



**Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2024**

Dear Parent/Carer,

### **Tate Britain**

Year 11 GCSE art students participated in an educational visit to Tate Britain this week. Students used this opportunity to record first hand contextual studies; observational drawings, as well as photos, postcards and resources from the gallery space, for their respective component one and component two assessments. Students were very well behaved and were brilliant ambassadors for the academy.

### **Year 9 Options Evening**

On Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> March, Year 9 Parents/ Carers and students will join us for Options Evening from 4:30pm-7pm. This is an opportunity for Parents/ Carers and students to speak to subject specialists to help them find out more information about the courses on offer next year. At the event, there will be a short presentation which outlines the process and key questions to think about. Once complete you will be free to visit stalls hosted by the teachers to discuss the content of the subjects, assessments and whether or not that might be a suitable option for your child.

In order to manage numbers at the event, it is being split into two halves by form group. Please check your presentation time.

<b>Form Group:</b> <b>9B, 9O, 9W, 9E</b>	<b>Presentation 5:00pm</b> <b>Visit subject areas.</b>
<b>Form Group:</b> <b>9P, 9A, 9R</b>	<b>Presentation at 6:00pm</b> <b>Visit subject areas.</b>

There will be limited parking available behind the North block, which is accessed via the Havering Gymnastics entrance. When you arrive, please head to our main reception and our Student Voice Leadership Team will direct you to our sign-in desks and give more information about the evening.

## **Year 10 Exam Walkthrough**

The process of the Year 10 Walkthrough started this week. The feedback from staff and students has been very positive and the walkthrough process will continue in the final week of this term. As explained in the last weeks newsletter, the purpose of this initiative is to support all Year 10 students with final preparation for upcoming mock exams.

## **Year 10 Pre-Public Examinations: April 15<sup>th</sup> – April 19<sup>th</sup>**

Year 10 PPE (mock) exams begin on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> April. The exams last one week, with most students having at least one exam per day. These exams are a vital milestone in Year 10. They will form the basis of the predicted grades that students receive, which will dictate their college, sixth form or apprenticeship opportunities. They will also allow teachers to adapt their curriculum based on student strengths and weaknesses and to create personalised plans in the run up to the real thing next year. Students will sit their second round of Pre-Public Exams around November and February of Year 11. The final GCSE exams are likely to start mid-May in 2025.

## **Year 11 Easter revision programme**

The schedule for the Year 11 Easter revision is in the process of being created. Parents/ Carers will be made aware early next week of the final arrangements. A timetable will be published and departments will be contacting Parents/ Carers to make you aware if your son/ daughter is required to attend.

## **Kooth Newsletter for local services**

Kooth offers 24/7 instant access to anonymous and personalised mental health support for young people in our community. Please click on this link (**Kooth's**) for the March newsletter for local services.

A recent survey conducted amongst young people using Kooth showed that:

- 78% said they would be concerned or very concerned if Kooth was no longer available in their area
- 96% said it was important that they could access Kooth after school or work
- 97% said it was important that they did not need a referral to access Kooth
- 62% demonstrated a severe level of psychological distress
- 96% would recommend Kooth to a friend
- 88% said if they needed support in the future, they were likely to use Kooth

In April, Kooth will be running webinars specifically to help parents and carers with children sitting exams on the following dates below. Please click the links of the dates below to find out more;

**Mon 22 Apr. 1-2pm**

**Thu 25 Apr. 6-7pm**

### **Pop-up Tuck Shop**

Friends of Bower Park Academy, PTA, will be running a tuck shop for students on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> March at break and lunchtime. Students should bring a small amount of cash if they would like to purchase any sweets or snacks on the day.

### **Last Day of Term**

The last day of the Spring term will be Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2024. Students will be dismissed at 1:20pm on this day.

Yours faithfully,



Mr E Aylett  
**Principal**

# 10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

## ENCOURAGING OPEN CONVERSATIONS AT HOME

With tricky topics and occasional clashes of opinion, it can be challenging to maintain an environment where children feel able to talk candidly and honestly. However, encouraging such conversations helps to develop trust – making it easier to unpack even sensitive subjects as children get older. Here are our top tips for promoting open conversations at home.

### 1 CREATE A SAFE SPACE



Criticism, blaming or shaming can all prevent children from feeling emotionally safe – while showing affection, positive attention and an interest in what a child has to say builds their sense of security. These formative years are when children's opinions and values begin to take shape, so it's important to provide a non-judgmental environment in which to discuss them – especially if their opinions differ from your own.

### 2 CONSIDER OTHER OUTLETS



Some children may find it easier to talk while they're participating in another activity such as drawing, writing, walking or sport. If it's possible, taking part in these activities together presents you with an opportunity to communicate while doing something side by side. A child may feel less pressure that way and can be more inclined to open up of their own accord.

### 3 NORMALISE CHATS ABOUT FEELINGS



Incorporate mental health and emotional wellbeing into everyday conversations, using age-appropriate language and examples to help children understand their emotions. Ask questions like "How are you feeling today?", "What was the best and worst part of your day?", "If you could start today again, what would you do differently?" and "Is there anything you want to talk about?"

### 4 LISTEN ACTIVELY



When children express themselves, make it obvious that you're listening closely and giving them your full attention. Maintain eye contact and validate their feelings without immediately trying to solve the problem. It's not helpful to dismiss their issues as childish or 'teenage angst' – or to assume that they'll simply 'get over' whatever they're feeling. Children don't have your life experience; their resilience is still developing as they learn to push through difficulties and handle problems.

### 5 ASK OPEN QUESTIONS



Encourage children to share their thoughts by asking open questions about their feelings and experiences. Closed questions (such as "Did you enjoy school today?") are more likely to elicit a simple "yes" or "no" response. Instead, you could ask things like "Who did you spend time with at break?" or "Who did you sit with at lunchtime?"

### 6 RESPECT THEIR BOUNDARIES



If a child isn't ready to talk to about something yet, respect their boundaries: this reinforces that their feelings are important and worthy of consideration. Ideally, you're aiming to let them know you care without smothering them, so just make it clear that you're there for them whenever they're ready to chat. Gentle, regular check-ins can sometimes be the best form of progress.

### 7 LEAD BY EXAMPLE



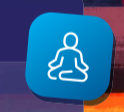
Model open, honest and healthy communication in front of children and young people. Try to demonstrate kindness when talking about others and yourself, because if children hear adults being overly harsh, critical or judgmental, or see them having unrealistic expectations of themselves, it makes them more likely to adopt and repeat this behaviour themselves as they grow.

### 8 HAVE REGULAR CHECK-INS



Check in with children periodically to discuss how they're feeling and what's going on in their lives. This could be a weekly or monthly conversation, where the child has an opportunity to share whatever's on their mind. For parents and carers, getting away from the house and other distractions might be productive here: you could consider regular trips to a coffee shop or a café, or just a weekly walk.

### 9 PROVIDE RESOURCES



It's often beneficial to let children know about other support that's available to them if they're struggling to talk to you specifically. Encourage them to talk to school counsellors, trusted adults or even a therapist, if necessary – while normalising this route and dispelling the harmful stigma around asking for help. Older children could engage with resources such as Kooth or YoungMinds.

### 10 CELEBRATE EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION



It's beneficial to praise children for expressing their feelings honestly – emphasising how important it is to talk about their emotions and how proud you are of them for doing so. This can be especially pivotal for boys, who often experience more of a stigma around talking frankly about their feelings and their mental health – a barrier that can be overcome, with enough love and support.

### Meet Our Expert

With 30 years' experience as a teacher, trainer, consultant and interim executive board member, Anna Bateman has a superb understanding of what works in pedagogy, school improvement and leadership. She has also advised the Department for Education on their mental health green paper.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College