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Friday 22 April 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing further to my [letter of 14 April](#) to update you with the arrangements we have in place to support our students and staff process Jethro's tragic death, and honour him, when we welcome our students back to school on Monday. Our overriding concern, of course, in making such arrangements is to ensure that we continue to respect the feelings and support the grieving process of Jethro's family and loved ones, including his two siblings who attend the College. We have shared our planned arrangements with Jethro's family before confirming them and, indeed, sharing this outline with you.

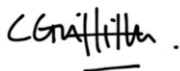
We have devised and shared a 'Managing Grief Support Plan' with all staff to ensure clarity and consistency and will be holding an extraordinary staff meeting before students return to school on Monday morning. In establishing the support plan, we have referred to guidance from a range of organisations and have elicited support from trained professionals, including the Education Psychology team from Devon County Council. In outline, our 'Managing Grief Support Plan' includes:

- Extended Tutor time on return to school on Monday 25 April.
 - ⇒ Heads of Year will speak directly with year groups from 08:45 before students go to their Tutor rooms. (Note that those students we have identified to be at higher risk for emotional distress will meet separately with members of our Safeguarding Team.)
 - ⇒ A whole school assembly will be held virtually in Tutor rooms.
 - ⇒ The Whole School will observe a two-minute silence.
 - ⇒ Tutors will support students using Teaching materials devised carefully to provide 'grief first aid', using guidance from a range of professionals and organisations, including [Kooth](#), Devon County Council, and [Young Minds](#), amongst others. In this session, we will make it clear where students can access support in school, and externally, and will support students in dealing with grief, encouraging them to work through and talk about their feelings.
- We will provide more specific support for those students we have identified to be at higher risk for emotional distress on return to the College. We have shared this information with all staff and have arrangements in place for these students to access support as and when necessary.
 - ⇒ Note that our Safeguarding Team will oversee this list of students and amended as necessary, using information we gather through the observations of all staff, and through students and parents talking to us.

- ⇒ We have also set up a 'Need to Talk' email address for any student who feels they need additional support: needtotalk@okehamptoncollege.devon.sch.uk. Students can contact us via this address, to let us know about any concerns that they may have. Students can use this address at any time, and our Safeguarding team will monitor and triage any communications received to ensure appropriate support is provided. (Please note that parents should not use this email address and continue to contact the school in the usual way.)
- Members of our Leadership Team will visit Jethro's classes, in order that any necessary support may be given.
- Trained professionals will be in school on Monday to provide support for staff, as required, in terms of how best to support our students.
- We have established a range of 'Crisis Counselling' arrangements, focusing on 'Grief First Aid' support, that we will keep in place for 1-2 weeks. This includes:
 - ⇒ Staff will direct students in emotional distress that may need to exit a lesson to our Safeguarding Team, following careful protocols that will be shared with staff and students on Monday 25 April.
 - ⇒ A member of the Education Psychology team from Devon County Council will be in school to provide support for staff as required, including how best to talk to students about — and support specific students dealing with — grief.
 - ⇒ Tor Support Counsellors will be on-site on 25, 26 and 27 April to provide additional support as necessary for staff in how best to support children experiencing distress.
 - ⇒ Dedicated mental health support drop-in sessions have been scheduled for students, with Tor Support Counsellors in the afternoons of 28 and 29 April, and 5 and 6 May. This is in addition to referrals for students wanting a course of sessions being prioritised.
- We have a Memory book in the Front Office, next to Student Support for anyone at school, students, and staff, who wish to share any memories and condolences. We will pass this book on to Jethro's family.

Thank you once again in advance for your support. Should you wish to discuss any matter further, please do not hesitate to contact us.

With my warmest wishes,



Craig Griffiths (Principal).