



**Life Education**  
Wessex & Thames Valley  
Helping children make healthy choices

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1/2/24

Witney Town Council

Dear Councillors

We are writing to request that you kindly consider Life Education Wessex & Thames Valley (LEW&TV) for a grant towards our work of providing health, well-being and drug prevention education to approximately 293 children at Madley Brook Community Primary School when we visit them on 11/3/24 for 2 days.

**The cost** to deliver our health programmes to schools is £530 a day; schools contribute approximately 70% of this, and we need to raise the shortfall. We will be spending 2 days visiting the school, which equates to a shortfall of **£310**. We do not expect your Council to contribute the whole of the difference, but obviously that would be fantastic if you were able. Nevertheless, any contribution you could make would be very would make a real difference to outcomes for local children and families.

**Background:** (LEW&TV) is an independent and self-financing charity and delivers the UK's leading health, emotional well-being and drug education programme, 'Coram Life Education', to children (aged 3–11 years) across Dorset, Somerset, Devon & Cornwall, and Hampshire the Isle of Wight. In October 2016 Life Education Thames Valley (Buckinghamshire, Berkshire and Oxfordshire) merged with Wessex, and in the 2021/22 academic year we saw over 72,000 children in the combined area.

Our strap line is '**Helping Children Make Healthy Choices**'. Programmes address many topical issues e.g. *emotional health & well-being, obesity, drugs, alcohol and smoking*. In a nutshell, programmes help children:

- Understand how their bodies work
- Understand what they need to do to look after themselves
- Understand the adverse effects of drugs, including alcohol, tobacco & new psychoactive substances
- Learn the skills and gain the self-confidence to make and implement healthy decisions now and in the future

The COVID pandemic and subsequent lockdowns proved particularly challenging for the children, schools and communities where we deliver our vital skills-for-life education. We are particularly concerned for the mental health and wellbeing of children and the effect isolation has had on their emotional wellbeing. How children react can vary according to their age, how they understand information and communicate their previous experiences and how they cope with stress. Negative reactions may include worrying thoughts and their concern for their friends and family, fear, avoidance, problems sleeping and physical symptoms. Children also react to what they see from parents/carers and how they deal with situations around them. Family concerns about financial problems and job security can also affect children's sense of security, leading to anxiety and depression. Lack of routine, space, contact with other children and reduced opportunities for physical activity affects children's confidence and overall physical and mental health. In addition, there has been a surge in

domestic violence during the Corvid-19 lockdown and many children are more vulnerable than ever, particularly in pockets of the most deprived areas.

### **Why Life Education is so vital**

Research shows that children who have better health and emotional well-being do better in life – both academically and socially. Children are also facing growing pressures at home, at school and with their friends, leaving many primary school pupils ill-equipped for life at secondary school and beyond.

Early intervention can prevent mental health problems, obesity and substance misuse in children now and in later life and helps to prevent drug and alcohol-related crime and anti-social behaviour. Our work not only benefits children's health and their futures, but also promotes healthier families and safer communities.

Life Education programmes empower children with key thinking, learning and social skills to make healthy choices and stay safe online and in the real world. Children graduate with confidence, knowledge and resilience to cope with the stresses of secondary school and life beyond.

### **Programme Delivery**

Our programmes can now be delivered either in the schools' own classrooms, or via SCARF Live Online, which uses ZOOM virtual video technology. Programmes focus on the mental health and wellbeing of children, which we are particularly concerned about at this time and the effect that isolation has/is having on their emotional wellbeing.

Schools also have access to **SCARE**, a comprehensive, interactive and flexible set of online resources which supports the entire PSHE curriculum.

Through our annual visits, children progressively acquire the skills and knowledge to make their own healthy choices in life. As well as helping the children who participate, the benefits of this preventative education cascade out to the wider community, as children who make the right healthy choices grow up to become better citizens and make a positive contribution to society.

We look forward to hearing from you and hope that ***you will be able to continue helping us to help your local children make healthy choices.***

Yours sincerely,

John Clements  
Administrative Assistant