

Monday 28<sup>th</sup> February – Friday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2022



## Headteacher's Blog

Welcome back everybody – Storm Eunice seems a hundred years ago. I hope you managed to hold onto your hats and retain all fence panels, roof slates and garden furniture!

### Covid

I have been looking at the guidance that was released by the Department for Education in relation to Covid and its management in schools. This relates to the Prime Minister's announcement about "Living with Covid". In the short term, the key messages are:

- There is no immediate change in how school manages Covid. Systems that have been in place this term will remain in place until further notice. I will write to you again in due course to confirm changes from 1st April 2022 (following further Government announcements).
- If your child tests positive for Covid please ensure they isolate in line with PHE guidance. We would ask that you carry out lateral flow testing on days 5 and 6 to see if they can return to school. I am asking my staff to do the same.
- The government has announced twice weekly lateral flow tests will stop for staff and secondary age students. Whilst free tests are being phased out, we currently have plenty in school and so students can still collect them as before.

Whilst the legal requirements for isolation have changed, the Public Health England (PHE) guidance remains, and so that is what I continue to refer to.

Our school community have worked well together to keep school open and as safe for students and staff as possible. Your support as parents has been vital for this. We will continue to work together as guidance changes and will provide you with updates where appropriate. Limiting the spread of Covid in our school not only protects health but allows us to keep us open to all children.

### Ukraine

I have been delivering assemblies this week on the topic of Ukraine. I am very conscious that just as the worst of Covid is fading from us, our young people are now being challenged to consider the implications of a world superpower invading a European nation. What I have been impressed with is the level of knowledge students have, and how keen they are to want to ask questions and discuss the issues as they see them.

I have emphasised that whilst this war is taking place many miles away from us, we do have members of our community with Eastern European heritage, who are more directly connected to what is going on. I have reiterated our support for them and encouraged them to come forward should they need anything.

### **Oversubscribed Again!**

For the third year running I am delighted that our local community has voted for us once again, with next year's Year 7 cohort oversubscribed. My ambition is that eventually we will be fully oversubscribed, as this leads to financial stability each year, and also means that there is a more stable community feel to the school. The archaic funding processes are quite challenging for a growing school, as 'lagged' funding means that a school's allocated budget is always one year behind. So instead of being funded next year for 190 Year 7 students, we will get the funding for the much smaller Year 11 cohort that would have just left. It's a crazy system, but nevertheless, I would rather have this problem than what we faced when I first joined, which was falling student numbers.

My thanks to all of you for this outcome, as your feedback and conversations about us as a school has helped build our reputation.

Next week Year 9's have an exciting theatre opportunity, and Year 11 sit their next set of Pre examinations. I am also sending out a letter about our new communication portal – so do look out for that.

Look after yourselves, and thank you for your support,

Mr Lee-Allan

## Ways to speak to Children About Events in Ukraine

Even the youngest children are overhearing the news of war and may find it frightening. This is a great article with more information on the impact & how to respond: we've summarised it in this infographic: [CLICK HERE](#) for some very useful advice on how to approach the subject.



## Ways to Speak to Children About Events in Ukraine

The media coverage of events in Ukraine is undoubtedly being heard by our children. The use words such as invasion, attack, bombing and war are, undoubtedly, being overheard and absorbed by our children. For some, this may well be very frightening. Sitting on top of the experiences of the last two years may add further anxiety and fear, exacerbating distress. As parents/carers or teachers, you may feel uncertain about the best way to reassure without raising anxiety further. We may inadvertently communicate our own anxieties and fears around the events by if we don't notice how we are feeling before speaking to them, or by ignoring the topic completely



**Steady yourself** before you start to speak to your child. Your child will take their cues from you, if you appear anxious, their fear may escalate. **Be calm, steady and factual.**

**Find out** what your child understands already and what they may have heard. "I'm guessing you have heard lots about Ukraine on the news, or from adults talking about it, I'm wondering what you may be thinking about it or if you have any questions?"



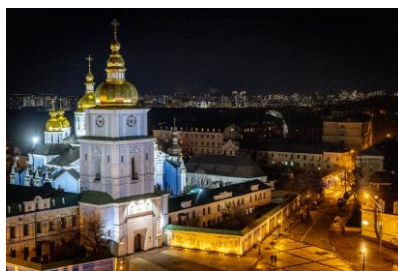
**Listen, Validate, Empathise** to your child's fears and worries. Be compassionate and understanding and accept their feelings before moving to reassure. War **is** frightening and this comes on top of their experiences of the pandemic which may have heightened their sense that the world is not safe.

**Contextualise and contain** locate where the conflict is happening so the child has a sense of distance and the risk of them being caught up in the conflict for them is low. Use appropriate sources of information - BBC Newsround, Time for Kids, News for Kids, The Day to find accurate, age appropriate information



**Take action:** be aware of what your child is overhearing either through news bulletins or through adults discussing the situation. Find ways to empower your child in to do something meaningful - maybe contribute to care parcels sent out to those displaced by the conflict, find out what is happening locally to provide support, looking for those helping can balance the child's perspective

[www.traumainformedschools.co.uk](http://www.traumainformedschools.co.uk)



## **Year 8 Option Choices – Important Reminder**

Before half term students were sent a link to their email address, please remind them to follow this link and choose the 5 options they would like to take in Year 9.

**This form closes a midnight on the 4<sup>th</sup> of March.**



## **Dates for your Calendar**

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> March – Trip – The Bone Sparrow in Bury St Edmunds – Year 9

Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> March – Trip – The Bone Sparrow in Bury St Edmunds – Year 10

Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> March – Year 10 Tripod Evening

Friday 18<sup>th</sup> March – 100 Years of Our BBC Event

Friday 25<sup>th</sup> March – Macbeth Performance

Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> March – Year 11 Tripod Evening

Friday 8<sup>th</sup> April – HPV Immunisations

Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> May – DTP/Men ACWY Immunisations

### Useful Contact Information:

Head of Year 7	Mrs T Goodman	<a href="mailto:t.goodman@stowhigh.com">t.goodman@stowhigh.com</a>
Head of Year 8	Mr S Peckford	<a href="mailto:s.peckford@stowhigh.com">s.peckford@stowhigh.com</a>
Assistant HOY 8 & 9	Mrs T Shaw	<a href="mailto:t.shaw@stowhigh.com">t.shaw@stowhigh.com</a>
Head of Year 9	Mr M Blewitt	<a href="mailto:m.blewitt@stowhigh.com">m.blewitt@stowhigh.com</a>
Head of Year 10	Mrs L Wellham	<a href="mailto:l.wellham@stowhigh.com">l.wellham@stowhigh.com</a>
Head of Year 11	Mrs R Dolby	<a href="mailto:r.dolby@stowhigh.com">r.dolby@stowhigh.com</a>
Finance		<a href="mailto:finance@stowhigh.com">finance@stowhigh.com</a>
General Enquiries		<a href="mailto:enquiries@stowhigh.com">enquiries@stowhigh.com</a>

### Reporting Student Absence

To report a student absence for any reason, *including positive Covid test results* - please call **01449 613541** and select option: 1

We will NOT authorise holidays as a matter of course. Our default position is NOT to authorise requests for holidays.

Should you have a request for your child to be absent from school please request a Leave of Absence Request Form.

### What to do if you are late?

If you arrive during registration, you should go to your tutor room where you will be marked late. If you arrive after registration, you should report to the Attendance office to sign in.