

Thursday, 7 January 2021

**Re: Vigilance of young people over lockdown – emotional and mental health**

Dear parents and carers,

I am writing to ask that you support the school in being watchful for any changes in your child's mental and emotional health over the period they are in lockdown and away from school.

The loss of peer to peer contact coupled with uncertainty about the future can often exacerbate already existing issues with mental health, particularly around self-harm or suicidal ideation; or bring new issues to the surface.

Whilst your child is at home with you, please be on the lookout for any signs which might suggest that your child is mentally or emotionally distressed.

**Things to look out for:**

- Frequently presenting themselves in a negative light, using words like 'useless', 'worthless' when referring to themselves.
- Difficulty in verbalising their feelings.
- Loss of interest in things they previously enjoyed.
- Withdrawing themselves away from family and spending long periods of time alone.
- Covering up (arms especially) even in heated rooms.
- Avoiding contact with friends.
- Unexplained outbursts of anger or sudden changes in behaviour.
- Significant changes to eating and/or sleeping habits

Many of these signs can often simply be classed as normal teenage behaviour but they can also be early indications of depression.

**What can parents and carers do?**

If you feel that your child's behaviour is not a simple case of them being a teenager:

- Remain calm and make sure your child knows that you are available to talk when they are ready.
- Spending communal time together as a family.
- Share your concerns with the school and access support. Our DSL is Marta Hotez and she can be contacted on: [mtarasewicz.320@lgflmail.org](mailto:mtarasewicz.320@lgflmail.org) or 07857600363.
- Arrange an appointment with your GP for further assessment as soon as possible.

As always, if we work together we can successfully ensure that our young people make it through these really difficult weeks and grab hold of the positive times which lie ahead.

Your child's form tutor will be calling at least once a fortnight to check in on their wellbeing. If we cannot make contact we may also carry out a doorstep visit.

Yours faithfully,

J McQuaid  
Head Teacher