

Parent Bulletin

Week commencing Monday 23 October 2023 – Week 2

Dear Parents and Carers

I write to you on a wet and windy Friday. Outside, the fringes of Storm Babet buffet our trees and our buildings. Inside, our students and staff are coping well with staying indoors at break and lunchtime – it's not what anyone wants, but it's much better than being exposed to the elements of wind and water. My sister teaches in a school in northeast Scotland, where today they face a rare red alert for the weather.

As a school leader, I always take a keen interest in the weather forecast, because I know the profound effect changes in our weather can have on our feelings of wellbeing. We enjoy a temperate climate here in Britain – even in the North East! – and that probably makes us even more aware of, and more susceptible to, small changes in temperature and conditions. Many of us say we prefer it to be warmer, but too hot is upsetting; too cold is miserable; and so on. Resilience to changes in the weather and the climate seems to be hard for us to achieve, as individuals and as a nation.

Changes in our 'emotional temperature' also affect us, although perhaps not so predictably. Yesterday I attended the Schools North East Conference at St James's Park where, with school leaders from across our region, I was fascinated to hear Professor Steve Peters speak about emotional resilience. Many of you will know of Steve Peters from his work with high-performing sports teams. His book, *The Chimp Paradox*, explains how the different parts of our minds work together (or, occasionally, work against each other) to condition and control our responses to different situations. Steve Peters has messages for us all – as parents, children and teachers – about how we regulate ourselves and how we understand one another. It will take me some time to process his insights and apply them to our own context.

Schools North East is the largest group of school leaders anywhere in the country. At our conference yesterday, we also heard from the Secretary of State for Education, Gillian Keegan. She referenced her own school experience in Knowsley – she was characteristically disparaging about the schools there, although she also acknowledged some inspiring teaching, particularly in technical subjects – and her unusual route into parliament, via a degree apprenticeship in engineering and a career in business. Although the Education Secretary had relatively little to offer us in the way of vision or ideas (and nothing in the way of additional funding for schools or high needs) it was interesting to hear from another perspective about the difference that can be made when parents and teachers work together for the good of students.

At the same time as the Education Secretary was talking to school leaders in our region, the Department for Education published its School Performance Tables. These showed that Lord Lawson achieved a Progress 8 figure that is broadly in line with the national average. No-one wants to be merely 'average', of course, and this is not our overall ambition, so it is good to contextualise this figure. Also in this 'average' category in Gateshead are St Thomas More Catholic School, Thorp Academy and Whickham School. The North East, as a region, was at the bottom of the national league. Other schools locally – including all the schools that are geographically closest to Lord Lawson in Gateshead, Sunderland and County Durham districts – performed less well than we did and are below average. We regard these figures as validation of the work that we have done so far to improve the educational opportunities for your children, and a solid foundation for the further improvement work that we are doing together right now.

I am acutely aware of the difficulties that have been imposed on so many families by the continued industrial action on public service buses. Many of you, and your children, will have been badly affected by the strike. Thank you for everything you have done to make sure that your children can get to school and benefit from the education and extra-curricular opportunities we offer.

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There is a possibility that industrial action will extend beyond the current period. Last week, I appealed to parents who were bringing their children to school by car and who had additional places in their vehicle to consider offering a place to a child who was struggling to get to school. I would now like to add a little more detail to my appeal.

First, it is important to stress that this would be an arrangement between parents/carers. The parents and carers of any child would of course have to give their permission and consent for their child to travel in the car of another parent. No child should accept a lift from someone they don't know, a safeguarding message that we reinforce to our students regularly.

Secondly, I regret that it is not possible for the school to arrange car-sharing. We do not have the resources to match families together, and we do not have the information about who drives and how many spaces they might have. We don't know, for example, about other siblings who are being taken to primary school.

We are grateful to parents and carers who have already made arrangements with other families. Such practical support means a great deal at such a difficult time. Dame Rachel de Souza, the Children's Commissioner, also spoke at yesterday's conference. Her message was about the importance of school attendance for the educational and social development of children.

Finally, we have reached the week of our performances of *Shrek the Musical*. Having seen some of the rehearsals and assembly previews, I know that we have a wonderfully entertaining show here, full of diverse characters and memorable tunes. A few tickets still remain for performances. I hope to see many of you and your children there next week!

With all good wishes,

Yours faithfully

Mr A T Fowler
Principal

Fire Evacuation Practice

We held a practice evacuation on Tuesday 17 October, in the afternoon. It is good practice to conduct occasional drills, to ensure that staff and students are kept safe. This was the first fire practice of the year, and the first opportunity for all our new students and staff to take part in the evacuation drill. I am delighted to report that we evacuated everyone safely in just over 4 minutes. I was impressed by the conduct of students during the evacuation.

We were able to check registers and get everyone back into lessons again with the minimum of disruption. We did identify a few small points for improvement in our procedures, and we are already implementing these.

Mr Fowler

Change of Event Date - Knife Crime Awareness: Lawson Leaders vs Friends of Tomasz Oleszak

With the possibility of Storm Babet putting a damper on the charity match originally scheduled for today, Friday 20 October, we have taken the decision to move the date of the game.

The charity match will now take place on Monday 23 October with a 3:45pm kick off.

Hundreds of tickets have already been sold and hundreds of pounds have been raised. Every penny is going to Samantha's Legacy (a local knife crime charity). Please purchase a ticket from reception ahead of the game if you wish to attend.

To celebrate Tomasz's 16th birthday, we will be holding a minutes applause on the 16th minute of the match. As Tomasz was a big football fan, please can spectators bring a football scarf if possible to wave on the 16th minute; it doesn't matter which team you support, as we are all supporting the same cause on the day.

We hope to see you on Monday.

Thank you

Mr L Cumiskey
Year 8 Leader and Event Coordinator

Upcoming Parents' and Carers' Evenings

Following our successful year 10 evening last night, we have year 12 and year 13 parents' and carers' evenings scheduled on:

Year 12: Thursday 16 November 2023

Year 13: Thursday 14 December 2023

All evenings are virtual. Appointments are booked via the SchoolCloud platform.

Booking is now open for year 12. Information about booking for year 13 will be provided after half term. If you are experiencing any difficulties in booking appointments via the SchoolCloud platform, or have any questions about these evenings, please contact me at sspraggon@lordlawson.academy and I will be happy to help.

Mrs S Spraggon
PA to SLT

Lloret de Mar Sports Camp – Easter 2024

The time has arrived for student passport details to be collected so we are able to input the details and book our seats.

Please can you send a photograph or screenshot of your child's personal details passport page to: kgolby1@lordlawson.academy, with the email subject title '(Student name) passport details'.

The photograph or screen shot must be clear so that I can see their date of birth, place of birth, passport number and expiry date.

Please look out for further information regarding a parent's information evening which will take place after the Christmas Holidays.

The deadline for this information to be submitted to me is Friday 10 November. If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you.

Miss Golby
Deputy Subject Leader of PE


Parent and Wellbeing Support Group (PWSG)

NHS North East and North Cumbria have a fantastic online group that they are facilitating called Parent Wellbeing and Support Group (PWSG). The group runs on a Monday and alternates between a morning session which is online, and an evening group session.

The dates and times for each can be found in the information flyer below, along with a list of the possible themes and topics that may be covered by the group. You have the option to attend either the morning or evening group, or both if you wish.

This group is set up to be a relaxed and informal safe space, where there are no expectations other than attendees are respectful to each other.

PARENT WELLBEING SUPPORT GROUP



6 ONLINE SESSIONS FOR PEOPLE AFFECTED BY DOMESTIC ABUSE







From September to December 2023
Alternate Mondays between 9:30am to 11am and 7pm to 8:30pm

- If you are struggling at all and would benefit from off-loading your distress.
- If you want to understand yourself better
- If you want to use knowledge for your own empowerment
- If you would like some honest and open company
- If you want to share your story in a safe environment





Then you've come to the right place.

This group is set up to be relaxed and informal. Nothing is expected of you, other than to be respectful to yourself and the other participants.

Possible themes may include: safe spaces, self-worth, the self, relationships, coping strategies, recovery, empowerment, change, wellness, looking to the future.

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For a link to this group or for any questions you might have please text Layla (from Impact) on 07932952653 or Simon (from Bright Eyed & Bushy Tailed) on 07549698050.



*Mr I Cooper
Deputy Principal*

Book of Remembrance

Our Book of Remembrance will be displayed in school from next Monday. This is a place for anyone within the school community to have someone remembered at our Service or Remembrance on Friday 10 November.

Students are welcome to write in the book which will be placed in the Atrium outside the main hall. Alternatively, you can email details to me at jkemp@lordlawson.academy and I will update the book on your behalf. Please include as much information as possible, including name, rank, service number, information about their service (such as where and when they died if they were killed in action, campaigns they were involved in, heroic actions or other notable details).

With thanks

Mrs J Kemp
Remembrance Coordinator



Young Carers: Drop In Sessions

If you have a child who helps to look after someone in their family, and you would like them to receive extra support, please inform their year leader or myself and we can refer them to The Carers Trust.

Charlotte Osgerby and Christine Tindale from The Carers Trust host monthly drop-in sessions for our young carers in school, all of which are supported by me.

All the sessions are held on a Wednesday in the small conference room next to the atrium at lunchtime on each of the dates below:

25/10/23
29/11/23
20/12/23
31/01/24
28/02/24
27/03/24
24/04/24
26/06/24

On all other Wednesdays I am available for additional support; I will be based at the far end of the school library.

Students must have a pass to attend which they can collect from me before or after school and must have this with them to show to staff to access the sessions.

If you have any questions or would like further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at: mglass@lordlawson.academy and I will be happy to help.

Mrs M Glass
Young Carers Support

Academy Production – Shrek The Musical, Jr: Tuesday 24 to Friday 27 October 2023

After 9 months of rehearsal we have reached show week for our 2023 Academy Production, Shrek The Musical Junior.

Our final Sunday rehearsal is this Sunday 22 October, 10am to 4pm. Students must attend with a packed lunch, plenty of refreshments, warm layers of clothing and all of the costume and make up items (including make up removal) they require for their performance. Students will be wearing face paint and full costume during this rehearsal.

All performers must bring their all black basic costume: plain black short sleeved round neck t- shirt, plain black trousers (no logos) and lace up shoes. Lace up shoes are essential. Cast members will not be allowed on the stage with slip on shoes due to health and safety concerns.

It would be helpful if students could write their names clearly in their black clothing and come to the rehearsal wearing these items.

All cast members **must** attend this final technical dress rehearsal to be able to perform during show week.

On Monday 23 October all cast members will be off timetable for the whole school day to perform a dress rehearsal to our feeder primary school guests. Students must come into the academy with all of the items that they had for the Sunday rehearsal.

There is no rafter school rehearsal on Monday evening; students will leave the academy at 3.20pm as normal. We encourage all performers to have a restful evening to prepare for the big week ahead.

Tuesday 24 October is opening night and the first of four evening performances across the week, all of which start at 7pm. Students are expected to return to the academy for registration at 5.30pm on each performance evening. Main cast members may be required earlier to prepare their full stage costume and make up.

We expect the performance to end at approximately 9pm. Parents and carers should aim to collect performers between 9.10 and 9.20pm latest.

Please ensure that performers have signed out of their dressing room upon collection to avoid the Performing Arts team having to confirm the whereabouts of students after the end of the event.

All of our cast have worked extremely hard to create a magical, fun and heart-warming show. Thank you to all who have supported the project throughout the rehearsal process and we hope you enjoy the final performances next week.

There are still limited tickets available to purchase. Occasionally, tickets are returned to us so we encourage you to make contact with reception if you wish to check ticket availability.

Please contact me via email at sbrown@lordlawson.academy if you require any further information about show week.


Thank you.

Miss S Brown
Subject Leader – Performing Arts



Lord Lawson of Beamish Academy

Presents

 DREAMWORKS
THEATRICALS

SHREK

THE MUSICAL JR.

Based on the DreamWorks Animation Motion Picture
and the Book by William Steig

Book and Lyrics by
David Lindsay-Abaire

Music by
Jeanine Tesori

Originally produced on Broadway by DreamWorks Theatricals and Neal Street Productions
Original Production Directed by Jason Moore and Rob Ashford "I'm A Believer"
by Neil Diamond

Tuesday 24 - Friday 27 October 2023

7pm Start - Main Hall

**Tickets £6.00 (Non-refundable)
Available from Academy Reception**

Tickets Available Now!

Should you require any adjustment or assistance for access to seating please contact
sbrown@lordlawson.academy on purchase of tickets.

Upcoming School Events

At the beginning of every term, we will publish a list of upcoming school events in this bulletin. Communication of some events, such as Parents' Evenings, will also be communicated separately via email, so please ensure you look out for these.

The events for this term are:

Monday 23 October: Academy Production – Primary School Performances during the day.

Tuesday 24 to Friday 27 October: Academy Production – Shrek the Musical, Junior. Evening Performances.

Saturday 28 October to Sunday 5 November: Half Term – School closed for staff and students.

Monday 6 November: School reopens for staff and students – students to be in school for 8.40am.

Monday 6 to Friday 17 November: Autumn Assessments for years 11 and 13.

Thursday 16 November: Year 12 Parents' Evening, 3.45 – 6.15pm – Appointments will be online.

Friday 24 November: Occasional Day – School closed for staff and students. School will reopen for staff and students Monday 27 November.

Tuesday 28 November: Careers Fair (all year groups) throughout the school day.

Tuesday 5 December: Flu Vaccinations for years 7 to 11.

Thursday 7 December: Sixth Form Open Evening, 5.00 to 7.00pm – for students considering their post-16 options and future academic pathways.

Thursday 14 December: Year 7 – Pantomime at Theatre Royal Newcastle: Pinocchio.

Year 13 Parents' Evening, 3.45 – 6.15pm – Appointments will be online.

Friday 22 December: Last day of school for staff and students – Christmas holidays begin Saturday 23 December. School reopens for all students on Monday 8 January 2024.