

## Parental Communication & Engagement



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### Message from Headteacher

It's been a fun packed, final week of the Spring Term! On Monday, our U15s Netball Team won a whopping 32 - 5 against Ellowes Hall. Player of the Match was Isobel Hobday.



On Tuesday, PSHE was delivered across the school during Periods 2 and 3. Year 7 took part in Active Citizenship where pupils continued their exploration of active citizenship, with a particular focus on ways to make a positive impact in the local community. Additionally, each form participated in a school litter pick to contribute to maintaining a clean and sustainable environment. Below is some of the litter that was collected. Well done Year 7!



Year 8 pupils examined the risks associated with sharing sexual images, exploring both the legal and emotional consequences. They also learned strategies for managing pressure to share such images and identified sources of support for individuals who may be pressured to send or share inappropriate content.

Year 9 pupils learnt about the health risks associated with smoking, vaping and the consumption of alcohol.

Year 10 had representatives from Halesowen College deliver a session on CV writing, after which students engaged in a reflective exercise regarding their work experience placements.

Year 11 pupils gained an understanding of the various pathways to parenthood, the implications of underage pregnancy, pregnancy-related choices, and the legal options available in such circumstances.

Thanks to Mrs Barrett for all her hard work in putting these PHSE sessions together.

As you know, we recently achieved our Music Mark Award and have now been presented with our award from the DPA Head of Service, Claire Pennycooke. Congratulations to our Music Department who have worked incredibly hard to achieve this amazing accolade and to all our many talented music students who have made this possible!



This week, Dudley Performing Arts also held their Spring Festival Concerts across the disciplines of brass, woodwind, strings and contemporary. We are extremely proud of the following Dormston pupils who have taken part and represented our School so fantastically - Tess Wilkinson, Imogen Rose, Kelvin Benion, Frazer Bateman, George Dupree and Sophie Barnet. Well done to them all!

On Friday, lots of our Year 9s brought in items for 'Black Country Foodbank'. Black Country Foodbank helps vulnerable individuals and families in crisis through the provision of 3 days emergency food supplies while a longer-term solution is developed. Dormston's School Council picked this charity for Year 9 because it provides an enormous impact for those who are struggling, and it gives them great help and a space to reduce stress for those in need. Well done Year 9!



This week in school we have also been celebrating and learning about different cultures in school and on Friday we held our Culture Celebration event where we had Bhangra dancing, kabaddi, hair braiding, henna design along with music and food. Students were also allowed to come in any cultural dress or wear colours from their flag. A massive THANK YOU to Mrs Downie and Miss Downie for all their hard work in organising the wonderful celebrations this week.



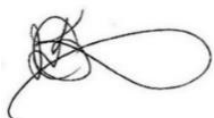


For the past two weeks the English Department have been trialling the removal of mobile phones to prevent a loss of focus in learning. This trial has gone well. Student feedback has been positive - their only observation was that lessons start a little slower as we ensure they are switched off and in their bags. Staff have reported that lesson engagement and student attentiveness have improved. After half term all Curriculum Leaders will be adopting the English model with a view to rolling this out with all classrooms. I am sure you will agree that less distractions = better learning.

Don't forget that we break up for the Easter Holidays today for 2 weeks. Students should return to school on Monday 28 April 2025 to a Week 1 Timetable. Just a reminder that contrary to social media or any uniform suppliers, wearing Summer Polo Shirts after Easter is '**optional**'.

FODC's #Pre-Loved Pop Up Shop will also be open on Monday 14 April 2025 at 10.00am - 12.00pm.

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.

- Year 8 Update Letter - April 2025;
- Year 11 Update Letter - April 2025;
- Well-being for All Sheet - April 2025.

## Events/Reminders

- Year 8 Vaccinations - Wednesday 30 April 2025;
- Year 7 On-line Consultation Evening Booking System Opens - Thursday 1 May 2025;
- New York Trip 2026 2<sup>nd</sup> Deposit Due (£200) - Saturday 3 May 2025.

## Updates

### Year 11 - Study Hacks

Please see below link for some great study hacks!

<https://www.fromthesidelines.uk/study-hacks>

### Reading Habits

We are constantly looking at ways to improve our pupils' reading habits and skills. To this end we would like to invite all parents/carers to take part in a short survey regarding your child's reading at home and in school. The survey should take no longer than 10 mins to complete and will prove invaluable in helping us develop and refine out reading programmes in school. Your support is much appreciated.

<https://forms.office.com/e/jtMVnhN9aU>

## Parent Webinar Opportunity - Thursday 24 April 2025

Please find below information for a Parent Webinar that takes place on Thursday 24 April 2025 at 3.00pm via MS Teams. It will be looking at how to recognise and understand anxiety in children and young people.



The poster features a light green background. In the top left corner is a circular logo with a rainbow and the word 'Reflexions'. In the top right corner is the NHS logo and the text 'Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust'. The main title is 'PARENT WEBINAR' in a small, blue, sans-serif font, followed by 'RECOGNISING AND UNDERSTANDING' in a large, blue, serif font, and 'Anxiety in Children and Young People' in a blue, cursive script font. Below the title, the date and time are listed: 'Thursday 24th April', '3:00pm - 4:00PM', and 'Via MS Teams'. A line of text says 'To register your interest, please [click here](#) or scan the QR code below!'. Below this is a large QR code. At the bottom, the section 'AIMS OF THE SESSION' is followed by a bulleted list of three points.

**PARENT WEBINAR**  
**RECOGNISING AND UNDERSTANDING**  
*Anxiety in Children and Young People*

**Thursday 24th April**  
**3:00pm - 4:00PM**  
**Via MS Teams**

To register your interest, please [click here](#) or scan the QR code below!

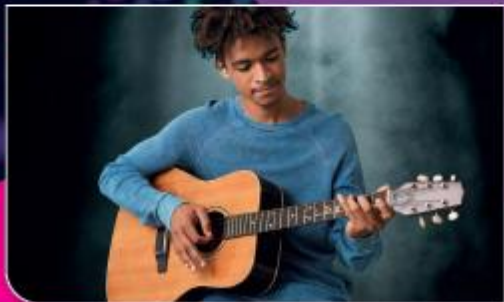


**AIMS OF THE SESSION**

- What is Anxiety?
- How anxiety affects children and young people?
- Strategies to support your young person

## Learn to play with DPA

# Learn to play



with

dpa  
dudley performing arts

Young people can now enrol for discounted music lessons with Dudley Performing Arts.

Lessons take place in school delivered by the biggest provider of music tuition in our area.



Scan the QR code to find out more, including how to enrol.

Alternatively, visit [www.dudley.gov.uk](http://www.dudley.gov.uk) and search 'lessons in schools' or phone 01384 813865.

Dudley  
Metropolitan Borough Council

BLACK COUNTRY MUSIC HUB

Supported using public funding by

Department for Education

ARTS COUNCIL

ENGLAND



## 10 Top Tips - Managing Exam Stress

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](https://nationalcollege.com).

# 10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators MANAGING EXAM STRESS

At some point in their education, children are almost certain to encounter exam stress, which can cast a shadow over their mental, emotional and physical wellbeing. Mental health charity YoungMinds estimate that a staggering 87% of pupils suffer from exam stress – highlighting the urgent need to minimise its impact on children's health and happiness.

### 1 PRACTISE WORKLOAD WISDOM

The build up to exam season is such a busy and pressurised time in a child's education that it can be difficult for youngsters to avoid feeling overwhelmed. Encourage them to consider whether their current workload is realistic and allows them sufficient time to relax and recharge. Work with them in creating a revision timetable that's manageable and includes breaks and occasional days off.

### 2 ADVISE CLEARING THE CLUTTER

A disorganised work environment is proven to negatively affect our ability to focus, as well as our emotional state. Encourage children to keep their desk, notes and revision materials tidy – creating a dedicated, well-kept study space to promote maximum focus. Foster their creativity by suggesting they incorporate vibrant colours, mind maps and even quirky drawings into their revision notes.

### 3 MASTER THE MATERIALS TOGETHER

Revision seems far harder when a child is uncertain where to begin or what sources to consult. Support them in confirming revision materials with their various teachers – emphasising the importance of gathering a range of resources to get a more comprehensive understanding of the subject. Feeling more prepared should nurture the child's confidence and help to dispel some of their anxiety.

### 4 RECOMMEND CREATIVE NOTE-TAKING

Writing out notes in full – rather than simply bullet-pointing – can be a strong start to a child's revision. Reinforce this idea, encouraging the use of flashcards (featuring shorter versions of previously taken notes) for effective repetition and memorisation. Discuss the power of regularly reviewing notes to help them stay in the child's memory.

### 5 USE VISUAL AIDS AND MNEMONICS

Encourage the use of visual aids like videos and sticky notes to enhance learning. Some children find these resources far more useful than simply reading their notes as written. Explore creating mnemonics for a fun and effective study approach – and it's also worth noting that the strategic use of colours is a proven means of triggering recall during exams.

### 6 GATHER A 'TECH TOOLKIT'

Technology can be a huge advantage in exam prep. Educational YouTube channels and revision websites like BBC Bitesize can be immensely powerful resources for helping children to expand and retain their knowledge. You could also recommend the use of flashcard apps and educational podcasts for revision and reminders when young people are on the go.

### 7 KEEP IT FUN

Revision tends to go far more smoothly if children are having fun in the process. Injecting some humour into their notes, for instance, can make details more memorable – as can relating information to their real-life experiences. Try to encourage a variety of study methods, such as incorporating physical activity (even simply taking a walk) into their revision routine.

### 8 SUGGEST ACTIVE REVISION STRATEGIES

Make sure children are aware of different study techniques. You could emphasise the effectiveness of spaced repetition by reviewing material regularly over time to reinforce learning and improve retention. Discuss the benefits of active recall methods – such as self-testing or explaining a concept aloud – in identifying where their strengths and weaknesses lie.

### 9 ENCOURAGE A POSITIVE MINDSET

It can be easy for children's thoughts to fall into a downward spiral when they're stressed about exams. Try to foster a growth mindset by emphasising the importance of giving it their all rather than aiming for complete perfection. Positive self-talk and the use of affirmations can build confidence and reduce anxiety, while visualising success and setting realistic goals can help them stay motivated and focused.

### 10 HELP THEM TO SEIZE THE DAY

There are lots of things children can do on the day of their exam to reduce stress and increase their focus. Talk them through some helpful exam-day strategies – such as arriving early, reading the instructions and the questions carefully, and pacing themselves during the test. Suggest some relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing or visualisation, to help them manage any nerves before and during the exam.

### Meet Our Expert

Minds Ahead design and deliver the UK's only specialist postgraduate mental health qualifications. Winner of the Social Enterprise UK 'One to Watch' award, the charity provides training and support to education organisations and local authorities. This guide has been written by Adam Gillett – a learning and development specialist who is also Associate Vice-Principal for Personal Development at Penistone Grammar School.



The National College

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## **Congratulations/Well Done**

### **Headteacher Commendations**

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

Sophie Barnett	Frazer Bateman	Kelvin Benion	Tess Wilkinson
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