

Pupil Awards

This academic year, we will be celebrating three pupils each week who have been nominated by staff for demonstrating our school principles.

We are pleased to announce that this week's winners are:

Thoughtful – Ibraheem Zaman has been awarded for being considerate to staff and students throughout the week

Value – Leo Dance has been awarded for displaying positive engagement with lessons

Safe – Marshall Collins has been awarded for consistently upholding the TVS pupil expectations throughout the week

A huge congratulations to these 3 pupils from all the staff.

Updates from the Senior Leadership Team

This week we welcomed Dr Nic Crossley, CEO of Liberty Academy Trust, who carried out her monthly visit with us. We always look forward to proudly showing the fabulous work the teachers have planned, and this week was no exception. As always, we received some great supportive and constructive advice in conjunction with praise and credit to the staff and pupils.

Our SLT have been very busy on a number of key initiatives this week such as our curriculum development and use of our core texts and the TVS Reading Strategy which is supported by Megan Dixon, our Trust Curriculum Consultant.

Mrs Dudgeon and Mr Shephard have been excitingly working on the careers planning for our pupils, more detail will follow in due course on this but we're thrilled with the progress and opportunities to tell you about.

Miss Archer has conducted our Safeguarding Audit and completed a safeguarding review of our curriculum which demonstrates compliance and robust support in ensuring our children know how to keep themselves safe.

We are spending time planning our wonderful Christmas Fayre, I'm sure you'll enjoy it as much as we will. And I hope as many of you can attend as possible. The date and further details are listed on page 4.

Occupational Therapy Tips-Activities of Daily Living Sleep (Week 2)

Sleep is one of the most crucial Activities of Daily Living for all children. A stable sleeping routine can improve pupils' mood, engagement, and performance throughout the day. Sleep problems are common in autistic students, with prevalence rates of approximately 50% - 80%. Here are some tips that you may find useful.

Eliminate household noises

Most typically developing (TD) kids can easily block out ambient noise, especially when they are tired. For kids on the spectrum, household noises like the TV, music, the dishwasher, etc. can be over-stimulating or otherwise disturbing, making it impossible for them to fall asleep or even feel tired. As much as possible, try to limit your child's exposure to household noises once they have gone to bed.

Set up a bedtime routine

Give your child clear and consistent cues when it's nearly bedtime. For example, 30 minutes before bedtime, start some quiet activities like reading or drawing in the family room. Then 15 minutes before bedtime, get your child to clean their teeth and go to the toilet.

Try a weighted blanket

While recent studies suggests that weighted blankets *do not* increase sleep time or decrease time spent falling asleep, the deep pressure touch provided by the weighted blanket can help to soothe your child and make the bedtime routine more appealing.

*Please consult with the OT for additional guidance on the appropriate use of the blanket.

Get enough physical activity during the day

It's a good idea to encourage your child to be more active during the day. For example, even a family walk before dinner can make a difference. And it's great if your child can be active outside, because plenty of natural light during the day also helps with sleep.

School-age children should do several hours of light physical activity and at least one hour of moderate to vigorous physical activity each day.

Assess fabrics on pajamas and bedding

Many autistic children find certain fabrics and clothing features to be extremely irritating. Make sure that your child's PJs and bed linens are made of fabrics that at least do not cause discomfort and at best are soothing to your child. Be aware that seams, zippers, and buttons can also be irritating.



the national sleep helpline

Does your child suffer with sleep issues?

Do you struggle with your child's bedtime?
Will your child not sleep in their own bed?

WE CAN HELP

03303 530 541

Monday, Tuesday & Thursday 7pm - 9pm
Wednesday & Wednesday 9am - 11am

the national sleep helpline

50%

Around 50% of children will have a sleep issue at some point*

WHAT IS THE NATIONAL SLEEP HELPLINE?
In partnership with Furniture Village, The Sleep Charity has launched a brand new National Sleep Helpline to ensure that everyone has access to high quality, evidence-based advice.

HOW CAN THE NATIONAL SLEEP HELPLINE HELP YOU?
• Run by a team of specialist family sleep advisors
• Offer you some practical strategies and management services that could help
• Helping you understand how sleep plays an important part in your child's mental health and wellbeing
• Listen without judgement and help you decide what next steps are right for you
• Empower you with sleep knowledge to you can understand why your child might not be sleeping well and how that can change.

03303 530 541

Monday, Tuesday & Thursday 7pm - 9pm
Wednesday & Wednesday 9am - 11am





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Strategies for coping with examinations

Examinations and the preparation for examinations can be a challenging time. With mocks approaching there are a few things that parents and pupils can do to ensure that they are able to do their best and show what they know and where their gaps are. These gaps help the school and their teachers to know what to target next and the areas to revise.

Exam stress can feel lonely and like a heavy weight to carry, but you don't have to handle it all by yourself. Lots of young people find exams difficult and it's okay to need support from people around you.

Try talking to someone about how you feel. If someone knows that you feel stressed, they can be there to support you, encourage you and offer a listening ear. This could be a friend, family member, carer, community or faith leader, a teacher, or anyone else that you trust. You don't have to go through this alone.

Be kind to yourself: It can be helpful to think about all the things you've achieved so far, in or outside of studying. Or write a list of all the things you like about yourself, and the things other people value about you too. Setting aside time for the things you enjoy and are good at can really boost your self-esteem.

Talk about feeling under pressure: If people around you - like your school or family - are putting pressure on you, it can help to tell them what you feel able to achieve. Let them know if your expectations are different to theirs. You could also talk to a teacher you trust about the pressure you are under at home.

Get organised the night before: Get everything you need for your exam ready the night before. You could ask someone you trust to help you make sure that you have everything. If you're going somewhere for your exam, check when and where it's happening. You can plan your journey and give yourself plenty of time to get there.

Try relaxation techniques: Try not to cram in last-minute revision before your exam. This can be really overwhelming and make you feel like you're unprepared, but you've done everything you can. Instead, try to focus on remaining calm. Breathing exercises and grounding techniques can help you feel calmer before your exam. If you have something that helps you to feel calm speak to Mrs Dudgeon as you might be able to have that in the exam as part of your access arrangements.

Reward yourself: Give yourself something to look forward to after your exam. That could be doing something fun or taking time alone to rest. It's difficult to switch off if you have more exams to prepare for but remember to pause and recharge first.

Here are some useful websites with some additional advice and guidance

<https://www.studentminds.org.uk/examstress.html>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/for-young-people/feelings-and-experiences/exam-stress/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults/advice-for-parents/help-your-child-beat-exam-stress/>

Exam Stress

Exams and preparing to take them can be a challenging time. With mocks approaching, below are some tips to help you cope with stress.

You might feel stressed because:

- you are worried about your future;
- you haven't revised or you feel underprepared;
- you are finding it hard to understand what you are learning;
- you feel pressure to succeed

It is important to remember you are not alone. Lots of people find exams difficult and stressful.



Coping with Exam Stress

There are things you can do to help you feel less stressed.

Talk to Someone

Speak to a parent/carer, teacher or key adult about how you are feeling. You could also phone a helpline. Adults will be able to provide support and help you find solutions to cope with how you are feeling.

Speak to Friends or Do Things you Enjoy

Your friends will likely be experiencing many of the same thoughts and feelings as you. Talking to your friends can help you realise that you are not alone. Take some time to do activities you enjoy or are interested in!

Take Care of your Physical Health

Make sure you are eating a balanced diet and staying hydrated. Exercise can help to relieve stress, so take some time to go for a walk, or play football. Most young people need 8 to 10 hours of sleep a night. Don't stay up too late, and find calming activities to help you wind down before bed.

Revision Tips

There are things you can do to help you prepare for exams.

Make a Plan

Creating a revision timetable can help to structure your revision and ensure that you are spending enough time on each subject. If you're not sure where to start, your subject teachers will be able to give you a list of topics to focus on.

Give Yourself Space

When you take a break from revising, physically move away from your revision space to allow your mind to fully relax. If you prefer not to work at home or don't have the space, speak to a teacher about where you can revise at school.

Set Realistic Targets

Try to focus on one topic at a time and break up your revision into short chunks of time. It's also a good idea to prioritise the things you need to work on most.

Celebrate Success

Reward yourself for small wins, such as finishing a chapter of your revision guide or completing a practice paper. It is important to recognise when you have done something well and use this to motivate yourself to carry on.

After Exam Results

Don't Compare Yourself to Others

Everyone is different, and different people will excel in different areas of life. Just because your friend has got a higher grade than you in a subject, it doesn't make you any less successful. The most important thing is knowing you tried your best and did as well as you could.

Explore Next Steps

If you haven't done as well as you hoped, speak to a teacher about your options. You could talk through what the next steps are, taking into account your exam results as well as your skills and interests.

Celebrate Success

Focus on the subjects you have done well in and congratulate yourself on your achievements! Just preparing for and sitting your exams is a huge success, regardless of what your results are.

Learning Mentors



Hannah Irwin

Senior Learning Mentor

Bio: Having completed my degree in psychology, I am passionate in supporting the students with both their learning and wellbeing.

Fun Fact: I played the flute on a music tour in Germany with my concert band.



Kyle Bone

Senior Learning Mentor

Bio: I have worked at TVS for over 3 years as a learning mentor, admin support and senior learning mentor. Jack of all trades!

Fun Fact: I was a youth academy graduate at Crystal Palace FC from 15 to 19 and made 1 senior appearance against Fulham.



Sujata Banti

Learning Mentor

Bio: I love working at Thames Valley School and have been here for almost 3 years.

Fun Fact: I can speak 4 languages, including Hindi, English, Kannada and Tamil.



Josh O'Brien

Senior Learning Mentor

Bio: I came to TVS to support young people and be a positive role model. Alongside working with Autistic children, I am passionate about football.

Fun Fact: I jumped out of a plane at 15,000 feet and survived !



Elizabeth Dyer

Learning Mentor

Bio: I enjoy supporting young people in developing their skills and knowledge to help them achieve their full potential.

Fun Fact: I did illustrations for a book when I was 15 years old with the help of an amazing Art teacher!



Jake Holloway

Assistant Therapist

Bio: I have an Autistic son and I am passionate about making sure Autistic children have bright futures.

Fun Fact: I play for a local football team in reading.



Becky Guy

Senior Learning Mentor

Bio: I joined TVS to make a difference to our young people, helping them to build the skills and confidence to lead productive, happy lives and be part of their communities.

Fun Fact: I have a Springer Spaniel called Amber and she loves chicken pakoras.



Ben Penfold

Learning Mentor

Bio: I am passionate about supporting autistic young people to develop their skills and achieve their goals in the future.

Fun Fact: I am Autistic and in the top 1% of players of League of Legends in Europe.

10/11/2023



What is Social Media Kindness Day all about?



Unfortunately, many social media users continue to make nasty comments online. Users can hide behind their screens, and not see the hurt and upset their remarks can make.

For this reason, SMKD was created.

It was also in memory of the late TV presenter Caroline Flack.

Every time we use social media, we leave an imprint. SMKD is encouraging all those imprints to be kind!



Social Media Kindness Day

We should treat people with the same respect and kindness online as they deserve in person.

Use 'THINK' to help check if your comment is okay to post online.

Before you speak:
THINK
T - is it True?
H - is it Helpful?
I - is it Inspiring?
N - is it Necessary?
K - is it Kind?

How to make SOCIAL MEDIA SAFER AND KINDER

Social media can be a great way to connect with your friends, but it can also be a cruel and dangerous world. Here's how you can make it a better place for yourself and others.

- Don't say anything that you wouldn't say to the other person's face. Insults hurt online too.
- Don't post things you'd be embarrassed about if everyone could see them. Secrets are never safe online.
- Remember that everything you post online social after, there forever, even if you delete it.
- Don't talk behind other people's backs or make fun of them online.
- Don't accept friend requests from people you don't know.
- Don't share personal information online, and never give away your password.
- Report do you like?
- OOO Private Street
- Don't post other people's pics or tag them without their permission.
- If a friend is in trouble online, talk to an adult.
- Report helpful, violent or inappropriate posts and comments.
- Hey! That post of me is BRILLIANT!

Social Media Kindness Day

Find out more about Social Media Kindness Day at:
www.socialmediakindnessday.com

Social Media and Bullying

Next week is Anti-Bullying week...

To kick-off Anti-Bullying week, on Monday 13th it will be Odd Socks Day!

Odd Socks Day is designed to be fun! It's an opportunity to encourage people to express themselves and celebrate their individuality and what makes us all unique!

In afternoon tutor, you will be decorating your own odd socks ready for Monday!

TOP TIPS FOR STAYING SAFE AND BEING KIND ONLINE

Don't engage in cyberbullying or online harassment: Treat others online as you would like to be treated in person.

Verify the accuracy of information before sharing it: Don't share fake news or misinformation.

Avoid sharing personal information: Don't share your full name, phone number, address and other personal information online.

Connect with positive influences: Follow people and pages that promote positivity and personal growth.

Take breaks from social media: Limit time spent online to prevent addiction and negative impacts on your mental health.

Be respectful: Remember that behind every social media account is a real person with feelings and emotions.



Christmas 2023

Reminder: Christmas Lunch (13/12/2023). The menu has been uploaded into MCAS specifically for this day, and I ask that you login and select the meal requested **before 20th November 2023**. Any orders after this day can not be guaranteed.

Christmas Fayre

Our Christmas fayre will be held on **Friday 15th December** time confirmed to be **12:30 to 14:30**. We will have lots of festive fun and games, mince pies and hot chocolate with Christmas songs and decorations to add to the festive fun.

How you can help

We are asking for donations to our **chocolate** tombola as well as to our **filled jars** tombola. Any old jam or coffee jars of any size can be washed and filled with content of your choice. For the chocolate tombola, all donations big or small are very much appreciated.

We have been fortunate to be kindly donated a large real Christmas Tree also this year. If you have any spare tinsel, baubles or similar (no lights needed) to help decorate—these would also be appreciated.

Please be generous and help make our Christmas fayre one to remember for all. Donations for the tombolas or of decorations can be brought to the school office anytime from now and last donations accepted Wednesday 13th December .



PSHE

This half term in PSHE the overarching topic is Diversity. Pupils will build a respect for similarity and difference, complimenting our anti-bullying week plans (13th - 17th November) and promotes us all being unique.

Year 7 pupils will be focusing on the difference between banter and bullying, exploring the meaning of prejudice and discrimination as well as beginning to understand what stereotyping means and its potential impact.

For Year 8 pupils, they have started the term by focusing on the challenges individuals may face when trying to make positive contributions. This will also consider what social justice means with pupils growing a further understanding of respect and equality within relationships.

In Year 9, pupils are distinguishing between 'banter' and sexist, LGBTQ+-phobic and racist language whilst building an understanding of protected characteristics and how everyone has the responsibility to challenge discrimination.

Year 10 pupils will be exploring the Equality Act, recognising some of the ways in which aspects of health can impact on life chances and how equality and inequality can affect relationships.

Year 11 pupils also have a focus on the Equality Act, confirming their understanding of prejudice, discrimination and how bullying can arise and affect a person's mental health. Alongside this, they are reviewing their 'dream jobs' and how this might differ from the expectation of others.

As a school, we use the PSHE programme Jigsaw, who have a strong philosophy that parents and schools are partners in their children's learning and, we at Thames Valley School, strongly agree. Jigsaw have created live links which parents can access to view what their child is learning in PSHE as well as accessing the resources and information. If you would like access to this link or any more information on what your child is learning within PSHE, please do not hesitate to contact me via email becca.archer@thamesvalleyschool.org.uk

Wishing all our families a lovely weekend

