



Horsforth School

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Headteacher: Dr P C Bell

Our Ref: PCB/TRH

21st June 2024

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing today as many of you will be aware that the sentencing of the young person who murdered Alfie Lewis happened on today and he was named.

I have not been able to let you know until reporting restrictions had been lifted but the young person who has been convicted was a student of Horsforth school.

Firstly, our thoughts remain with the family and friends of Alfie and anyone affected by the tragic events in November.

Secondly, I would like to reiterate that as Headteacher of Horsforth School my priority is always that students and staff should feel safe and be safe and I am confident they are. The purpose of my letter today is to let you know what we have done, what we are doing and what we plan to do to keep students and staff and ensure they feel safe.

I would like to share again that when we have information/suspicion that a young person has a banned item (such as a vape) we always search and screen like every secondary school, we have searching and screening protocols outlined in our behaviour policy and students are very aware of what is not allowed in school. More detailed information on this can be found in our Positive Behaviour Policy (appendices 15 & 16) which is available on the school website: <https://www.horsforthschool.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Positive-Behaviour-Policy-2023-2024.pdf>

All staff have access to an 'emergency button' and the school has invested in site security over the past 6 years. Access to our site is restricted and we have ensured that we have electronic security gates, another secure line of entry to the main building and increased staff presence and visibility. I am confident that we are as secure as any secondary school reasonably can be.

We also have clear, consistent safeguarding procedures for staff and students reporting/investigating and skilled staff who are proactive in acting to ensure safety for all. Our recent safeguarding audit was strong in all areas and had exemplary practice in some.

I would also like to acknowledge that there have been some upsetting incidents in schools nationally and, whilst the chances of this happening at Horsforth are extremely low, we are prepared if there is an intruder on site.

'Opportunity and achievement for all'

It is standard health and safety practice for schools to have lockdown procedures in place as it is good practice for schools to prepare for all situations regardless of how unlikely their occurrence may seem.

We have a clear lockdown protocol and we will be refreshing the awareness of this procedure and will be running a drill procedure in the new academic year.

I just want to reiterate that the chances of this happening are extremely small but I wanted to let you know of our preparation and that we have had this in place for a number of years now.

I appreciate this can heighten anxiety and how we support students and staff has been a massive focus for us. For our work and efforts in mental health specifically around trauma and bereavement we have recently been granted Mind Mate Champion status and are one of the few 'beacon' schools to be granted this. Work with Sarah Lloyd around trauma and loss is still being undertaken for key students and we have extra capacity for counselling going into September. We will start PSHCE lessons for all students with mindmate lessons as we always do to support students' emotional health and wellbeing.

Students will be supported by our pastoral staff leading up to the holidays and we have the Police Liaison officer in school next week to support with questions and advice for students directly and to support with advising our pastoral teams.

Finally, thank you for your patience and understanding. I understand this letter may raise anxiety and/or questions for some parents which is not our intent so please contact us and let us know if we can help in any way.

Yours faithfully

Dr Bell
Headteacher