

**A ROUND UP OF THE WEEK AT LAUREL PARK SCHOOL****Headteacher's Message - Adele Christofi**

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we approach the midpoint of this term, I'm delighted to share some of the exciting happenings at our school. It's been a bustling few weeks, filled with academic pursuits, sporting triumphs, and important life lessons.

Our Year 10 basketball team has done us proud, securing a win against Edmonton County. Beyond the victory itself, I was particularly impressed by the team's integrity and sportsmanship. Their conduct on and off the court exemplifies the values we strive to instil in all our pupils at Laurel Park.

For our Year 9 pupils, an important milestone is on the horizon - the options process has begun. We've kicked off with key subject assemblies, providing a wealth of information and guidance. To support this crucial decision-making phase, our PSHE lessons have incorporated careers exploration using Unifrog, helping our young people to make informed choices about their future pathways.

Science has been particularly exciting for Year 8 this week. Our budding biologists have been getting hands-on experience, dissecting hearts. While some pupils may have looked a tad pale at times, the overall enthusiasm was palpable. It's these practical experiences that often spark a lifelong interest in science, and I'm thrilled we can offer such engaging lessons.

On a more serious note, I must address an issue that has come to our attention recently. We've had to deal with several incidents involving inappropriate use of social media, particularly among our younger pupils. I want to remind all parents, especially those with children in Years 7 and 8, of their duty to monitor their child's mobile phone usage. It's crucial to note that many popular apps such as Snapchat, Instagram, and WhatsApp have a minimum age requirement of 13. Using these platforms below this age is not only against the apps' terms of service but also potentially puts our children at risk.

As educators and parents, it's our shared responsibility to guide our young people in navigating the digital world safely and responsibly. I urge you to have open conversations with your children about their online activities and to stay informed about the apps they're using.

In closing, I'd like to thank you all for your continued support and partnership in educating our pupils. Together, we can ensure that Laurel Park remains a place where young minds are nurtured, challenged, and inspired to reach their full potential.

Adele Christofi  
Headteacher

# Headteacher's Award

At the end of each week, form tutors choose one student from their form for the 'Headteacher's Award'. In a special ceremony with Ms Christofi, she shares the 'story behind their success' with the winning recipients. The students also receive a special certificate and pin badge to commemorate the achievement.

Congratulations to the Year 10 winners from this week who received a great surprise to find out they had won this prestigious award!

Tyrone - Wins for **Integrity**, Tyrone has been trying to stay in his lessons this term. Although there have been a few issues he has been modelling the correct way to interact with peers and teachers which is positive to see.

Mehrab - Wins for **Determination**, His attendance has improved this term. He always arrives on time with perfect uniform and ready to learn. He helps out in the form time and works hard in PSHE. Engages well in discussions and completes all the work to the best of his ability.

Safiya - Wins for **Determination**, Safiya is a delightful student who always strives to be the best version of herself. Her attendance, punctuality & uniform are exemplary - all signs to indicate how seriously Safiya takes her education and her own success. She is always positive and upbeat, & it's a delight to have Safiya in my tutor group

Hafsa - Wins for **Excellence**, Hafsa has shown an increase in confidence, taking part more in activities both in and outside the classroom such as public speaking. She has an excellent attitude to learning and explores all opportunities to improve the standard of both her work and personal development.

Talia - Wins for **Ambition**, Talia never ceases to impress both students and staff with her integrity, determination and excellence all fuelled by her deeply passionate and creative ambition. She is a role-model to the entire LPS community both academically and pastorally. Her attitude to learning, attendance, punctuality, uniform and equipment is excellent, as well as her leadership, maturity, resilience during tough times and superb public Speaking skills are outstanding!





# JACK PETCHEY



This week saw the second group of Y10 students participate in the Jack Petchey Speak Out Challenge. They had a really positive experience with lots of interactive ways to help students build their confidence with public speaking, an essential lifeskill for the future. I am pleased to announce that we now have 6 finalists who will perform their speeches in front of their year group in next week's assembly. I look forward to announcing who will be performing their speech in the Regional final on Monday 10th February. Mrs Nicolaou

It helped me to improve my confidence and how to speak to others in a better manner and tone. Before I would have been very nervous but afterwards I knew I could do it.  
Ash Y10



The workshop really helped improve my confidence in speaking in front of a large audience. The workshop gave us many tips on how to structure and deliver a speech. It helped me to improve my delivery when performing. Overall, it was a really good experience and I feel I have improved on a lot of skills.  
Salah Y10



## OUR FINALISTS

Well done to:

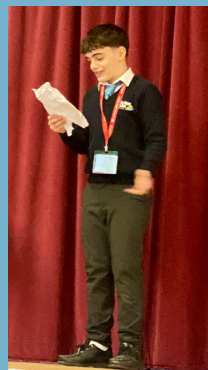
- Isabel
- Mary
- Hfasa
- Gideon
- Ash
- Salah



# Year 7 Winter Poem Project

A huge Bravo to our wonderful Y7 cohort who have completed the Festive Winter Poem performances. This vibrant and culturally enriching project celebrating the Winter Solstice from different communities around the world was a fantastic creative collaboration, showcasing a multitude of talents & performance skills. Watch out KS4 Drama, the Y7's are hot on your Performing Arts heels!

**Congratulations Y7, as we now move upwards and onto the mighty, Greek Theatre!**



## YEAR 10 BASKETBALL MATCH

**Year 10 Basketball Team Claims Victory!**

This week, our Year 10 basketball team took on Edmonton County in a thrilling game. Entering the 4th quarter down by 1 point at 12-13, the team rose to the occasion and delivered an outstanding performance. Displaying remarkable creativity, resilience, and dominance, they more than doubled their score to achieve a commanding 26-15 win. Bolu contributed 6 points, Mohamed added 4, and Trevaun chipped in with 2 points. The star of the game was Saleh, who scored an impressive 14 points and expertly controlled the pace as point guard.



## Remembering the Holocaust

This week's assembly was dedicated to Holocaust Memorial Day, which is on Monday 27th January. All year groups have had an assembly led by their RSLs talking about the history of the Holocaust, what took place, what a genocide is and how genocides still happen across the world. Students also watched an interview with John Hajdu who is a Holocaust survivor.

This year's theme is 'For a Better Future'. As a result, the assembly was linked into what students can do to show support for people being marginalised or victimised which demonstrates our core value of integrity.



## Careers Corner - Year 10

Exciting opportunity for Year 10 students!

We have been very fortunate to have access to some free careers mentoring for our Year 10 students through Brightside charity.



Mentoring charity Brightside, in partnership with Laurel Park School, will be delivering an online mentoring project connecting young people with trained mentors online. The project aims to help young people get access to the information and guidance they need to find out more about their post-16 and post-18 options, whilst exploring possible career paths and developing their transferrable skills. All Year 10 students will have a chance to take part in the programme, and they will communicate with a mentor who is either a current working professional or university student.

They will communicate with their mentor through a safe and secure online mentoring website between January and March 2025 for a period of 8-10 weeks. Mentors will provide information, advice, and guidance about life after school, the different routes into careers/higher education pathways of interest (including university and apprenticeships), transferrable skills, and study skills - empowering young people to make the right choices for them in the future. Please support your child by encouraging them to participate and make the most out of having a mentor.

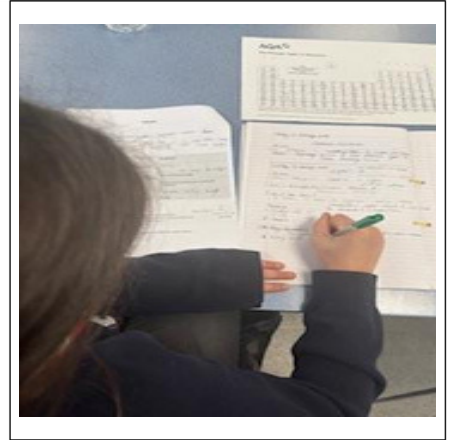
Next week in PSHE students will have a virtual meeting with Brightside to introduce the concept to the students. We are very excited for Year 10 to have access to this fantastic opportunity

## Spotlight on STEM year 7 Science and Technology

This term, our focus has been on fostering curiosity and innovation in Science and Technology lessons. Students have shown great enthusiasm in developing both practical and analytical skills, paving the way for a deeper understanding of the world around them

Our Year 7 students have been working exceptionally hard, exploring new skills and broadening their horizons. From mastering the intricacies of the periodic table in Science to learning how to operate sewing machines in Technology, they are embracing every challenge with determination and creativity.

In Technology lessons, Year 7 students are discovering the art of sewing. For many, it's their first time using a sewing machine, but they're quickly gaining confidence and learning the importance of precision and patience. Their newly acquired skills are already translating into impressive work, and the atmosphere in class is buzzing with creativity. We've embraced the "Each One Teach One" approach in our classrooms this term. Students are encouraged to share their knowledge and help one another grow. Whether it's guiding a peer through a challenging Technology project or explaining a tricky concept in Science, this collaborative spirit is creating a strong sense of community and teamwork.



Each One Teach One

Science lessons have been full of energy, excitement, and hands-on learning. A particular highlight this week has been the focus on the periodic table and learning about different elements. Students have not only memorised its structure but have also started applying their knowledge to solve real-world problems. Interactive activities have ensured that learning stays fun, dynamic, and impactful.

### Looking Ahead

As we move forward, our Science and Technology lessons will continue to encourage curiosity, collaboration, and creativity. Year 7 students are off to a brilliant start, and we're excited to see how their confidence and skills develop throughout the year.

Let's keep the momentum going!

# Character Education focus of the week

The vision of Laurel Park School is to develop well rounded students who have the ambition and determination to excel in life whether this be through academic study, vocational training or employment.

Alongside this, we have a commitment to developing character and integrity across the school and wider community. Opportunities are provided outside of the taught curriculum to develop core life skills, preparing our students to be proud global citizens.

Finally, Laurel Park is a school where all members of the community are treated with care and respect, whilst supported both with their well-being and their academic aspirations.

This is achieved through our Core Values of **Integrity, Determination, Excellence** and **Ambition**

Each month we will see a Skill and each week we will try to link this Skill to one of our Values.

**This month's Skill is Creativity!**

*"Creativity takes courage." – Henri Matisse*

**This week's value is Determination.**

**How can Creativity help us achieve Determination**



- **Boosts Confidence:** When you create something new and achieve success, you feel proud of yourself and become more confident in your abilities.
- **Develops Resilience:** Creativity helps you bounce back from setbacks and failures, making you more determined to reach your goals.
- **Reduces Stress:** Creative activities can be a great way to relax and unwind, helping you stay determined and focused without feeling overwhelmed.

Students will be presented this in assembly each week but please also speak to them at home



Member of the



# NOMINATIONS FOR HEADTEACHER'S COMMENDATIONS ARE NOW OPEN

Anyone can nominate a student for a  
Headteacher's Commendation.

Staff, parents, other students -  
complete this nomination form:



## Criteria

**Integrity** - for hard work, honesty, making good choices, representing the school

**Determination** - for motivation, overcoming barriers, effort, self-discipline

**Excellence** - for Character Points, personal excellence, sporting / musical excellence

**Ambition** - for high aspirations (mock) exam results, assessment results



Bronze Award  
Awarded 1st time



Silver Award  
Awarded 2nd time



Gold Award  
Awarded 3rd time

# Cycle Training for Families

Learn how to cycle or improve your skills and confidence at one of our free cycle training courses.

All abilities welcome



It's free!

Our courses, run with an experienced cycle instructor, can teach you to ride, improve your skills and confidence, and help you perfect your cycling technique. Gain confidence and learn skills to cycle as a family with a family cycle training session. Whether you and your family are novices to cycling or you all ride already but would like advice on specific routes, your instructor will tailor the session to meet your needs.



# WELCOME TO SPOTLIGHT

Congratulations on your child gaining a place on Spotlight, an online mentoring experience where they can explore their next steps in a flexible and exciting way!

## WHAT IS MENTORING?

Your child will be connected with a trained mentor - a working professional or current university student - who can support them to:

- \* Find out about their post-16 and post-18 options
- \* Explore possible career paths
- \* Develop transferrable skills and confidence for their future

## WHAT IS SPOTLIGHT?

Spotlight is a new national schools programme from Brightside, which has been running online mentoring projects for 19 years:

At Brightside, your child's safety is our #1 priority, which is why all communication takes place on our secure platform. Your child's mentor will be fully trained and will have an enhanced DBS background check.

Your child will take part in mentoring for 8-10 weeks and should message their mentor at least once per week.

Their mentor will provide advice and guidance about life after school and empower your child to make the right choices for their future.

Please support your child by encouraging them to participate and make the most of having a mentor! They can:

- 1 Log in at [brightsidementoring.org](http://brightsidementoring.org)
- 2 Get the 'Brightside Mentoring' app



“Brightside mentoring is a great opportunity for students to make a decision on what to do after school and be more confident in themselves”



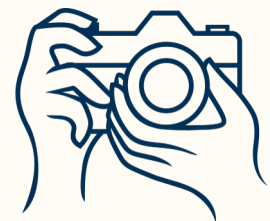
Year 10 pupil, Trinity Academy

# #LoveLooksLike: Enter Tender's Valentine's Day photography competition



**This Valentine's Day, it's time to get creative!  
From your pet dog to your best friend, we want to  
know what #LoveLooksLike to you. Snap a picture  
for a chance to represent your school at the annual  
Tender Awards 2025 alongside several very special  
celebrity guests.**

**[tender.org.uk/love-looks-like](https://tender.org.uk/love-looks-like)**



**Deadline: 5pm, Friday 7th February.  
Winners announced on Valentine's Day 2025.**

# What Parents & Educators Need to Know about HEALTH & FITNESS APPS

Physical wellbeing apps are useful tools for monitoring and improving our health. They allow us to balance nutrition, set goals, track our activities and sleep patterns, and motivate us to exercise. Nonetheless, there have been some reported drawbacks; this guide outlines some of these concerns and explains how to use fitness apps safely.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### LACK OF PERSONALISATION

Many apps take a one-size-fits-all approach, failing to account for the varying ages and abilities of children: a 16-year-old, for example, will have different physical needs to a child of 10. This can create unrealistic expectations and set exercises which may be too advanced for younger children or too simple for older ones.

### NOT DEVELOPED BY EXPERTS

Some fitness and wellbeing apps are developed by experts in the field – but a concerning number of them aren't. As such, these platforms may contain inaccurate information. They may present safety concerns by giving incorrect advice regarding physical activities or might include age-inappropriate content which would clearly cause more harm than good.

### REDUCED INTERACTION WITH OTHERS

Physical wellbeing apps can remove the social and interactive elements which physical exercise can offer – for instance, meeting people at fitness classes, at the gym or during any other such activities. Research has found that young people generally dislike this aspect of fitness apps, suggesting that they would rather exercise in the company of friends or other like-minded individuals.

### DATA AND PRIVACY CONCERNS

Fitness and wellbeing apps tend to collect a lot of personal information from their users, including name, location, date of birth, details of their physical health and more. It's worth keeping in mind that some of these apps may sell this data to third parties. We'd advise that any apps young people download should have the correct legislation in place to protect their safety and privacy while using the service.

### ADDITIONAL COSTS

While many fitness apps are free to download, the initial content is quite basic. Users will only receive more helpful content (such as new workouts, nutrition advice or a personalised plan) by signing up to a subscription or paying for extra features. This can incentivise users to spend money on the service – a cost which can quickly mount up.

### DEPENDENCY ON THE APP

While physical wellbeing apps can help motivate young users to manage their fitness, there's a possibility that – without being sent frequent rewards and reminders – children could start to lose their natural drive to be active. Young people may also become obsessed with tracking their exercise, health and eating habits: this can have negative effects on their mental and emotional wellbeing.

## Advice for Parents & Educators

### EXERCISE AND SOCIALISE

Highlight the importance of children enjoying fitness activities with family and friends, rather than always exercising alone. Emphasise the fun they can have by interacting with others rather than solely relying on an app to maintain their regime. Remind them of the importance of staying active, as well as the benefits of doing so with company.

### PROMOTE POSITIVE BODY IMAGE

While we want children to be active and healthy, we must also ensure they don't become fixated on how they look and begin take things too far. During childhood and adolescence, the body is still growing and changing. It's vitally important for young people's wellbeing that we promote a positive body image and a healthy relationship with food, empowering them to make informed decisions about their diet and lifestyle.

### REVIEW THE APP FIRST

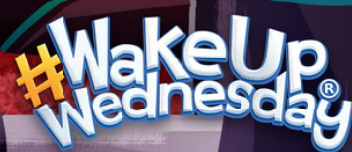
Before allowing someone under 18 to install a fitness and wellbeing app, check its age rating, read its reviews and scroll through its data policy, to ensure its suitability for younger users. You could also try it yourself, to see if it's appropriate for the child's particular needs and decide if you're comfortable with them using it. Ensure that any privacy-compromising features – such as location tracking – are disabled.

### USE PARENTAL CONTROLS

As with all apps, it's important for parents to familiarise themselves with any controls on the app and to use these on a child's account. The specific settings vary between platforms but – most commonly – these will relate to screen-time limits, disabling or capping in-app purchases, and managing social aspects or features which aren't age appropriate. By utilising these controls, you can help to ensure a child is getting a safe experience.

## Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian Government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.



Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/wellbeing-fitness-apps>