

# Pastoral Newsletter



Spring Term 2 2025

## SAFEGUARDING

Please note details of our Safeguarding team:

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):  
Mr Michael Keeley  
([mkeeley@morehousemail.org.uk](mailto:mkeeley@morehousemail.org.uk))

Deputy DSL: Ms Paulette Monteiro  
([pmonteiro@morehousemail.org.uk](mailto:pmonteiro@morehousemail.org.uk))

Deputy DSL: Ms Claire Phelps  
([cphelps@morehousemail.org.uk](mailto:cphelps@morehousemail.org.uk))

Please contact one of the staff listed above if you have any safeguarding concerns. In an emergency, please use of the following number:

**Emergency Safeguarding Tel: 07393 392745**

## RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

As a school community, we are aware of the religious communities represented within More House School. Therefore, we can usually make provision for pupils to fulfil any observances without the need for absence during the school day.

### Statutory Guidance

Absences from school for religious observance can be authorised within reason where we are satisfied that the day has been set aside by the religious body and the parents of the child are members of that religious community. Within some religious traditions, observance varies between different denominations and communities.

When parents request leave for their child(ren) for religious observance, students can be granted a day's authorised absence for a particular religious festival. Where a religious festival falls during a school holiday or at the weekend, no authorised absence should be granted. If parents request further days then appropriate consideration will be given to this. Requests for preparation for religious festivals will be regarded as unauthorised absence.

There is no religious obligation requiring students to be absent from school.

If your child is unable to attend school for any other reason, for safeguarding purposes, it is imperative that you phone the school or email [absent@morehousemail.org.uk](mailto:absent@morehousemail.org.uk) before 8.25am to inform us.

## ATTENDANCE UPDATE

All schools are legally required to share information from their registers with the local authority. As a minimum this includes:

- **Attendance Return**

The school must provide the local authority with the names and addresses of all pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend school regularly or have been absent for a continuous period of ten school days where their absence has been recorded with one or more of the codes statistically classified as unauthorised.

- **Sickness Return**

Following new government guidance, we have been asked to provide the Local Authority with the names of any pupils with 15 or more days of sickness. This is the total number of school days missed during the current school year because of illness (whether consecutive or cumulative). This report is to help the school and local authority to agree on any provision needed to ensure continuity of education for pupils who cannot attend because of health needs.

## TERM TIME ABSENCE AND OTHER ABSENCES

I wanted to take the opportunity to remind you about our published policy statutory guidance on students' absence.

We know that families play a vital role in the academic success of our students. The first step to academic achievement is establishing excellent school attendance habits.

**Family holidays in term time are not allowed by law and are unlikely to be authorised.** Family emergencies will be given careful consideration. It is not always appropriate or in the best interests of the student to miss school for emergencies which are being dealt with by adult family members. Notifying the school of leave due to a family emergency does not mean it will be authorised.

If you wish to take your daughter out of school during term time for purposes other than holidays, you should email their leave of absence request to [absent@morehousemail.org.uk](mailto:absent@morehousemail.org.uk) at least 2 weeks in advance.

Under current regulations, schools cannot authorise any holidays taken in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Note that only the Head can decide if the absence is to be authorised or unauthorised so please do not email your child's form tutor or subject teacher. We may require evidence of exceptional circumstances, which should be attached to the 'request for leave of absence' email and the judgement about what is exceptional will be made by the Head and the pastoral team.

Where authorisation is not granted then subsequent term time holiday absence will be reported as an unauthorised absence negatively impacting your child's overall school attendance.

## FINANCIALLY MOTIVATED SEXUAL EXTORTION ('SEXTORTION')

We are continuing to raise awareness of online threats to young people. We were recently made aware of a case where images of pupils at a school were obtained from Facebook accounts, nudified using AI and the school threatened that the images would be released if money was not handed over.

### What is 'sextortion'?

Financially motivated sexual extortion (often referred to as 'sextortion') is a type of online blackmail. An adult (or group of adults) threatens to release nude or semi-nude images of a child unless they pay them money, or do something else to benefit them. It is a form of child sexual abuse. Sextortion is often carried out by offenders in an organised crime group overseas, and is motivated by profit. Sometimes adults pose as children, to make contact with them. They might:

- Groom or coerce the child into sending nudes or semi-nudes and financially blackmail them;
- Use images that have been stolen from the child, taken through hacking their account;
- Use digitally-manipulated images, including AI-generated images, of the child.

### Signs to look out for:

If a child is a victim of sextortion, they might:

- Spend more time online, or more time offline - they might try to avoid mobile phones, laptops and tablets entirely, for example;
- Complain of being tired because they were online all night, or have their phone going off a lot ;
- Have stronger emotional responses or outbursts to being online - they may get unusually angry, upset or distant after checking their phone or using their computer/tablet;
- Be secretive about their use of the internet or a device - they may refuse to hand their phone in if they're asked to do so by a

teacher, or refuse to tell you what they get up to online;

- Show signs of self-harm or suicidal thoughts. They might also show signs of hopelessness.

### **How to protect yourself and your child from sextortion:**

- Encourage your child to be careful with the information they share online;
- Review your child's privacy settings on any accounts they use, so it's harder for strangers to contact them;
- Use strong passwords for each account you use online, so it's harder for criminals to break in and get information about you.

### **What to do if you think your child is a victim:**

- Don't blame your child - criminals use sophisticated methods to trick young people;
- Don't pay the person asking for money, and make sure your child stops engaging with them;
- Don't delete any images, messages or videos, since they can be used by the police as evidence;
- Do contact the police - you can make a report via the Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) website (<https://www.ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre/>);
- If your child agrees to it, speak to our school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL).

## **UNIFORM**

We have recently noticed an increase in pupils not wearing the correct uniform or wearing their PE kit on days when they do not have PE. **Sports kit should only be worn on the day of physical education lessons and sports clubs.**

May I remind you that pupils should always come to School in the correct uniform. When in School uniform, pupils are ambassadors of the School and therefore skirts should be a respectable length and **shoes must be black and flat.**

Pupils are not permitted to wear jewellery with the exception of small stud earrings. Infringements of

this rule will result in jewellery confiscation until the end of term. Nail polish is forbidden.

On the days when pupils have P.E. they must come to School dressed in her P.E. kit. This is also the case if pupils are going to participate in a sports club after School. It is important that your daughter has suitable trainers - converse and pumps are not allowed, for example.

Pupils in Sixth Form are expected to wear business attire every day except when they have a sporting activity.

There is an expectation that no midriffs are exposed or offensive logos worn.

Tracksuit bottoms and hooded tops are not permitted with the exception of school leavers' jumpers and school trip hoodies on PE days.

### **Sanctions**

- Inappropriate uniform will result in a Debit in the first instance
- Any student inappropriately dressed may be sent home to change. More than one infringement in a half term will result in a letter being sent home by the Pastoral Team or the Head of Sixth Form and a Level 2 detention.

## **BRINGING CASH TO SCHOOL**

Pupils are reminded that sums of £10 or more should be handed in to the office for safe keeping during the School day. We recommend the use of a card where possible. We have a card reader available for charity donations on non-uniform days.

## **PHSE and RSE**

Here is a reminder of the PSHE and RSE topics each year group will be exploring during the second part of the Spring Term:

### **Year 7:**

#### Spring Two:

1. Being Positive
2. What Makes a Good Friend

3. Friendships and Online Relationships
4. Pressure, Influence and Friends
5. Respect and Relationships
6. Consent and Boundaries

### Year 8:

#### Spring Two:

1. Relationships and Sex Education
2. What is love?
3. Healthy Respectful Relationships
4. Sexual Orientation
5. Dealing with Conflict
6. Introduction to Contraception

### Year 9:

#### Spring Two:

1. FGM and the Law
2. What are STIs?
3. Contraception
4. Contraception explored
5. HIV/ AIDS
6. HIV/ AIDS - prejudice and Discrimination

### Year 10:

#### Spring Two:

1. Pleasure and Delaying Sexual Activity
2. Sexting, Nudes and D\*ck Pics
3. Online Pornography (Myths v Reality)
4. Porn and its impact on society
5. Campaigning against FGM
6. Unhealthy Relationships, Sexual Assault and Rape

### Year 11:

#### Spring Two:

1. Peer on Peer Abuse
2. Fertility and What Impacts It
3. Alcohol, Parties and Bad Choices
4. Importance of Sexual Health
5. Revisiting STIs
6. Respect, Love and Relationships

### Year 12:

#### Spring Two:

1. The Importance of First Aid
2. Decisions, Drink Spiking & Drink Drivers
3. Getting Home Safely
4. Going Abroad and Safety
5. The Police, Organised Crime & Gangs
6. Drugs, Alcohol and Work

### Year 13:

#### Spring Two:

1. Importance of Sexual Health
2. Sexual Health Misconceptions
3. Body Modifications
4. Appearance Vs Reality
5. Body Image & Pressure to Conform
6. Managing Life's Phases

### Right to withdraw

- Parents have the right to withdraw their children from Sex Education except in those elements which are required by the National Curriculum Science orders.
- Requests for withdrawal should be put in writing using the form found in our published RSE policy and addressed to the Head.
- The Head will discuss the request with parents and take appropriate action. A copy of withdrawal requests will be placed in the student's educational record.
- Alternative work will be given to pupils who are withdrawn from sex education.
- Please note that, in accordance with the DfE guidance, More House will respect the parents' request to withdraw the child, up to and until three terms before the child turns 16. After that point, if the child wishes to receive sex education rather than be withdrawn, the School can make arrangements to provide the child with sex education during one of those terms.

### EXAM STRESS

As exam season approaches, it is natural for children to feel a little stressed or anxious. At More House, we believe that with the right support, every child can navigate this period confidently. Here are some practical tips to help your child manage exam stress and perform at their best:

**Encourage Open Conversations:** Create a safe space for your child to share their worries. Let them know it's okay to feel nervous and that you're

there to listen without judgment. Sometimes, just talking about their concerns can ease their anxiety.

**Help Them Establish a Routine:** A balanced routine can make a big difference. Encourage regular study breaks, healthy meals, and a consistent sleep schedule. A well-rested mind is better equipped to handle stress.

**Promote Healthy Habits:** Physical activity, even a short walk, can help reduce stress. Encourage your child to take breaks, get outside, and stay active. A healthy diet and plenty of water also play a key role in maintaining energy and focus.

**Teach Relaxation Techniques:** Simple techniques like deep breathing, mindfulness, or even listening to calming music can help your child relax when they feel overwhelmed. Practising these together can be a great way to bond and support them.

**Keep Things in Perspective:** Remind your child that exams are important, but they don't define their worth. Celebrate their efforts and progress, not just the results. Encourage them to do their best, but also to recognise that setbacks are a normal part of learning.

**Stay Positive and Calm:** Your attitude can have a big impact on your child. Stay positive, offer encouragement, and avoid adding unnecessary pressure. Let them know you're proud of their hard work, no matter the outcome.

**Work with the School:** If you're concerned about your child's stress levels, don't hesitate to reach out to us. We're here to support both you and your child through this time.

Remember, a little stress can be motivating, but too much can be overwhelming. By working together, we can help your child approach exams with confidence and resilience.

## SAVE THE DATE

**18th March:** Composers' Concert (5pm)

**27th March:** Whole School Mat at St Mary's Church (9.30am)

**1st April:** Easter Choral Concert (6.30pm)