

March 2023

Dear Parent, Carer

Message from the Principal and Senior Leadership Team:

This academic year has seen education fully back into normal routine. Sadly, four strike days have impacted our Years 9 and 10 over the past few weeks; the lack of funding from the Government for education is a cause for concern for the team of a small secondary school, therefore we do support our staff in their strike action.

As we come to the end of the spring term, our Year 11 and 13 have been completing Pre-Public Examinations (PPEs) for the second time this year in preparation of live exams as well as live BTEC exams in both Sport and Performing Arts.

Staff changes:

We say goodbye to Miss Pyke and welcome Mr Lawrence in the science department this Easter. Mr Lawrence is moving back to the BCP area, having most recently been teaching in Kent.

We also welcome Mrs Kulaksiz, who has started as a part-time English teacher and we welcome back Mrs Watt from maternity for Business and Head of Year 11.

Quality of Education:

Over the last few terms pupils have been busy with exams and of course that means results which get posted home to parents and carers.

Years 9 and 10 need to start preparing for their end of year exams. Revision lists will be published to allow pupils to organise their time effectively. Please ensure that they have all their equipment- this includes the following:

- Clear pencil case
- Black Pens
- Pencils
- Highlighter
- Rubber
- Sharpener
- Scientific Calculator (must not be taken into exams where a calculator is not allowed)
- Geometry Set – Protractor, Compass, Triangle, 15cm Ruler

Pupils will be under exam conditions as soon as they enter the exam room. Pupils must go straight to their assigned seat and remain facing forward. They must not communicate with other candidates in any way.

LeAF Studio

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Part of Ambitions Academies Trust

Mrs Percival has reached out to our Parent Voice body who have provided LeAF with feedback on our progress reports to parents. The grading system is seemingly still a confusion point; therefore, we have included the GCSE grading scale in this newsletter to support parent understanding against the old system:

How the new grades compare with old ones

| Old grades | New grades |
|------------|---------------------------------------|
| A* | 9 |
| A | 8 |
| B | 7 |
| C | 6 5 Strong Pass 4 Standard Pass |
| D | 3 |
| E | 2 |
| F | 1 |
| G | 1 |
| U | U |

Pupils must gain a minimum of a grade 4 in Maths and English otherwise they will be expected to re sit examinations until they are nineteen years old by the Government.

Online Safety

Hollie Guard App

This app allows you to keep an eye on your child while they are traveling using the Journey feature. Whenever they use this feature, their emergency contacts are informed when they have arrived at their destination. With the free version, users can also use this app to get help quickly if they are in danger. If a user is in danger, they hold down the button for 5 seconds to raise an alert, which activates Hollie Guard and automatically sends their location to their designated contacts. Visit their website for further information: <https://hollieguard.com>

Online Scams

Internet Matters have published an article detailing common online scams targeting teenagers. Are you aware of scams involving social media spoofing, webcam and remote access scams and health and beauty scams? Internet Matters highlight a list of different scams, how they work and actions you can take to protect your teenager online. You can read the article here:

[Common online scams targeting teens | Internet Matters](#)

Gangs & County Lines

Would you like to find out more about gangs and county lines and how children can be exploited? LGfL have put together several short videos and a leaflet including more information for you. You can find the information here:

<https://parentsafe.lgfl.net/gangs-county-lines>

The National Crime Agency also provide information including defining what a county line is and what to do if you have any concerns:

<https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/what-we-do/crime-threats/drug-trafficking/county-lines>

Attendance:

For the first time this year, our whole school attendance has slightly dipped below the national average which is a real concern. We always pride ourselves on our high levels of engagement, but now have a lot of pupils whose attendance is slightly below 90%, which is what we refer to as Persistent Absence. This means that these pupils are missing on average one day every two weeks, which will clearly have a significant impact on both their training and academic progress. We have had numerous incidences this year where pupils have been kept home for minor issues such as tiredness or colds, and we would urge parents to only keep their children off if they are genuinely too unwell to attend school. If your child is too ill to attend school, please ensure that you email studioattendance@leafstudio.co.uk as soon as possible on the morning of any absence.

Behaviour:

With the majority of homework now being set via online platforms, from Easter we will be changing the way that we monitor homework being set across the school. Regular completion of quality homework is one of the biggest factors in student attainment, and here at LeAF Studio we value it very highly.

From T4, we will be trialling a system where all homework will be set on a Monday and will be due for completion by the end of the day on the following Sunday. Any student that does not complete their homework in a subject will be issued with a behaviour point and will attend homework club for an hour after school on a Tuesday to enable them to complete their work. Students who get buses or coaches will be able to get a later bus to take them home. Subjects offering drop-in support sessions will still run, but the days will be changed to ensure students have time to access these before the Monday deadline each week.

Any students who do not complete their homework in this time, will have to attend homework club again on the Thursday of that week to allow them to finish it. We will no longer be removing students from training in school or issuing break time detentions, as we feel that this new sanction will be a simpler and more consistent way of supporting students in completing their homework and ultimately improving their academic progress in school.

Message from Heads of Year:

Year 9 – Mr Dennett, Year 10 – Miss Magookin, Year 11 – Miss Spencer

Please ensure for equipment checks pupils have a geometry set for upcoming EOY exams, otherwise a preparation point will be issued. Without the geometry set or calculator, your child will be at a disadvantage when sitting their exams.

If your child is struggling to complete their homework, home learning support is available at break and lunch times for Maths, English, and Science and there is an after-school club on a Tuesday and Thursday manned by staff. I encourage students to use this to help prevent homework points being issued.

Well done to the year 9 pupils that have participated (and often won) in the girls' and boys' football, rugby and cricket fixtures this term.

Pupils within year 10 have now secured work experience places for their two-week placements in May. Heads of Year wish them luck and hope that they make the most of this time within their place of employment.

Year 11 now have the Prom booked and planning is underway; Please see Parent pay if your child has not secured their ticket. Well done to U16 girls' football who have secured a place in the National Cup quarter finals, this is the furthest the team has ever progressed.

Training fund:

With ever increasing pressures on school budgets, we are now more than ever reliant on parental support through our Training Fund. If you are unaware of this, we ask parents to commit to a regular £5 a month payment to support the specialisms in purchasing vital equipment that they need for both Sport and Stage & Screen. All money raised through this charitable venture is reserved exclusively for the specialisms and cannot be spent on anything else in the school, so parents can be secure in the knowledge that their contributions are going directly to support their children. The level of training and coaching we offer is usually only reserved for private schools, and so as a state school (that is completely free to attend) we do rely on the Training Fund to support us as we develop our specialism training. In the academic year so far this has already raised over £3000 which has been spent on your children. If you are able to support this initiative, then please use the details below to set up a standing order. For the reference, please use "LSFT" plus your child's name.

- LeAF Studio School
- Sort Code: 30-91-08
- Account Number: 58638468

Any support would be hugely appreciated by all of us here at LeAF Studio.

Careers

Students have been busy with careers events during T4 at Leaf Studio. In March, 50 students from years 9-12 undertook our annual trip to the Move-It show in London to support our performers and attend what is one of the biggest careers events in the world of stage and screen. LeAF had students participating in various events as well as talking and meeting with some of the hundreds of presenters, employers, and providers in attendance. Students also showed their best support for the two LeAF Studio groups who also performed on the day.

Year 10 students are finalising their arrangements for work experience, which will be taking place during T5. Students have had to sort their own placements and the two-week placements are expected to give students their first experience of the real world of work.

The coming term will see students in year 9 beginning to meet with our dedicated careers advisors and introducing students to the various educational pathways open to them.

Lisbon 2023:

As you may have seen from our social media channels, the Lisbon tour went out over February half term and was an enormous success. 44 pupils and 5 staff headed out to Portugal to train and compete in a fantastic sporting environment. We stayed in the same hotel as the Portuguese national rugby team, which was an experience, and had a wonderful time exploring Lisbon as well as training and playing matches. The footballers won 5 out of their 9 games (U15 boys, U16 boys and U16 girls) whilst the mixed sport pupils trained at the Jamor National Sports complex which is the home of many of the Portuguese international teams and athletes. Overall, the entire tour was a resounding success, and we look forward to finding out where we will be heading in February 2025 for our next international sports trip.

Move It

55 of our students ranging from Year 9 through to Year 13 stormed the Move It dance convention in March. The students performed across 4 pieces including our mainstage performance 'CONGA' and our 3 showcase theatre pieces. We are unbelievably proud of our students who once again 'held their own' whilst performing alongside some of the UK's most recognised vocational colleges and universities.



End of term and start of T5 arrangements.

Please remember LeAF will close at 3:15pm on Friday 31st March.

School re-opens to all on Monday 17th April at 8:35am.

Future events:

- Thursday 30th March
 - Reports to Parents emailed home.
- Friday 31st March
 - LeAF Live @ Absolute Music 6pm, £5 entry per person
- Wednesday 26th April
 - Yr. 9 Booster vaccinations
- Thursday 20th April
 - Live GCSE language exam
- Thursday 27th April
 - Live Drama practical exam
- Friday 28th April
 - Live Drama practical exam
- Tuesday 2nd May until Friday 12th May
 - Yr10 End of Year Exams

- Monday 15th May
 - GCSE live exams commence.
 - Yr.10 work placement fortnight begins.

I would like to wish all parents, carers, and students a lovely Easter.

Yours faithfully



Mrs Lapskas

Principal & Designated Safeguard Lead