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## A MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

Zoe Ramshaw

"The secret of getting ahead is getting started."

- Mark Twain

November has been a busy month at Orange Tree for all year groups as you can see from all the amazing learning opportunities in this newsletter.

The year 11 and GCSE students have impressed us with their effort and determination during their mocks. We appreciate how difficult this experience is for the students, and we are proud of everyone for the exams they were able to come in and complete. If students did not complete them all, it's OK, we understand it was a tough few weeks and will continue to support this in school.

Hayley's anti-bullying workshop was amazing and brought everyone together. We do not tolerate bullying at Orange Tree, the workshop showed how much the students care about and accept each other.

The therapy team offered a wonderful parent workshop this month and Bansi our yoga teacher taught the parents some mindfulness techniques for themselves. If you are interested in this, please do sign up to the next one!

Thank you to everyone who contributed to a wonderful November, now lets see what December brings...

# ANTI - BULLYING WEEK

In honour of anti-bullying week, staff and students came into school wearing funky, odd socks on Thursday the 21st. The afternoon consisted of a workshop lead by Hayley focussing on the different roles in bullying, choosing respect, and the impacts of bullying. Students learnt about what bullying is - a group behaviour that is separated into 6 main parts: the target, the ringleader, the reinforcer, the assistant, the bystanders and the defenders.

At the end of the workshop, we as a school pledged to stand up to bullying and not participate. We showed this pledge by printing our hand as a statement. We also discussed that participating in bullying is laughing, staying silent and joining in. It was lovely to see everyone coming together as a community to be educated and having fun creating a brand-new mural for the Lunch Hall!



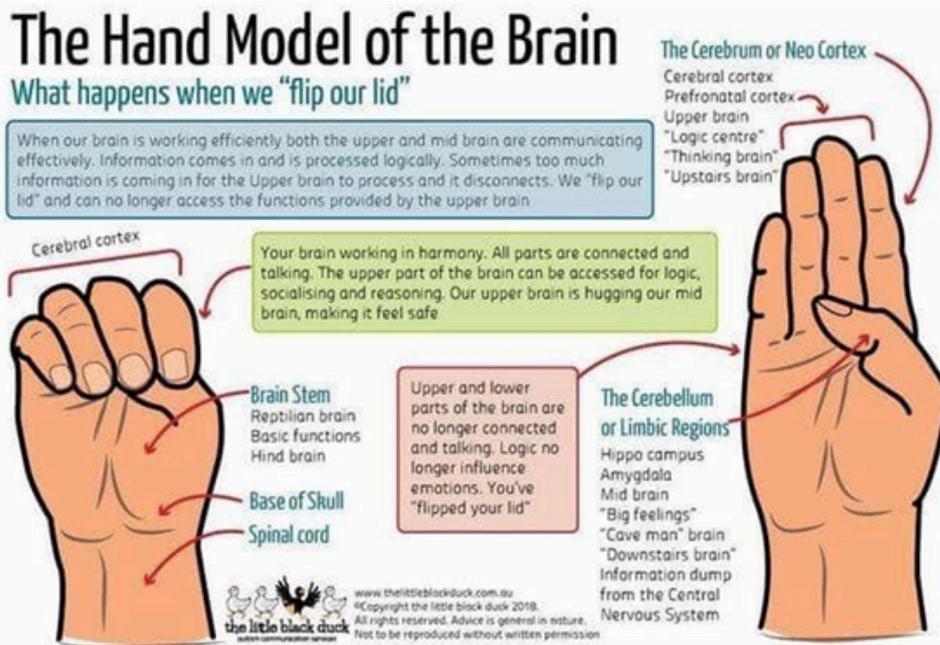
# PARENTS COFFEE MORNING

On November 20th, we held a coffee afternoon for parents. The OTS therapy team led a presentation about interoception, emotional literacy and emotional regulation tools and strategies used in school. Top tips for supporting emotional regulation were also given to parents. This was a big success and feedback was very positive all throughout!

After the informative workshop exploring interoception, parents took part in some mindfulness exercises for stress relief and empowerment. We began by briefly discussing the stress response and how we may “flip our lid” and lose control of our actions when we act from the emotional centre/fear part of our brain.

We used Dr Dan Siegel’s hand model to show how when we are in this fight/flight/fawn mode, our ability to use the “rational thinking brain” is diminished, resulting in a lack of integration of the different parts of our brain, which in turn affects our ability to learn, communicate our needs, stay connected with others or problem-solve. We can often speak and act irrationally or without empathy or patience.

In order to stay integrated and calm parents were taken through a simple grounding exercise using our 5 senses to become aware of the present moment, and in turn allowing us to feel calmer and less anxious.



We then proceeded to go through a calming body scan and guided visualisation with awareness of our breath as we relaxed each part of our body.

Parents were encouraged to empower themselves by changing their internal narrative as we ended with an anchoring practice integrating the two sides of our brains while repeating some positive affirmations such as “I am a good parent” and “I am enough just as I am”.

# PSHE AND SOCIAL LEARNING UPDATES

## PSHE

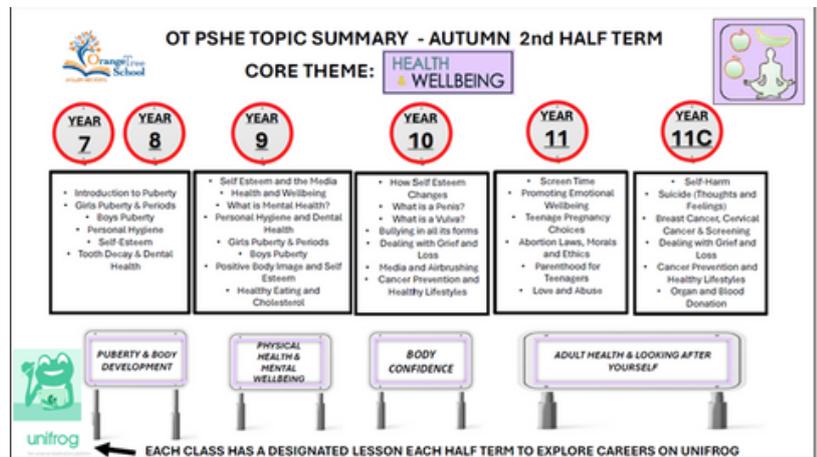
We have now begun our new theme of 'Health and Wellbeing' in PSHE. Please note that there will be some RSHE (Relationship, Sex and Health Education) topics beginning to be discussed in these lessons so please do look at our PSHE and RSHE policies on the school website.

If you have any questions or concerns or please do get in touch via email to [vicki.marer@orangetreeschool.org](mailto:vicki.marer@orangetreeschool.org)



A large range of health subjects covered including puberty for children and teens  
<https://kidshealth.org/>

Brook Health lives for young people  
<https://www.brook.org.uk/your-life/puberty/>



## SOCIAL LEARNING

This month social learning has been focusing on exploring the senses and strategies to support, personal hygiene, group games, labelling feelings and conversation skills. We have explored ways to start and end conversations smoothly. Our older students are making good progress towards their personal targets which are around preparing for adulthood.

## NEURODIVERSITY WORKSHOP

On the 23rd October we hosted another really well attended neurodivergence information session for 14 of our students. This is a drop in session led by the therapy team where students can come and ask questions about neurodiversity, talk about their diagnosis, share experiences, and offer peer support. The topics discussed were: celebrities with neurodiversity and their stories, and talking about the pro's and cons of being neurodivergent. Students also had the opportunity to put questions in a hat and the answers to these have been shared with all attendees. We had questions like "what's the best way to tell someone about my diagnosis?". The next session will be after Christmas and will focus on "What is disability?" and "Why me?".

### General Resources and links:

#### Podcast for parents of students with PDA

<https://feeds.captivate.fm/pda-parents/>

#### Article about being a young person with Selective Mutism

[Selective Mutism: 'I struggle to talk but dream of being on stage' - BBC News](#)

# IMPORTANT DATES

## Orange Tree School's Safeguarding Team

If you have any concerns about a child or want to talk to a designated or deputy safeguarding lead, please speak to one of the following:

**DSL:** Melanie Nichols  
**DDSL KS4:** Hayley Hunter  
**DDSL KS3:** Keziah Arthur

### December 5th

*Year 10 Science Summative Assessment*

### December 11th, 2024

*Year 7 and 11 parent information day  
(SCHOOL CLOSED TO STUDENTS)*

### December 12th, 2024

*Festive lunch + Festive Jumper Day!*

### December 20th, 2024

*Last day of term (1pm finish)*

## ORANGE TREE VALUES

Optimistic  
Ready to Learn  
Achievement  
Nice and kind  
Good listening  
Effort

Team work  
Respectful  
Engagement  
Empathy and Acceptance

## YEAR 11 GCSE MOCKS

Our lovely Year 11 students had their GCSE mock exams November 11th-22nd. We would like to congratulate them on their effort and hard work.

We know they're going to do an amazing job on their GCSE exams next year!

## APPRECIATION OF THE MONTH WINNER

Each Month we will have an appreciation tree winner by picking a leaf at random from our Appreciation Tree. This month, the winner was Matthew.

Matthew's leaf said: "To Matthew, you never fail to make me smile".

Thank you Matthew, we hope you liked your appreciation gift!

