



# MALCOLM SARGENT PRIMARY SCHOOL

*Love To Learn*

9 September 2020

Dear Y6 Parent

## **Y6 DARE 25 LIFESKILLS PROGRAMME**

I am writing to tell you about the DARE 25 programme which the Y6 children will be taking part in this autumn. It is a ten week course, delivered in classrooms by an experienced DARE Officer from Lifeskills Education. The programme teaches children about making healthy and safe choices. Basic information is given about drugs and alcohol so that they can begin to learn about the health effects associated with their use. There are also lessons which look at knife crime and also at the differences in our communities and in society. Other important life skills are also taught that your child will need as they are growing up.

### **Covid 19 and DARE 25**

In these uncertain times, Lifeskills Education want to reassure you that it makes the health and safety of your children a priority. With this in mind the following will be ensured:

- A complete risk assessment for all DARE Officers going into schools is in place
- DARE Officers will be aware of the school risk assessment and guidelines, and will work within this
- Lessons will be adjusted to take account of social distancing guidelines with the DARE officer teaching from the front of the class.

### **How do we know the programme works?**

By 2020, DARE will have been delivered in the UK for 25 years and has been delivered at our school previously. The programme now running was new for 2019 and will be evaluated in due course. However, in 2016, a report was published by Nottingham Trent University which details how successful the previous programme has been. This survey shows that children who have graduated from the programme will have the ability deal more effectively with stress, peer pressure and bullying, and will make safe and healthy choices by knowing about the facts and health effects of tobacco, drugs and alcohol. They will also have developed improved communication skills and a higher likelihood of asking for help.

### **How long does it last?**

The programme lasts for ten lessons with each lesson lasting about an hour. At the end of the programme, there is a graduation (in week 11). Pupils and teacher will organise this, in line with COVID safety precautions, at that time. Certificates are given for those who have fully completed the programme.

### **How will it help my child?**

The programme will help your child to make safe and healthy choices and to understand different kinds of communication. This will lead to an increase in knowledge and self-confidence and assist in their overall development. This is especially important during the transition to secondary school when we know that they are at an extremely important, but also vulnerable, stage of development.

### **Will drugs be shown to my child?**

No; DARE does this through cartoon pictures. DARE does not bring drugs or anything else into the classroom.

### **Are drugs or knife crime a problem in my area?**

Children are faced with a number of risky situations across all areas of the country and it is likely that young people will move between communities as they grow older. It is important that your child is equipped with accurate and up to date information and knows what action to take as they face life's challenges. Of course, the majority of children will develop into sensible young people and we seek to reassure them that any kind of risky or challenging situation can be difficult but is manageable with the right knowledge and skills.

### **Why does my child need to know about drugs at such a young age?**

We live in a drug-using world and we know that children are particularly vulnerable at the point of transition to secondary school. There are legal (tobacco, and alcohol) and illegal drugs (cannabis, heroin) and helpful (medicines) and harmful drugs. We know that prescribed medications can be abused and that this is on the increase. This is an opportunity for your child to begin to understand the issues raised, to learn that legal does not necessarily mean safe and to obtain knowledge and skills which will help to be responsible when drugs are involved. DARE gives all information in an age-appropriate way.

### **I smoke/have a drink and that's OK, isn't it?**

You are an adult and as such have the knowledge and judgement to make your own choices. DARE does not tell children that they should never smoke or drink, but it does highlight the dangers of drug use and of smoking. It gives children the information they need about drugs, encourages them to weigh the risks and consequences and gives them the tools to make positive decisions for themselves.

### **What happens in class?**

DARE uses a workbook for which the children have the responsibility of filling in during and after class. In order to graduate at the end of the course, the workbook should be filled in. If your child is absent for any lessons then they have the responsibility to talk to the teacher and decide on a plan to make up the work.

DARE uses videos alongside the workbooks to help the children learn about a variety of different topics including bullying, responsibility, confident communication, how to resist peer pressure, resistance strategies and where to go for help and advice. The programme gives basic information about drugs and

alcohol and what the health effects of using these are. DARE teaches children to recognise risky situations and then make safe and healthy decisions. During the class, the children will be encouraged to explore and discuss issues through question and answers, small and large group discussion, using the workbook and watching the videos.

**I still have questions**

We hope that we have been able to answer your questions but if you are still unsure about anything, please ask your child's class teacher who may put you in contact with the DARE 25 team.

Yours sincerely

Ms Julie Williams  
Head of Y6