

5th March 2024

NORTH STAR 240°

Dear North Star Families,

In this issue of the Newsletter we have news on how we are preparing our students for the future, providing them with first aid skills, helping to care for the school environment, English writing skills and dealing with bullying. We also have some information on how we are supporting students after the recent events in Bristol.

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- First Aid training
- Staying safe
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- Gardening
- Top tips for supporting children who are experiencing bullying

First Aid Training at North Star 240°



Learning First Aid is an invaluable life-skill!

All of our students from Year 7 to 11 recently participated in an insightful half-day first aid training session run by Star-Med First Aid Training. Throughout the program, they acquired fundamental first aid skills crucial for potential life-saving situations. Engaging in practical sessions, our students learned how to effectively respond to a medical emergency, how to place an unresponsive person in the recovery position, and appropriately handle a casualty requiring CPR.

Despite initial nerves, all our students exhibited active participation in the sessions and showcased the core values of North Star 240°. We are sure that these newly acquired skills will instill confidence in the students, empowering them to confidently navigate and apply their newfound knowledge in real-life scenarios.

Staying Safe

Last week, following recent tragic events in Bristol, we shared with our community a letter from Avon and Somerset Police. The letter detailed some actions the police will be taking to keep our communities safe. North Star Trust want to take this time to reflect on the seriousness of this situation.

Firstly, we offer condolences to those effected by such tragedy.

Secondly, we want to reassure our school community that we work tirelessly to educate our young people about how to stay safe and avoid any youth violence. We have offered school assemblies as well as individual support sessions and will tailor our PSHE lessons to educate those we work with.

We understand that young people and their families will have questions and many emotions regarding these incidents and we encourage all of our community to talk with us, especially our young people who can draw on their key adults in school to ask questions or be supported in reflecting on such tragedy. If you have questions please do not hesitate to ask our school leaders or your child's tutor if we can help in any way.

English at North Star 240°

Riley's review of 'Pig Heart Boy' by Malorie Blackman

I read this book in the half term after Miss Clarke recommended it. This book moved me because I thought Cam (the main character) wasn't going to survive his heart transplant. His Mum and Dad argued and Cam thought it was because of his issues with his heart. When Cam gets a heart transplant, they used a pig one which was very risky!

He survives the operation but a few weeks later the heart starts failing him and making too many white blood cells. The heart transplant made some people very angry and Cam suffered some abuse such as death threats and someone even poured a bucket of blood over him.

I would give this book a 10/10 and would recommend this to anyone who likes real life sort of stuff.

One of our student's creative writing

In English, Miss Clarke has been encouraging us to use 'ambitious vocabulary'. Here is a piece that's full of it!

In the jungle, there was a lion with piercing orange eyes, his eyes narrowed as he was getting ready to pounce and catch his prey and slaughter it. His ears were perked up to listen to any movements of his prey. He didn't quite know where it was but he could sense it was near... the trees were swaying, he was focused and his prey didn't stand a chance.

Glorious Gardening at North Star 240°

Our KS4 students continued their hard work to renovate our garden space for the whole school community.

On Tuesday 20th February, efforts were sustained to clear the site of debris, tidy and rake over land for seeding and bedding of plants around our newly filled pond!

We were able to work in conjunction with staff from the Avon Wildlife Trust and Bristol Works to use a variety of equipment, demonstrating practical skills to complete the jobs required.

Our next session is on Tuesday 12th March. The focus in this session will be to build some new flower beds from kindly donated sleepers, plant more flowers and add features to promote local wildlife.



We are really proud of our students' commitment to this project, with many being involved from planning to planting! We look forward to seeing the project completed in the summer and hope to invite members of our school community to visit our new garden.

Scott Mitchell, PE and Careers Lead

Top Tips for Supporting Children Who Are EXPERIENCING BULLYING

In a DfE survey, 36% of parents said that their child had been bullied in the past year, while 29% of secondary school headteachers reported bullying among students. Public Health England states that young people who maintain positive communication with their family were less likely to experience bullying – so it's important that parents, carers and educators know how to talk to children about bullying.

1. WATCH FOR BEHAVIOURAL CHANGES

Children who are experiencing bullying may become quiet, withdrawn, or anxious; however, they may also act on the pain and anger that they're feeling. A shift in attitude towards their existing friends (or not mentioning them any more at all) or alluding to new friendships which seem notably different could also be warning signs. It's important to be alert to such changes and talk to your child about them if they occur.



2. THINK THINGS THROUGH

Before acting, ask yourself if this is the right time and place to address concerns about bullying. Might your worries trigger strong feelings – perhaps from your own experiences – that could discourage your child from opening up to you? You could try discussing what you've noticed with another trusted adult who knows your child well.



3. BE OPEN AND UNDERSTANDING

Try to outline to your child the changes that you've noticed in their body language, appearance, behaviour, or tone of voice – and do so without sounding judgemental. Help them to describe what they're feeling – be it anger, sadness, fear or something else – as accurately as possible. If they say they're "angry", do they mean "enraged" or "frustrated"? This will help them to understand how they're feeling and why.



4. LET THEM SPEAK FREELY

Use open questions and a welcoming tone to encourage your child to talk. Listen closely and summarise what they've said at appropriate points (ideally without interrupting) to demonstrate that you're understanding clearly. Bullying may have undermined your child's sense of control, and they may fear that you'll judge them, overreact or impose consequences – so this conversation can reassure them being honest with you was the right decision.



5. CALL A TIME OUT

A conversation about bullying could leave both you and your child feeling distressed. It's important to recognise this and pause at suitable moments to calm down. Take deep breaths, enjoy a hot drink or even have a cathartic cry. This can reinforce trust, while also helping you both feel that you have control over the situation and the emotions that you're feeling.



6. STAY INFORMED

Make sure you know your child's school's definition of, response to and relevant contacts for bullying. This information should be in their anti-bullying policy, which ought to be available on the school's website. Class teachers or form tutors are usually the first point of contact, though there may be dedicated support teams or key workers to help your child, depending on the specific situation.



7. PREP YOUR CHILD FOR THE RESPONSE

Schools' responses to bullying vary depending on whether they're resolving disagreements and arguments, or addressing unintended verbal or physical harm and so on. It's important to work out with your child whether any harm was intentional, how much control they had over the situation and how often such incidents have occurred. Reporting concerns accurately will get the best outcome for your child more quickly.



8. SUMMARISE YOUR CHILD'S EXPERIENCE

When you contact the school, make sure you've precisely described what your child experienced: what happened; when; where; and who was involved. This will help the school to investigate further, identifying any witnesses, as well as those who were directly involved. It can also help the school to know how your child is feeling and how they'd like the matter to be resolved.



9. LIAISE WITH THE SCHOOL

Any school has a duty to ensure that the members of its community feel safe and included. It's important for children to learn their role in this. The school must determine how best to restore these feelings of safety and respect. It's often best for schools to keep parents and carers informed of any action taken – and for families to avoid taking matters into their own hands.



10. CHECK IN FREQUENTLY

Once the issue has been resolved and the bullying behaviour has stopped, your child may still feel anxious and might find it difficult to rebuild relationships or develop new ones. Parents, carers and the school should all keep an eye on how the child is feeling and acting over the following months. Any relevant information should be shared, so that further support can be planned if necessary.



Meet Our Expert

Bob Basley is the Director of Anti-Bullying Quality Mark-UK, which challenges and supports schools to develop sustainable whole-school approaches to prevent bullying, including working with parents and carers. More than 80 schools in England and Wales currently hold the quality mark.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College