



What's on in Year 9?

Monday 20th April - Please find the latest updates for Year 9. Year 9 Summer Term Focus is **'Reflect and Resilience'** - Review of the year, celebrate involvement and successes and know yourself and your learning journey. Action plan to identify areas of strength and strategies to develop next steps with the aim of being more capable, independent and resilient learners who feel prepared for the year 10 journey. *Develop a more mature and holistic outlook with a real focus on health and wellbeing (physical, mental and social).* In the current climate, I would like us to focus on the highlighted blue section.

General Update – Initially, I would like to start by saying that I hope this communication finds you all safe and well in these unprecedented times. The safety of the whole "Penrice Community" whether it be students, staff, parents, carers, or family remains our number one priority. As you are aware, Penrice remains closed to students, apart from our most vulnerable or the students that have parents/carers who are keyworkers. In terms of establishing an idea of when school will reopen to students, we are of course following Government advice and guidelines on when this will be safe to do so and therefore we are not speculating on any length of time. One thing for certain is that this will not be forever and I would personally, like to say a huge thank you to you all for your continued support of the school during these challenging times.

Student Wellbeing – Top of our priorities is the safety and wellbeing of our students. We have of course reiterated the importance of the students "staying at home" and to follow Government advice. Similarly, we have encouraged that they establish good routines to enable them to make the most of their day. I have also regularly advocated that the students do some form of exercise for the mental and physical benefits that we know this brings to us all. I appreciate that some of our students may of course feel nervous, anxious or apprehensive about being away from school and what impact this will have on their education. Our aim is to minimise this as best that we can and I encourage students that should they have any concerns, worries or any questions in particular, that they simply ask us. We are still here to support you all, keep those lines of communication open please.

Student Work - As a school, we remain committed – and it is our duty - to provide the best possible learning opportunities and support for the students. I reiterate again, should your child have any issues, whether it be technical, questions about the work, if they are feeling under pressure, whatever it is, please ask! Staff have continued to set work for students on Show My Homework and they will also be receiving work packs that will be sent home. Where there will be a few changes to this process for Year 7 and Year 8, Years 9 and 10 will remain the same. Work will be set by teachers for the students according to their timetable and staff have been instructed to set between 45-60 minutes worth of work per lesson. Set work for Year 9 should help to deepen and embed their new learning and please rest assured that it is not just being set for the sake of it – it should all have a purpose and that purpose is to assist them to continue with their learning journey, albeit in a different environment! I can fully empathise as parent of two younger children, that this is a challenging time! Trying to wear so many 'hats' and juggle so many things is not an easy task; my message to you all, is please do not allow this to cause any additional stress on you as a family. Our aim is to simply encourage all students to engage with us and do their best in order to avoid potential 'gaps' for when they return. On this note, I would like to express my upmost thanks and appreciation for your hard work and continued support. We are in this together!

Communication – Should you as parents/carers have anything at all you would like to discuss, please let us know and staff will get back to you as soon as possible. Please email me; crazzell@penrice.org.uk and I am more than happy to arrange a phone call/email with you at a convenient time. It is essential that we keep open lines of communication and please be aware that you may receive an email from either myself or Matthew Potter (Year 9 Pastoral Support) regarding your child if they are not accessing/submitted work on Show My Homework. As mentioned previously, we fully understand the challenges you might be facing and please see this communication as supportive and non-judgemental – as stated previously we are in this together and we are here to offer support and guidance if and when required.

Us Plus – At this unusual time it is really important to look after the mental health and well-being of ourselves and our loved ones. People might be finding the changed circumstances of our lifestyle particularly difficult and this may show itself in a range of behaviours at home:

8 WAYS A CHILD'S ANXIETY SHOWS UP AS SOMETHING ELSE

- 1. Anger**
The perception of danger, stress or opposition is enough to trigger the fight or flight response leaving your child angry and without a way to communicate why.
- 2. Difficulty Sleeping**
In children, having difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep is one of the hallmark characteristics of anxiety.
- 3. Defiance**
Unable to communicate what is really going on, it is easy to interpret the child's defiance as a lack of discipline instead of an attempt to control a situation where they feel anxious and helpless.
- 4. Channelling**
Channelling is when a seemingly calm person suddenly flies off the handle for no reason. They have pushed hurt and anxiety so deep for so long that a seemingly innocent comment or event suddenly sends them straight through the channeller.
- 5. Lack of Focus**
Children with anxiety are often so caught up in their own thoughts that they do not pay attention to what is going on around them.
- 6. Avoidance**
Children who are trying to avoid a particular person, place or task often end up experiencing more of whatever it is they are avoiding.
- 7. Negativity**
People with anxiety tend to experience negative thoughts at a much greater intensity than positive ones.
- 8. Overplanning**
Overplanning and defiance go hand in hand in their root cause. Where anxiety can cause some children to try to take back control through defiant behavior, it can cause others to overplan for situations where planning is minimal or unnecessary.

It is important to acknowledge their fears and concerns but work positively to overcome them. Ways to help your young people at this time are:

- Routine – this is where schoolwork is important! Getting up at the same time, showering, eating at the same time impacts positively on mental health and well-being.
- Encourage physical activity – a workout / walk round the garden/ session on just dance etc.
- Limit access to social media and online gaming. Some is good lots can be damaging.
- Plan times to rest and relax time to do fun activities.
- Talk to and listen to each other – a simple 'Yes, I understand your feelings' can be really supporting at these uncertain times.

There is lots of information on our website including an A to Z of services and 'Your Way' link that can support and give advice about mental health and well-being and Mrs Taylor sends a twice weekly 'Us Plus' bulletin to all students giving lots of ideas, links and advice about staying mentally and physically well at this time. Finally, there is a team of Trauma Informed Schools staff at Penrice who are able to give 1-2-1 support to students who are struggling. This support, at this time, will take place over email but can be reassuring and effective for students. If you feel your child would benefit from this please email taylor@penrice.org.uk for further information. Students can also self-refer using the same email.

Stay safe and please take care

Kindest Regards

Mrs C Razzell (Head of Year 9)

