

DARE 25 Parent/Carer FAQ sheet for Autumn 2020 – Covid 19

Covid 19 statement for Parents/Carers

In these uncertain times Lifeskills Education want to reassure you that we make the Health and Safety of your children a priority. With this in mind we will ensure the following –

- 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
- DARE Officers will be equipped with appropriate Personal Protective Equipment and will be required to wear this in line with school requirements
- Lessons will be adjusted to take account of social distancing guidelines

Who is this page for?

This page is for any parent/carers who has a child in Year 5 or 6 and who will be taking part in the DARE 25 programme. At the beginning of the course (as long as a DARE Officer is involved in the teaching) the school will be offered a parent/carers briefing by the DARE Officer. This gives parents/carers the opportunity to meet the DARE Officer and learn about the programme and ask any questions they might have. Do ask your child's teacher about the briefing if you have not had a letter about it.

How can I be involved?

At the beginning of the course you will be sent a letter about the DARE 25 programme from the school. Once the workbook has been given to your child (in lesson 1) they will bring it home for you to read together and there is a place for you to sign to say that you consent for your child to undertake the course.

As the course progresses we encourage children to take books home and to talk to their parent/carers about what they have learned. The graduation at week 11 is a celebration of your child's learning and usually parents/carers are invited to this – again, ask the school about this.

What is the programme about?

The DARE 25 programme is a 10 week course for Year 5/6 pupils which teaches children about making healthy and safe choices. We give basic information about drugs and alcohol so that they can 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. We also teach many other important life skills that your child will need as they are growing up. You can see more details about this further down this page.

How do you know the programme works?

By 2020 we will have been delivering DARE in the UK for 25 years, and have schools that have been working with us from the very beginning. The programme we are running now is 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. From this survey we know that children who have graduated from the programme will have ability deal 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.

Please click here for more details of the evaluation 2016 report <https://lifeskills-education.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Summary-of-DARE-Evaluation-Report-29th-September-Version-AT.pdf>

How long does it last?

The programme lasts for 10 lessons with each lesson lasting about an hour. At the end of the programme there is a graduation (on week 11) where parent/carers are invited and where the children can show off what they have learned during the programme. The pupils and teacher will organise this. Certificates are given for those who have fully completed the programme and there is usually an opportunity to buy DARE gifts and to speak to the DARE Officer involved with your school.

How will it help my child?

It 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 you be showing drugs to my child?

No – we do this through cartoon pictures, we do not bring drugs or anything else into the classroom.

Are drugs or knife crime a problem in my area?

We know that 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 are face life's challenges. We know that 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 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. We give all information in an age appropriate way - we do not scare children into just saying no to drugs as we know that this approach is less likely to work.

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. We do not tell children that they should never smoke or drink, but we do highlight the dangers of drug use and of smoking. We give children the information they need about drugs, encourage them to weigh the risks and consequences and give them the tools to make positive decisions for themselves.

What happens in class?

All classes are different; some are taught fully by our DARE Officers and sometimes the teacher will deliver the programme, sometimes there is a little of both throughout the course. This will depend on what the school has asked for.

We use a workbook that the children have responsibility for filling in during and after class. In order to graduate at the end of the course, the workbook must 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.

We use 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. We teach children to recognise risky situations and then to 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, see the DARE Officer in school, or please feel free contact us through the form on our website.