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Dear Parents/Carers

PSHE Focus for KS4

As part of the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) Programme students at KS4 build on the work started at KS3.

For our Upper School Students, a key aspect of PSHE is to appreciate the changing feelings and emotions of themselves and others. Teaching and learning in this regard takes place within the context of a Catholic teaching and looks to the example of Jesus in the Gospel Writings.

Year 10 students think about what it might be like to suffer from an addiction and try to empathise with those who experience addiction within the family. We discuss what situations might influence a young person to experiment with illegal drugs. There is also a reminder of the legal position regarding drugs and drug-taking in a presentation from an external speaker. The dangers of alcohol are discussed and the need for responsibility when consuming alcohol. The effects of alcoholism on family as well as an individual's life will be viewed in a sensitive manner.

Staff discuss with students the appropriate time for sexual relationships, and we explain the position of the Catholic Church on contraception and sexual relationships, while giving our young people the information on keeping themselves protected, and discuss the possibility of making relationship and contraceptive choices. The emotional and health consequences of entering into a sexual relationship are considered, and we emphasise the importance of self-respect, self-esteem and dignity and the right to say 'no' to a sexual relationship. The facts about the transmission, the effects and prevention of HIV/ AIDs are discussed in detail and we actively promote abstinence, avoidance of casual sexual relationships and faithfulness within marriage. We also discuss the prejudice surrounding this disease and how education can combat this; within this, we recognise that we all have responsibility.

Every effort is made to facilitate students on their journey to responsible adulthood and confronting prejudice and discrimination is an important element in this journey. This is part of a wider emphasis on moral justice and having moral courage.

The Local Authority will be educating the students on the dangers of social media, county lines and specific safeguarding issues within the Southend area.

In addition, time is given over for the planning and preparation for Work Experience which takes place in Year 11.

Additional lessons cover bullying, employee rights and Trade Unions, and the Catholic ethos of the school, as reflected in St Bernard's being a Holocaust Beacon school, as well as a key focus on Spiritual, Moral, Social & Cultural (SMSC) issues.

Year 11 explores the negative aspects of social media and focusses on the barriers to learning as well as reflecting on the legal and social aspects to posting material on social media sites. The emphasis on being safe is continued with a consideration of the legal issues around drugs and the key facts and fictions on drugs. Additionally, in looking at the physical and psychological effects of alcohol consumption, and the personal safety issues which arise from excessive drinking, we aim to protect our students and encourage them towards greater maturity and responsibility.

Students will also consider the issues surrounding sexual relationships, pregnancy and choices affecting parenting. Such lessons are routed in Catholic teaching and healthy relationships.

A key focus in Year 11 is on preparing students for Post 16 education and training, as well as the world of employment. The aim is to enable our students to make informed decisions which affect their futures.

Students' focus on financial literacy is complimented with lessons on budgeting and taxation and issues of wider Citizenship are tackled with sessions on Crime and choices.

Finally, just before the GCSE exams the students have specific revision time set aside.

The Local Authority will be educating the students on the dangers of social media, county lines and specific safeguarding issues within the Southend area.

This year will also see a specific series of lessons on Holocaust Education. This reflects the fact that St Bernard's is now a Holocaust Beacon school working in partnership with University College, London. There is also an emphasis on Spiritual, Moral, Social & Cultural (SMSC) issues.

Should you require any further information please feel free to contact me at the school.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H Barnes', written in a cursive style.

Mrs H Barnes
Assistant Head Teacher