

14th February 2023

Dear Parents & Carers,

Yesterday we learned the incredibly sad news that our colleague and friend, Lisa Kennedy, died peacefully following a short battle with cancer. Staff and students are devastated by her loss. She was a huge personality in our school and has worked closely with a large number of students over the past 5 years.

Lisa has worked in our pastoral leadership team at Longbenton High School since April 2018. She has been instrumental in that time working with vulnerable young people and their families and has been a force for good at LHS - setting up projects such as the food bank through the People's Kitchen; championing young people across the borough with mental health work and ensuring our students have had access to engagement projects such as the youth parliament - to name a few.

Lisa's family have asked that those wishing to pay their respects make a donation to Macmillan Cancer Support rather than sending flowers. You can do so at the following Just Giving page here:

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/longbenton-high-school>

There will be a condolence book set up in our main school reception from tomorrow (Wednesday 15th) for any parents, students or staff who would like to leave a message.

We will be working to support each other as a school community in the coming days and weeks. In the meantime, if you feel your child is struggling to process this news, please make us aware via your child's tutor or relevant RSL (Raising Standards Leader). The following guidance principles regarding grief have been shared with our staff and are equally applicable in any conversations you might have around bereavement with your child:

- Explain what has happened and stick to the facts. Allow them to ask questions. Answer all questions honestly.
- Don't minimise the conversation but equally it does not have to be long or heavy. Most will just want to acknowledge it and then move the conversation on.
- Some might want to say more or pay tribute. Encourage them to talk about their feelings and share memories if it is obvious that they want to.
- Reassure them that they can talk to someone about how they're feeling and that they are supported.

<https://www.cruse.org.uk/> is also a good first source of online information about bereavement.

Thank you to those who have already sent messages of condolence and support, which will be a source of comfort to Lisa's colleagues here at LHS and her family.

Yours faithfully



Kelly Holbrook
Headteacher