

April 2020

Dear Parent /Carer,

My name is **Julie Peattie** and I am pleased to introduce myself as the **PSHE & Welfare Lead** at Birch Wood and Birch Wood Vale School. As a school community we understand that there is a lot of uncertainty around the current COVID-19 outbreak. Understandably, this is causing a lot of worry and anxiety for many of our young people and their families.

We want to continue to support and work with our students and their families to ensure that nobody in our school community feels isolated or alone during this period of not being at school.

The emotional welfare of our students is of the greatest importance and by being the dedicated PSHE & Welfare Lead this enables me to ensure that these issues are given the time and care needed to be worked through together.

One of my responsibilities is to oversee the **Family Listening Support Team**, which we have established in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of you will be familiar with Sarah Alldridge our Family Support Link Worker who will continue to work in her current capacity which many of you have found invaluable. However, at this time we recognise the need for us to enhance our support to families; our expanded team will provide extra help in the following ways:

Support for Young People

- Listening and counselling appointments where a young person just needs the opportunity to talk. I will be taking referrals for this service through your child's class teacher, form tutor or via the Senior Leadership Team, through consultation with parents.
- We will arrange a specific time to call your child back for a counselling or listening appointment
- Remote well-being interventions; this may involve students working one to one basis on remote PSHE or therapeutic sessions to support their social, emotional and mental wellbeing. These may include the following sessions:
 - Ways of promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing
 - Sleep and good sleep habits
 - Balancing time online with other activities
 - Managing online friendships and social media
 - Maintaining healthy eating habits and physical activity
 - Pet Therapy
 - Counselling

Referrals for this service are through your child's class teacher or form tutor or via the Senior Leadership Team through consultation with parents.

Please note any disclosure of a safeguarding matter would need to be passed on social care, but in most cases we would contact parents or carers first.

Support for Parents and Carers

We will also provide further advice and information to parents/carers within our school community. We can help parents with any worries that you may have in relation to your child's education, behaviour and emotional well-being. We are also here for parents to talk to about their own mental well-being. We would like to offer the following service:

- Whatsapp messaging support service, contact us via the mobile app Whatsapp (free to download) with your questions or concerns and we will either respond via messages or arrange a call back if you prefer. This will be available between **10 am - 4 pm Monday- Friday.**

We have set up a designated mobile telephone line to provide our listening and support service, which is:

07915871046.

You can also contact me by email:

Email: peattiej@birchwoodschool.co.uk

Also remember we have our advice and support email available for you to contact us on, this is monitored daily by our Senior Leadership Team who can let me know if you would like me to make contact.

adviceandsupport@birchwoodschool.co.uk

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind Regards

Julie Peattie
PSHE & Welfare Lead