



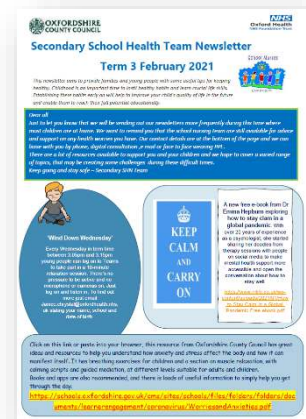
Friday 5 February 2021

Dear Parents, Carers and Students

It's official, spring is on its way: I saw snowdrops growing near a hedge on Sunday morning and there is no further proof needed that winter is behind us! At some point in the next two weeks, we ought to know more about plans for the reopening of schools and how the cancellation of examinations will be managed in England. We have all become more adept at managing to live with uncertainty but it will be good for some of that fog to lift in the coming days.

HPV and Td/IPV Immunisations

Attached to this letter is the latest health team newsletter. It is full of valuable information and useful signposting. I understand that the routine immunisation programmes are likely to be offered, as planned, in March (HPV for Years 8 and 9), April (Td/IPV for Year 9) and May (catch-up of both). Parents and carers of students in these two year groups are asked to look out for a separate letter from the Immunisation Team at Oxford Health NHS. Please note that these immunisations are entirely unrelated to the COVID-19 vaccination programme.



Mind and Body



At the start of this letter, I referred to the discovery of snowdrops. I happened to be out for a spot of exercise with my Golden-Collie at the time. I now wish to mention the 'ying' of staying physically active, alongside the 'yang' of reading that I set out in my letter to you last week.

We have heard that levels of exercise across the country are lower during this lockdown and closure of schools, than the first. The weather plays its part in this apparent trend, but we have to do all we can to encourage ourselves, and our children, to take personal responsibility for their own physical activity and health; including diet and sleeping patterns.

I know the battles a parent or carer faces when we try to convince our children that they need to get off the PS4 and put on their trainers for a walk, a run, or a cycle. Unlike Fortnite, Doritos or a fizzy drink, the gratification or effect is not instant and therefore so much harder to promote.

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Unlike other subjects, we have not tried to require students to attend live PE lessons. We remain very uncertain that this kind of expectation would work successfully. We note how camera shy students continue to be, and expect students to take some personal responsibility for their own physical fitness and wellbeing as well. We also hear students tell us how uncomfortable they would be uploading images or videos of their 'evidence of participation' - and so it is a complex area for sure. Judging by the parent and carer survey results (which Mr Gent will summarise next week), the majority of families and students prefer the wide menu of possible activities that are provided each week - whereas others would welcome a more structured and monitored approach. Depending on how long the closure of schools lasts, we shall keep that policy under review and consider a new approach if we feel this would be a preferred direction for the majority of students and families.

Tribute to Captain Tom Moore

Normally, when we hear the news of a much loved and decorated person passing away at the grand age of 100, we might be forgiven for consoling ourselves with the thought that they 'had a good innings'.

However, the death of Captain Tom felt very different and a sense of him being stolen from us too soon was very strong indeed.

For me, his passing symbolises the tragedy of this pandemic but also the silent passing of 'that' generation who saw, suffered and saved so much for us all. I reflect that when I was a child, these Second World War veterans were everywhere (and quite a few from the Great War), but almost all of them have moved on now. We are left with their legacy and the challenge to be remembered as fondly and with as much respect as we hold for their generation.

Have a lovely weekend.

Yours faithfully



Mr Doherty

Headteacher

