

NDHS GAZETTE

Issue 16
April 2019

NEWS

Dear Parents, Carers, Students and Friends

Everyone here at school is looking forward to the Easter break, after another busy half term. We say farewell to Mr Hartmut Jenniches, who is leaving us after two terms. We thank him for his contribution to teaching Science and Physics and wish him every success.

I hope everyone can find an opportunity to rest and recharge their batteries over this holiday period. For both our Yr 11 and 13 students, their exam season is on the horizon and most will have exams to take within four weeks after we return on 23rd April. They will need to use a fair amount of the two-week break to continue with their revision preparation. It is important, however, that they build in time each day for rest and relaxation. Regular exercise and doing something you enjoy are both good stress 'busters'. A balanced diet and regular sleep patterns are important too.

School photo

We have arranged to have whole school photos taken on Friday 3rd May, weather permitting. Given the size of whole school, we will have a photo taken of students in Yrs 7-11 and staff, followed by a separate photo of our sixth form with their tutors.

For Christians, Easter is our most important festival, as we celebrate Christ's resurrection after his crucifixion and death. It is a season of rebirth and renewal. We wish all members of our school community (students, parents and staff) a happy, holy and peaceful holiday.

In this edition of Parent News, there are two items that will be of interest:

"Choose life!" is a reflection for Easter written for us by our School Chaplain, Fr Sean.

"Let's talk about sexting, consent and online relationships" is one of our regular e-safety articles, provided by Mr McCormack (Head of Computer Science & E-safety Coordinator)

Best Wishes

Neil Cully
(Head of School)

Dates for Parent Evenings and Parent Surgery meetings

2 May	Yr 10 Parents Evening from 4.30 p.m. Parent surgery between 6 and 7 pm in M24
16 May	Yr 12 Parents Evening from 4.30 p.m. Parent surgery between 6 and 7 pm in M24
20 Jun	Yr 7 Parents Evening from 4.30 p.m. Parent surgery between 6 and 7 pm in M24
2 Jul	New Yr 7 (2019 intake) Parents Evening, 6.00 p.m.

Choose Life!

Choose life. It was the opening line to the film based on Irvine Welsh's novel, *Trainspotting*, wasn't it? Choose life. Choose a job. Choose a career. Choose a family. Choose a big television. Choose washing machines, cars, compact disk players and electric tin openers. Choose good health, low cholesterol and dental insurance. Choose fixed-interest mortgage repayments. Choose a starter home. Choose your friends. Choose leisure wear and matching luggage. I won't go on - and you may have noticed I cut out the swear words!

The question of the novel was, is this really life? Is this really living? Or is this just what the world tells us is living: what the world tells us we should have and what we should be? Some of these things, it seems to me, we simply can't choose. Sometimes we'll find we've drifted into jobs or houses or relationships and we can't just up and change them - or not at least without a lot of difficulty, upset and fall out.

I was reminded of that film because during the past forty days of Lent, a lot of the readings given to us at Mass, particularly the ones taken from the Old Testament, have been about choosing life.

"See today I set before you life and prosperity, death and disaster," Moses says dramatically in one of the readings, taken from the book of Deuteronomy. "Choose life, then, so that you and your descendants may live in the love of the Lord your God, obeying his voice, clinging to him; for in this your life consists."

It seems to me that this is something much more radical than a rampant consumerism. It is something we are free to choose every waking day. Do we resolve to love the Lord our God and resist the lure of the straying heart and the worship of idols? Easier said than done because there are plenty of idols out there for us to worship: career, money, success, possessions, sex, reputation, peer pressure, our children, our parents, our husbands, our wives, our status, our well-being and so on. None of these, in themselves, are necessarily bad, but if we place them above everything else, if we effectively (and in the language of the Old Testament) begin to worship them, then they can turn into the worst demons imaginable and take over our lives.

During our whole school service for Ash Wednesday, all our staff and students joined hundreds of thousands of Christians around the world in having ashes daubed on our foreheads to mark the start of Lent. Sometimes the priest or minister marking us with ash will say, "Remember you are dust and unto dust you shall return," and sometimes he may say: "Repent and turn to the Gospel."

The first is a very stark reminder that we are all mortal and living on borrowed time. The second asks us to think again (which is literally what repent means) and embrace the Gospel, or the Good News. What is the Good News? It's that Jesus has risen from the dead,

and offers to share the new life with each of us. In other words, we are encouraged to re-think our priorities and be ready to embrace Life with a capital L. Choose life!

That's really what our fasting and abstinence have been about: stepping back from potential idols and addictions, stripping away the little luxuries or self-indulgences, maybe even tackling our petty selfishness and stubborn self-centredness, so that we can say Yes to the God who offers us the fullness of life. Hopefully, we've learnt that we don't need alcohol, rich foods, sweets and cakes, television and social media, 24 hour news or the internet to be alive and happy. Hopefully we've learnt that we're more ourselves and more human when we care about the world's poor, give of our time and ourselves to others, and put others first. Hopefully, we've found the space to listen to God in prayer and managed to hear him saying to us: "You are my beloved, and I delight in you!"

The last week of our school holidays will bring us to Holy Week and our celebrations of those last days of Jesus' life which have transformed history and are the very reason our school even exists. On Maundy Thursday, 18th April, churches around the world will celebrate the Mass of the Lord's Supper and recall that night, the night of his arrest, when Jesus stepped down from the table and began to wash his disciple's feet. On Good Friday, 19th April, Christians around the world will gather at 3.00pm to mark with solemnity the crucifixion of the Jesus Christ, by listening to the story as told by the gospel of St John and by kneeling down and kissing a wooden cross. And on Holy Saturday with the Easter Vigil starting around dusk, and on Easter Sunday at various Masses, the whole Church unites to welcome Jesus Christ Risen from the dead.

I encourage you to try and attend as much of these wonderful services as possible in your local parishes.

Wherever and however you celebrate Easter this year, may it be a happy time for you and your family and my God bring you every blessing.

Fr Sean
School Chaplain

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CAFOD Cyclone Idai Appeal

Thank you to the whole Notre Dame Community for such a positive response to CAFOD's appeal to provide emergency aid in Southern Africa. Particular thanks to the Year 7 Forms, Tutors and their families that organised a wide variety of stalls and ways to raise funds. The money will be sent to CAFOD to provide urgently needed drinking water, food and shelter to those affected by this natural disaster.

Mr A Savage



A lovely photo of our students in Japan during February half term

Let's talk about sexting, consent and online relationships

When we teach about consent in relationships, the discussion must relate to pupils' online lives.

The statistics paint a picture: one in 10 young people has been pressured by their boy/girlfriend to share a nude image; and a quarter have witnessed someone secretly taking a sexual image of someone and sharing it online. "Consent" is conspicuous by its absence, which is why it's such a hot topic in relationships and sex education. Young people are being shamed into school and community exclusion, and we want to change that. But when we talk about consent and online relationships, there's a missing piece of the jigsaw.

Here's a question: what is the first thing you would do if a stranger fell ill in the street?

1. Stop to help.
2. Take a photo.
3. Take a video.
4. Livestream it.

Unfortunately, these days the answer seems to be anything but the first one. Maybe technology is like wearing sunglasses that filter out the true impact of our behaviour. Maybe it emboldens us to act in ways we'd be ashamed of in any other context. We seem to have developed different norms of behaviour online. Is it a problem that we bark commands at our smart speakers, expecting immediate acquiescence to our desires? As we communicate with – rather than through – technology, does it matter if we're rude or respectful, patient or impatient? These are all issues that are increasingly spilling into schools, which teachers are having to grapple with.

Here's the rub: the importance we place on consent within online relationships is a reflection of how we value consent in every part of our online lives. But consent is routinely abused online. It is devalued, invisible or perfunctory at best. It is reduced to a box-ticking agreement to terms and conditions which haven't been read because they're (deliberately?) too long and verbose. Technology involves psychological levers to gain compliance and extend screen time – think of the social media "likes" which define popularity, the notifications to regularly bring you back to an app or the virtual rewards that signal accomplishment in an online game. Onward, ever onward. A company showed off a new chatbot that fooled the caller into believing they were talking with a real human. Fake videos have been created to serve a political agenda. Technology with manipulation at its heart.

Online safety: sexting and consent

These principles have spread into our own online behaviour. We can use apps to covertly track, video, photograph or listen to employees, children or spouses. "Sharenting" (over sharing by parents of their children's images or data) is evolving. It is no longer just a case of risking future identity theft. Children are a commodity online – there is an income to be made through a family YouTube channel. Is it only celebrities who Photoshop their children to perfection? We cannot expect young people to value consent in online relationships if we regularly delegitimise it elsewhere.

But there is good news: consent is an increasing part of our vocabulary when we talk of digital matters. There is greater public awareness of online data and privacy. Government is talking tough about the need for regulation. There are excellent educational resources available regarding consent in the digital world. Change is afoot, which will no doubt come as some relief to teachers – who are busy enough with other stuff already, of course – as they try to get to grips with the fast-changing digital world that now pervades school life.

So, when we talk with young people in our schools about consent in relationships, let's root that conversation in the language of our online lives. Let's talk about data rights, manipulative technology and authenticity online. Let's talk about power, image, shame and empathy, and how we can use technology as a force for good. That's the missing piece of the puzzle.

Mr McCormack



DramActive Academy - Notre Dame

DramActive Academy specialises in teaching children of all ages and abilities in drama, theatre and film and television training. The company currently operates from a number of different venues in and around Norwich and Norfolk and is a well-established company of over 20 years.

DramActive Academy aims to coach and mentor students to the highest levels in the subjects that it covers. Utilising a structured but creative approach to training and teaching in the following areas:

1. A mixture of drama, singing, confidence building, role-play, dressing up, dance and movement/mime/poetry/speech.
2. Television and film technique
3. Preparation for a future in the acting world, drama school preparation.

DramActive Academy offers all students the opportunity to enter into The London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art's (L.A.M.D.A) examination syllabus for many of the listed subjects. LAMDA is the oldest Drama School in the United Kingdom, and is well respected across the board in the field. The Curriculum Authority has accredited the LAMDA Examinations. In conjunction to their accreditation by the Curriculum Authority, the higher grades have UCAS points attached to them, aiding those applying to University and beyond. These exams are at an extra cost and arranged by Jane Ashdown.

We are also able to offer students of DramActive Academy to experience and work within film and television through its established relationships with various companies. DramActive Academy offers students opportunities in extra work through its own casting agency, Luvvie's Casting. Further details on how to join will be given to students at their class or requested.

DramActive Academy's Principal, Jane Ashdown (LLAM (Hons) and ALAM (Hons)) is a fully qualified teacher of Dramatic Art and has been teaching for almost 30 years. Jane is also member of the Society of Teachers of Speech and Drama, which is a body that monitors and maintains high standards of drama teaching through the provision of only *qualified* teaching professionals. Having experience film, television, and theatre throughout her career, she is able to offer a unique training that is only gained from experience within the field. Jane is also qualified in Mencap training, which supports learning disabilities and is a member of the S.A.F.E organisation. Every member of staff, including Jane holds a DBS (Disclosure Barring Service) and an advanced disclosure. Insurance

