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Headteacher: Mr Iain Horner

13<sup>th</sup> May 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

On Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> May, we have the exciting opportunity to welcome Rachael Mackenzie, athlete mentor with the Youth Sport Trust, to visit Chesterton. Rachael's background is as an elite-level martial artist, spending many years participating in top-level sport, and her career now encompasses physiotherapy, as well as her work with young people across the country.



I heard Rachael speak at a YST event a couple of years ago and was fascinated to hear her make the connections between physical activity (not just sport), and wellbeing. It became clear to me that, whilst we are all aware of the correlation between staying active and physical fitness – for ourselves and for our children, the links between physical activity and some of the wider benefits are less obvious. Rachael talked with great expertise, knowledge and clarity about how physical activity affects us neurologically and can help with areas such as concentration, learning, sleep, anxiety....the list goes on!

Therefore, I wanted to invite Rachael to Chesterton to help spread the message to our pupils and parents of how physical activity can help us in so many ways.

Rachael will be leading pupil sessions in classes (Ash-Oak), at an age-appropriate level of course, hosting a whole-school assembly, and then running a parent talk after-school (3.30-4.30). The focus for the parent session will be 'Physical Activity and Wellbeing For Your Child'. Even if you feel that you may already be a convert to the benefits of physical activity (as I was), I am sure that you will still find the session very interesting and thought-provoking. As the talk is designed for adults, we are offering free places at Tuesday's Tree House for any parent attending. Please indicate on the reply slip if you would like to make use of this.

As our children emerge from the past two years into what is (hopefully) a more normal world, the Youth Sport Trust, for whom Rachael works, has just launched a new long-term strategy (see bulletin overleaf) to combat the negative effects that the pandemic has had on children's mental health. Whilst I believe that the pupils at Chesterton have remained remarkably positive and retained enormous resilience, we are far from complacent, hence initiatives such as this and physical activity remaining at the forefront of what we do.

We are all looking forward to a very enjoyable and interesting day on the 24<sup>th</sup>.

Yours sincerely, Mr. I. Horner - Headteacher





*“Today the Youth Sport Trust has launched its new long-term strategy ‘Inspiring Changemakers, Building Belonging’. It said it will be vital to ....ensure that by 2035 all children grow up knowing how to balance the demands of the digital age. It wants every young person to learn in a healthy way what belonging really feels like, and for young people to have a positive personal identity which comes from play and sport.*

**Alison Oliver MBE, Chief Executive of the Youth Sport Trust, said:**

*“We are staring in the face of a ‘new pandemic’ of increasing rates of self-harm and children struggling in a digital age. Urgent action is needed.*

*“Children’s social and emotional wellbeing is in decline, and ... there is a real concern from parents that their children are not getting enough play and sport. We know that unhappy, unhealthy children don’t learn as effectively. If children don’t learn we won’t have a society fit for the future. When children play and are physically active, they are happy, healthy and achieve.*

*“Daily physical activity, play and the development of physical literacy should be an integral part of every childhood.”*

**The research among UK parents of children aged 18 and under carried out by YouGov found:**

- 83% of parents are concerned that children are spending too much time online and not enough time with one another
- 81% of parents are concerned that young people aren’t getting enough physical activity
- 80% of parents say that cuts to PE, sport and break times in school have a negative impact on young people’s wellbeing.

**Please see the following link to hear Rachael talk a little bit more about her work <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KDn0E8MD-rU> and see below for more information.**

***Rachael is part of the Sky Sports Living for Sport Athlete mentor team and she comments on this work. “My role as an Athlete Mentor has enabled me to inspire and motivate young people across the UK to be the best they can be. The young people I meet are so inspiring for me. It is amazing to see so much enthusiasm and desire to achieve. By learning new skills and disciplines that they can apply to all aspects of life, today’s youngsters can really strive to achieve all of their aspirations.”***

***As a physiotherapist Rachael has worked in a variety of clinical settings, including the NHS, private hospitals, nursing homes, special needs schools and a range of sports clubs. In addition to this, she has worked with elite athletes including world champion martial art practitioners and Olympic athletes. Rachael has a special interest in the treatment of movement disorders and restoring normal movement and function in both the treatment of neurological conditions and sports injuries.***

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Please complete the reply slip and return to school office.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND WELLBEING – PARENT SESSION

As parent / guardian of ..... in class ..... I / we wish to attend the parent session on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> May at 3.30-4.30 p.m.

I do / do not need to request a free place for my child/ren at Tree House

Names: .....

.....

.....

Signed: ..... Parent / Guardian