

8 February 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

On Thursday 19th January, we held our second Parent Forum of the academic year. Bexley Community Safety Team (community.safety@bexley.gov.uk) came to Welling to speak to parents about us all being proactive members of the community, and to listen out for and support our young people through their Community Risk Awareness Workshop. Our Executive Headteacher, Mr Hatley, explained that this workshop is one part of the package for us all to support our young people moving forwards.

The context of Bexley borough was provided by the Community Safety Team, explaining that Bexley is a safe borough and ranks between position two and position four (out of 32) in terms of the safest London Boroughs. The workshop focussed on the fact that safety isn't an issue exclusively for schools, and that the entire community needs to work together to safeguard our young people.

The definition of a gang can range between a 'peer group' as a collective group of young people who do not have crime as a central aim to their identity. This was contrasted with 'street gang' who engage in criminal activity, and an 'Organised Criminal Network' where criminal activity is central to their purpose. It was then explained that contextually, Bexley only has one 'street gang', which the Community Safety Team explained is being monitored closely by police.

Helpfully, we were presented with the signs to look out for among young people, which included but is not limited to:

- New groups of friends
- Going missing for long periods of time
- Unexpected cash or new goods (designer clothing or balaclavas)
- In possession of a second phone, such as a 'brick phone'
- Sudden changes in behaviour or secrecy
- Unexplained parcels or packages
- Looking after possessions for friends
- Unexplained bank activity

Some suggested steps put forward by the Bexley Community Safety Team to support your young person include:

- Monitor social media accounts
- Monitor mobile phone usage (the contract belongs to the bill payer who is responsible for it) - are there calls at unusual times or photos of money and drugs?
- Ensure you know who your child is with.
- Have you registered their Oyster card to see its history?
- Report your child as missing to 101 if you do not know where they are
- Keep an eye on bank accounts
- Key contacts are:
 - Welling School
 - The police via 101 (or 999 if it's an emergency)
 - Crimestoppers/ Fearless.org for anonymous reporting
 - Bexley Community Safety Team - community.safety@bexley.gov.uk
 - Bexley Children's Social Care - 020 3045 5440

Executive Headteacher
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Building Successful Futures

We hope you find this information helpful, and we hope to see you at our next parent forum which will take place on Thursday 30th March. Further details about the event will follow nearer the time.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P. Hemsley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping 'y' at the end.

Mr P Hemsley
Deputy Headteacher