to our Well-being for All Sheet please see below FYI.

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING APPS

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

When looking at options for supporting a child's mental health, the sheer volume can be overwhelming. There are many wellbeing apps available, but unfortunately not all are trustworthy. It's important to evaluate which resources are suitable, reliable and effective. This guide lets you know what to consider before installing such an app, to determine just how useful it's going to be.

QUALITY & RELIABILITY

Mental health apps can be a useful starting point when looking for wellbeing advice and strategies and can be a useful extension to the in-person services available. However, they aren't a substitute. Information on the quality of some of these apps is scarce. They may look cute and child-friendly, but have they been designed by a mental health professional? Furthermore, do they have research to back up their content?

PLACE RESPONSIBILITY ON CHILDREN

Some apps add the words 'kids' or 'children' to their title or use cartoon icons to make them more appealing to young people. When signing up for some of these apps, some will speak to the parent directly, saying something along the lines of "Your child is good to go. Let them take it from here". It's important to remain involved in the child's mental health journey, so regular check-ins are recommended.

DISREGARDING APPROPRIATE SUPPORT

Young people who feel anxious and have trouble sleeping may download a mindfulness app to help. While this is a good strategy initially, it's not addressing the root of the problem. A child could simply try managing these symptoms themselves (as opposed to speaking out and seeking professional help), which could potentially worsen their anxiety in the long run.

LACK OF PERSONALISATION

Mental health or wellbeing apps are useful tools for the short term, teaching users several helpful habits to manage their condition – such as keeping an illness diary, improving nutrition and practising mindfulness exercises. As every person is unique – and children especially will grow and develop in different ways – these apps struggle to tailor themselves to users' individual needs. For example, many apps don't distinguish between the ages of users and can offer extremely generic advice.

DATA SECURITY

As with any other app – not just those for mental health and wellbeing – it's wise to check out the privacy policy before downloading it. Some of these applications may share data with third parties for numerous reasons (such as targeted advertisements), and if a user is sharing personal and sensitive information within the app, they probably don't want it ending up elsewhere without their consent.

IN-APP PURCHASES

Many apps will provide their most basic features for free but will require you to pay for other aspects – such as a more tailored experience or access to additional resources. This could be a one-off fee or a regular subscription. Consider whether this is actually required. Is it benefiting the child, or could they receive the same support from a medical professional?

Advice for Parents & Educators

CHECK THE CREDIBILITY OF THE APP

Before you download a mental health and wellbeing app, investigate the developers. Have they consulted with qualified mental health professionals to create their resource? Also check whether the app is affiliated with any government or mental health organisations, as these are solid indicators of legitimacy. Reviews can also be a useful signpost to the app's quality. There are many good apps out there, but there are just as many that miss the mark.

SEEK PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

Trusted mental health and wellbeing apps designed by qualified, reputable organisations can be used alongside the personalised advice and support of fully trained professionals. These apps should never be considered a substitute for counselling or other tailored medical help. If you have real concerns about a child's mental wellbeing, you should seek appropriate advice from a suitable source, such as their GP – or Childline, who can be contacted by calling 0800 1111.

READ THE PRIVACY POLICY

Look into the app's terms of service – especially its privacy policy. Do so by yourself first, then go over it with the child who is considering using the app, to ensure they know what data will be collected and how exactly it will be used. Use all of this information to make an educated decision on whether or not to download that particular app.

ENCOURAGE OPEN COMMUNICATION

Mental health and wellbeing apps can be useful for writing down feelings, tracking your own health and other such activities. These can help if the problem is short-term and temporary – such as a child getting stressed about approaching exams – or if you're currently waiting for professional support. Nonetheless, it is important that children aren't solely reliant on the app and have a safe space to talk about their feelings and experiences in the real world.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/mental-health-apps>

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Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 04.12.2024

Congratulations/Well Done

Headteacher Commendations

Congratulations go to the following students who received Headteacher Commendations this week.

Arley Jay Anslow	Finley Beale	Rosie Harris	Alfie Hill
James Hickman	Finley Jones	Jasdeep Kalsi	Oscar Leak
Lovell McIntosh	Hattie Powell	Maddison Whittaker	Amber Tandy
Emma Trinfa			