

18 July 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

It is with much sorrow that I am writing to you with some sad news about a member of our school community. Following a serious incident last week, a student in our academy community has died suddenly. Our thoughts and condolences are with their family and friends.

Our young people were informed of the critical condition of one of our Year 8 students on Friday. It is with sadness that we are now informing you that Alex Dews died today, in hospital, surrounded by loved ones. Students are not aware that Alex has died and we are asking you to share this news sensitively with your child or children when they return home from school.

iSpace counselling support has been made available since Friday in school to all young people. The school will also be considering the need for additional support over coming weeks. If your child needs support we are offering a drop in service on Monday 25 July, 09:30 – 11:30, entry to the building will be via Student Reception. Students can also be signposted to additional support services via our [Mental Wellbeing website](#).

Today and over the coming weeks your child may react in different ways to this sad news. These reactions and feelings may be part of the grieving process. Many young people will wish to talk with their parents/carers or talk to someone else about how they are feeling. If you are concerned about your child's reaction or expression of feelings about this news, please seek help and support. Staying connected and engaged with your child is one of the best ways to support them. At this time it is important to remind young people that all of us should seek help from others when we feel down or vulnerable, and that they should tell an adult if they are worried about a friend.

Our school will be concentrating on supporting our community over the coming months. This means, among other things, returning the school to normal routines as we return in September and recognising that young people can be affected by this event for many months to come. If your child is already using the services of a mental health professional, you should ensure this information is passed on to them. Please feel free to contact Miss Fox, Safeguarding Officer, s.fox@shafton.outwood.com, in September if you have any concerns about your child this is an important way of ensuring you receive consistent and accurate information and for us to be aware of all parent concerns.

As a school community we will come together to remember Alex. I am in constant contact with Alex's family and we will follow their wishes, but we will commemorate Alex in our very own Shafton way.

Yours sincerely,

Alison McQueen
Principal