



# 'Head' Lines - Friday 15th December

Headteacher's welcome - Friday 15th December





#### Dear Parent and Carer

As this term draws to a close and we are reaching the end of 2023, I would like to thank you for all the support you have given to the school over the last year.

The last day of term is Friday 22nd December 2023 and students will leave the school to go home at 12.30pm. Normal school uniform will be required on the last day of term please.

On the last day, students have an opportunity for 'brunch' at an extended break time, having the chance to eat before they come home. It is important to note that there will be no school buses when students leave school at 12.30pm, as the bus companies cannot move the schedule unfortunately.

Can I ask please, that arrangements for travel to home have been made in advance. If any student cannot travel home, I am more than happy for them to stay in school until the normal finishing time of 3.25pm.

(Please let the school know if this is required for your child).

As Headteacher I wanted to take some time to also celebrate the wonderful achievements of the students and staff this year. Our students made fantastic progress in their GCSEs this summer. They achieved better progress than all the other non-selective schools in the local authority, plus Neston again and the boy's progress is on a par with the three Boys' Grammar schools.

This was as a result of the hard work of staff in the school, and more importantly, by yet another brilliant group of students who worked very hard to achieve the results that they deserved; congratulations to all of them again, but also to you. You set the tone and conditions for success; thank you.

So many in our community represent the very best of us and that gives me faith in the future, thank you. The overwhelming majority of the students have again shown themselves to be a credit to both you and their school. They conduct themselves in a mature manner, are generous and considerate, and these are key

qualities in making life successful. GCSEs are only one measurement, and we are fortunate to work with some really lovely young people, who consistently demonstrate their positive values and outlook on life. Once again, I want to take this opportunity to tell you, the staff and the students in the school, how proud I am to work here.

This year we have continued to focus on the wider life of school, as it is the whole experience which builds character, not just the academic studies.

Students in the school have continued to benefit from a wide range of extracurricular activities that have enriched their learning and add to their school experience.

I believe passionately that students who participate in, and contribute to, the wider life of the school, enjoy school more and take more from their school experience. Our extracurricular and cultural activities over the past year have included: Year 11 Prom at Thornton Hall, visit to Spain, a history trip to Berlin, our Christmas musical showcase, university trips, Year 7 Residential, Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme at Bronze and Silver, theatre trips, book fairs, library and science competitions, visits by authors and touring theatre groups and a wide range of sports fixtures, and success. Current Year 8 boys won the plate competition at Birkenhead Park Rugby Club early this year and current Year 9 boys football team won the Merseyside Cup, followed up by Secondary Team of the Year in Wirral. Congratulations to all the pupils who represented the school across this year.

We will finish the school term on Friday 22nd December with Pensby's Got Talent and we are so proud of all the students who have auditioned and those that also made it to the final. This event truly encapsulates Pensby as the students are always so supportive of each other, and genuinely love and appreciate the event.

Thank you to the staff who so generously give their time to make this event a possibility each year.

Please remember that the new term starts on Monday 8th January 2024 at 8.40am.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and all your family a happy Christmas and New Year.

Yours sincerely,

Mr K Flanagan

Headteacher

# **Useful Information**

**Term dates 2023-24** 

Key diary dates

For the Parent Governor nomination letter and form please go to: Letters home

**School uniform policy** 

Employment opportunities at Pensby High School

Pensby Parent Voice: Pensby Parent Voice (office.com)

PLEASE NOTE THIS CLOSES TODAY (FRIDAY 15th)

# We are here to help



### There's no excuse for abuse

Pensby High School is built upon positive relationships and this is a major contributory factor as to why our outcomes are higher than many other schools across the region.

While most interactions with parents are positive, there are a small groups of parents "willing to be abusive towards school staff".

This is a national problem, not exclusively relating to education. Walk into your local medical centre or to the local supermarket, you will see messages stating that 'abuse will not be tolerated'.

It is evident that people working in public facing roles have reported that they have seen a "seismic shift in attitudes" towards them during and since the pandemic.

However, schools across the United Kingdom are reporting that incidents of poor behaviour at the school gates has risen by more than a quarter since 2020.

Data from recent surveys show the proportion of school staff who reported verbal abuse from parents or carers has risen from 28 per cent in 2020 to 36 per cent this year.

Furthermore, it seems that teaching and non-teaching staff have seen an increase in irrational, confrontational, unreasonable behaviour and expectations" from parents and carers, leading to "rising vexatious complaints".

All we ask is that you as parents, guardians and carers support us. We are here to improve the lives of the young people. Whilst we are not completely fallible, we do get things wrong as a school and when we do we will hold our hands up and say sorry.



1 - There's no excuse for abuse

# **Attendance Matters**



As we draw ever closer towards the end of term, attendance matters more than ever. Lessons will continue as normal with staff working hard to complete programmes of study with lessons going on as normal.

For example, Year 11 students will continue to work through mock examinations reviews. The aim is to review, analyse and improve pupil performance to make continual progress and to achieve their goals.

# **Punctuality**



Good punctuality at school is essential for students to achieve their full educational potential. It is also vital for students to form good habits for later life. Punctuality records form part of references passed onto employers and Further / Higher Education establishments.

All students are expected to arrive punctually for school in the morning and to arrive punctually for each lesson. A register is taken at the start of the day and during each lesson.

Students arriving late are recorded as thus on the register, along with how many minutes late they are.

### We place a strong emphasis on good punctuality; we support this by:-

- Giving sanctions to students who arrive late to school or lessons.
- Informing parents, by automated call, if their child arrives late for school.
- Awarding rewards where all students have arrived punctually over a period of time.
- Senior staff on the gates
- Sending attendance records home to parents each term so that parents can monitor any lateness.
- Addressing issues of poor time keeping with individual students and their parents.=

### Parents'/Carers' Support for Good Punctuality

We would ask parents to support us in maintaining good punctuality by:-

- Ensuring that their children get up in plenty of time to be ready and prepared for school.
- Ensuring their child has organised their bag and equipment the night before so that this does not delay departure in the morning.
- Discussing any issues of lateness to ensure this does not become a habit.
- Monitoring their child's attendance record when it is sent home and looking for patterns of lateness.

# 5 on a Friday



# **Celebrating success here at Pensby High School**

Congratulations to the following students across the year groups for featuring in our rewards leaderboard and receiving nominations for a 'shout out' from teaching staff including their Heads of year.

Well done!

# Year 11

- 1. Hannah Lyons
- 2. Niamh Lawton
- 3. Ellie Rose Dawson
- 4. Leo Webster
- 5. James Tully

Embed://<iframe src="https://giphy.com/embed/v5NFDWRwoyqMGfLIPG" width="480" height="480" frameBorder="0" class="giphy-embed" allowFullScreen></iframe><a href="https://giphy.com/gifs/amazing-you-rock-that-is-awesome-v5NFDWRwoyqMGfLIPG">via GIPHY</a>

# **Year 11 - Class of 2023**











This week we have had the Year 11 Class of 23 return back to Pensby High to collect GCSE certificates. It was great to hear their stories since they have left.

GCSE certificates are available to be collected from reception until 19th January 2024.

# **Christmas Show 2023**



On Tuesday 12th December, we had a festive evening of drama and music. The Pensby High School community turned out in force to our sold out, "Christmas Showcase 2023". Students from across all year groups performed scenes, dances, songs and even poetry they had written themselves. Nathan and Jack from Y10 took control of the technical aspects of the sound whilst Reem in Y8 reprised her role as lighting technician. The tech team were ably supported by former Pensby student Luke who is now studying technical theatre at college.

The DT department hosted a Christmas market in the entrance hall with home baked mince pies, mulled wine and Christmas tree decorations. Thank you to FOPHS for their support always and to all members of staff who enabled the showcase to take place. All students were full of energy and festive enthusiasm; a wonderful night was had by all.



Introduction: Charlie Houldin, Oliver Rigg, Ethan Evans, Zakhir Nayyir-Ahmed and Callum Houldin

Mums At Christmas: 8x/Dr2

**Christmas Poems** 

A Christmas Carol: 8x/Dr1

Skyfall: Phoebe Carney

**Christmas Poems** 

Lakeside Primary School Nativity: 8x/Dr3

Home Alone: 8x/Dr5

**Y9 Dancers:** Emmy Walton, Maddie Ogden Jessica Williams

#### Samba Band

Mama I'm a big girl now – Phoebe Carney, Latazia Beardsmore, Chloe Ellias-Hammonds

How to make the perfect Christmas pudding: Brianna Meade and Isla Bratherton

Merry Christmas Everyone – Pensby's Choir

With huge thanks to the main office, Reem Abdelhafiz, Nathan Stirrup, Jack Harris, FOPHS, the DT department and Luke "the legend" Palin.

Merry Christmas to all our Pensby community!













# **Christmas Attendance Draw Countdown**

At Pensby High School, excellent school attendance is one of our top priorities. We are keen to encourage all pupils to take advantage of every teaching and learning opportunity available to them at the school, and in order for that to happen it is important they are here.

This week, all pupils from Years 7-11 were given an Attendance Draw Card. The draw card (started on Tuesday 12th December) will be signed by their form tutor during morning registration and again

during afternoon Pastoral time. This process continues until the last day of term; Friday 22nd December 2023.

On the last day of term students who have 100% attendance between Tuesday 12th December - Friday 22nd December will go into the prize draw to win goodies from chocolates to Amazon vouchers.

The aim is to maintain the excellent levels of attendance right the way through to the end of term and is an initiative that has been well received by students and parents.

Please note that we take into medical appointments into consideration.

D.M.	Collect two	Wednesday Collect tWO	Thursday Collect tWO	Friday Collect two	Monday Collect two
STATE	stamps per	stamps per	stamps per	stamps per	stamps per
是相	your form	day from your form	day from your form	day from your form	day from your form
PM	tutor	tutor	tutor	tutor	tutor
Poss	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	
AM	Collect two stamps per	Collect two	Collect two	Collect two stamps per	100
-	day from your form	day from your form	day from	day from your form	13
M	tutor	tutor	tutor	tutor	

# Spelling Bee

As part of our ongoing commitment to promoting literacy at Pensby, ten Year 7 students were chosen to take part in a Spelling Bee competition. Students were given ten tricky spellings per round, and the winners progressed to the final. This term the winners were: -

Gold winner: Archie Carney

Silver winner: Austin Harvey

Bronze winner: Charlotte Millensted

All participants tried really hard to learn their spellings, so all participants received a gargantuan bar of chocolate! The bronze, silver, and gold winners received book vouchers too, just in time for Christmas!





# **Christopher Salmon Poetry Competition - 'Dream'**

The Christopher Salmon Foundation, in conjunction with Wirral Poetry Festival and Wirral Libraries, will be launching the next Christopher Salmon Poetry Competition, in January 2024.



The theme for this year's competition is **Dream.** The competition is open to entrants under 19 years of age, being educated in Wirral. A **£100** Prize will be awarded to the winner of each of the five age categories. We have had several winners over the years here at Pensby High!

In Christopher's memory the family set up the foundation and started the poetry competition with the aim of encouraging young people to express themselves through poetry. They tell us that over the last 14 years the quality of the entries they received has been phenomenal and it has been so heart-warming to see the fabulous work of such talented young poets in Wirral.

If anyone would like to enter, please hand in your poems to Mrs Dufton in the library or to any of your English teachers.

# **Christmas Reading**

The most borrowed books from the school library this year have been Manga books - they're quick to read and come in box sets, so students like to work their way through them. Also graphic novels, illustrated books and football biographies continue to prove popular, especially with reluctant readers. Horror and murder mystery are still one of our students' favourite genres but there are also some modern classics like Harry Potter and The Hunger Games which are borrowed time and time again!

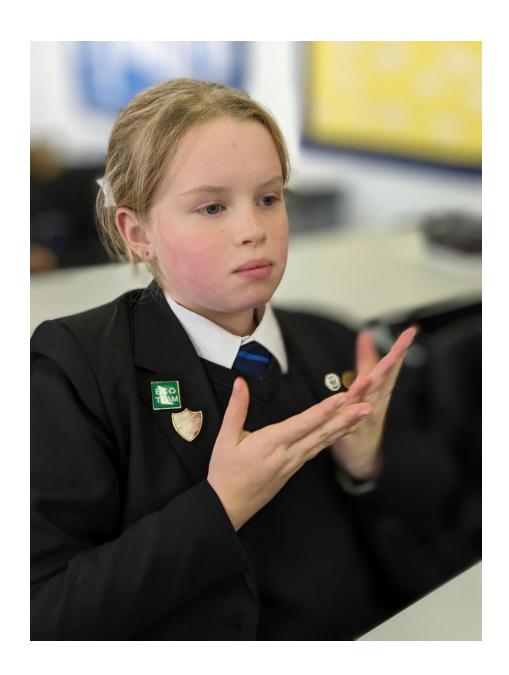
We hope this tree will inspire you to keep reading over the holiday and into the new year. Many of these books would make great gifts.



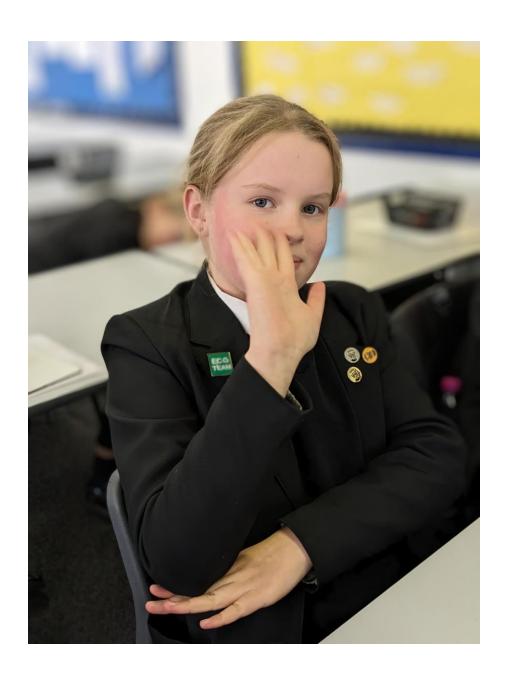
# British Sign Language Club

This week in BSL we learnt how to sign words related to Christmas. This was so students can use their signing knowledge over the Christmas holidays.









# **Period Poverty**



The Department for Education runs a period product scheme which provides free period products to girls and women in their place of study. Period products should be available for all who need them, when they need them, so they can access education. Having periods should not be a barrier to education for anyone.

Girls, women, and pupils and students who identify as non-binary or transgender, who have periods may all need to access this scheme. All pupils and students in schools and 16 to 19 organisations should be able to access period products if they need them.

This may include, for example, where individuals:

- have forgotten or run out of products at their school or college
- cannot afford products
- have come on their period unexpectedly

We have a large supply of sanitary towels, tampons and period underwear in school that is available to any of our students who request them and we regularly issue full packs of period products to students.

Students know that they can ask their form tutor, at the SSC or they can come to A4 and ask me for them. We encourage period positivity around school with an awareness campaign and talk openly about them. Having periods is a fact of life for half the population and we encourage boys to be supportive and understanding.

We would be happy to pass on a box of sanitary towels to families who are on free school meals or need them due to the increased cost of living.

Please email your child's head of year if your family need them.

Kind regards

Mrs Teare

**Head of PSHE** 

# **Christmas Toy Appeal**



A big thank you to all the parents, carers, students and staff who have brought gifts in for Cash for Kids Mission Christmas. We have 50 gifts that will go to children who would otherwise have nothing on Christmas day.

If you are still wanting to donate a new, unwrapped gift you can do so until Monday 19th December, this is the date they will be dropped off at a collection point.

Here is a link to the Mission Christmas website for more information: <a href="https://planetradio.co.uk/city/charity/events/mission-christmas-2023-liverpool/">https://planetradio.co.uk/city/charity/events/mission-christmas-2023-liverpool/</a>

Thank you again,

Miss Simons"



# Pensby's Got Talent



CAST WILL PERFORM THE SHOW THREE TIMES ON THE LAST MORNING ON THE LAST DAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS FRIDAY 22ND DECEMBER 2023

Max of 2 acts can get through per form (forms decide this week) to the Auditions stage

REMEMBER TALENT CAN BE ALMOST ANYTHING,

# TOP PRIZES FOR 1ST PLACE, 2ND PLACE AND 3RD PLACE.

REMEMBER,

TALENT CAN BE ALMOST ANYTHING, SINGING, RAP, BANDS, MUSICAL, POP, ROCK...STAND UP COMEDY, PLAYING AND INSTRUMENT, COMEDY SKETCH.... DANCING (individual or group) classic or modern...STREET DANCE....BEATBOX....DJ SKILLS......PUPPET SHOW.....BREAKDANCE...JUGGLING....AND MORE!



# Help and support at Christmas





# COPING AT CHRISTMAS

Christmas can be tough. That's why it's important to know there's always someone you can talk to.







- J 0300 123 3393
- Melpline
- mind.org.uk
- J Text SHOUT to 85258 J 116 123
- 0 24/7 text service
- giveusashout.org
- 0 24/7 helpline samaritans.org





- J Text YM to 85258
- 24/7 text service
- youngminds.org.uk
- J 0800 58 58 58
- Helpline for men
- thecalmzone.net
- J 0800 068 4141
- Under 35s Helpline
- papyrus-uk.org



# Where to get support for your mental health over the **Christmas period**

The Christmas holiday is a time when people spend moments with friends, family, and caregivers, reflecting on the year gone by and looking forward to the new one. It's typically a time filled with joy and celebration, but amidst the festivities, it's normal for individuals to feel sadness or worry, facing challenges to their mental health, just as they might during other times of the year.

At times, the festive period can prove more challenging than other parts of the year. Various factors, such as dealing with grief, the loss of a loved one, or experiencing loneliness, can make Christmas a sombre or difficult time. Even for those who don't actively celebrate Christmas, the festive season and the shift in routine might contribute to them feeling less well than at other times of the year.

Kooth

Kooth offers free, confidential and anonymous online support and counselling for 11-23 year olds. Their team will be available to provide mental wellbeing support over the festive period.

Beat

Beat provide support to help young people who may be struggling with an eating problem or an eating disorder. Call 0808 801 0677 (9am-midnight during the week and 4pm-midnight on weekends and bank holidays).

Childline

Childline provides a confidential telephone counselling service for any child with a problem. Call: 0800 1111 anytime or online chat with a counsellor.

Crisis Tools Crisis Tools helps you support young people in crisis. Short accessible video guides and text resources are available for free.

Every Mind Matters

Prestricted tips to help you look after your

mental health and wellbeing

Every Matters offers expert advice and mental health and wellbeing.

**Good Thinking** 

Good Thinking is London's digital wellbeing service and provides a range of resources for people to help improve mental wellbeing including free NHS-approved apps.

**Papyrus** 

Papyrus provide confidential support and advice to young people struggling with thoughts of suicide, and anyone worried about a young person. Call: 0800 068 3131 or text: 07860 039967.

The Mix

The Mix provides free, confidential support for young people under 25. Call: 0808 808 4994 (3pm-midnight every day) or email.

# GCSE Pod



What is gcsepod?



GCSEPod is a digital learning platform with over 6000, short videos known as 'Pods' which are designed to help support students with specific, tailored information. GCSEPod uses scientifically proven learning techniques to engage students in a way that builds confidence and resilience encouraging them to work smarter, not harder. Another feature includes 'Check and Challenge' where pupils can test their knowledge and understanding through mulitple choice questions. GCSEPod is compatible with all smart phones, this means students can download Pods to their phones and can access them at any time. GCSEPod is proven to help students achieve one grade higher on average than non-users.

Providing the highest-quality content and assessment the platform helps students achieve more. GCSE Pod are trusted by over 1,700 subscribing schools.

They provide content for <u>GCSE/IGCSE</u>, <u>Resits</u>, <u>Scotland</u>, <u>Northern Ireland</u>, <u>Wales</u>, <u>International and Functional Skills</u>



# **HELP YOUR RESULTS SOAR!**

We've invested in GCSEPod to help you reach your goals. Join hundreds of thousands of students using GCSEPod for revision, independent learning and homework today.







#### How to log in:

**P** podup

- Go to GCSEPod.com and click 'LOG IN'
   Click 'New to GCSEPod? Get Started'
   S. Enter your name. date of birth and the name of your school
   Create a username and password







# Helping students log in for the first time



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Activating /	Accounts			
All students have registered with G using the site, the their accounts by	GCSEPod. Before by need to activate	LOGIN	NEW HERE? GET	STARTED
simple steps:		USERNAME OR EMAIL	ALDRESS	
click "Login"	csepod.com and ere? Get Started!"	PASSWORD		
4. Select "Studer	nt"	LOGIN		
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	STUDENT			Enter their name, date of birt
FIRST NAME	STUDENT Test			Enter their name, date of birt and type in the name of you school. The school name
FIRST NAME	STUDENT  Test  Student			Enter their name, date of birt and type in the name of you school. The school name should appear. Click on it to
FIRST NAME  LAST NAME  DATE OF BI 2TH	STUDENT    Test     Student     20 •			Enter their name, date of birt and type in the name of you school. The school name should appear. Click on it to

www.gcsepod.com



### Troubleshooting

Sorry, we can't find you. Please make sure that all the details are correct. Please remember that you may be known by another name (e.g. Tom rather than Thomas).

Still stuck? Email support@gcsepod.com

If the message to the left appears, the details the student has entered do not match the details registered on our system. If this happens, please ask the student to try again, ensuring there are no spelling errors in their name and they use the correct date of birth.

Also try alternative names such as "Daniel" rather than "Dan".

#### Still not recognising the student?

Check what details have been registered for the student on GCSEPod by completing these steps:

- Log on to GCSEPod with your own account
   Click the green "Monitor and Manage" box on the teacher dashboard
   Type the name of the student into the search bar and you will see the details they have been registered with. Double check the date of birth and spelling of the name and ask the student to copy these directly.

#### Still not recognising the student?

In 95% of cases, the student will have been registered using the details from the school's MIS system. It may be that the student is not entered on the school MIS [e.g. if they have just joined the school or they may have been entered with a spelling mistake in their name. Please login to your school's MIS and check the details of the student. GCSEPod always uses the student's preferred first name and surname.

If the details for the student in the school's MIS are incorrect you can still activate the account using the incorrect details and then ask your MIS Manager to correct this later.

#### Still not recognising the student?

Please contact us on 01913387830 or email <u>support@gcsepod.com</u> and a member of the team will be able to help identify the problem and provide a solution.



**LGBTQ+ Support - Pride Action Team** 





Pensby High School is an inclusive environment and all students, staff, parents and visitors should feel welcome and supported. The award focuses on positive LGBT+, (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, plus other related identities), inclusion and visibility.

Our School Governors are in full support of the award and the inclusive practices we have at Pensby High School.

We will often promote activities within the community and for students through the newsletter however we understand that you may want to explore LGBTQ+ identities further. If you are seeking additional information, advice or support then please follow the links below.

### **Pride Action**

We run an inclusive Pride Action Team in school regularly that is open to all students. Details are published regularly via form notices. This is a safe space for students to self organise as well as seek

out further support if required. Previously the group has run social events and coordinated whole school form activities.

Pride action team put up this display and posed this question for class discussion:

What can schools do to raise awareness and support for trans pupils?

# **LGBTQ+ Resources**

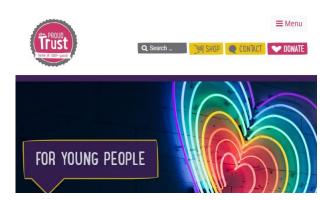
# **Stonewall Young Futures**

Helpful advice and information. If you need to talk to someone, you can also call the Stonewall information service on 08000 50 20 20.



# **The Proud Trust**

The Proud Trust are a charity who support LGBT+ youth. They have lots of help and advice for young people on their website.



### **LGBT Foundation**

LGBT Foundation is a national charity delivering advice, support and information services to lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) communities.



#### **Trans & Gender Diverse Resources**

#### Mermaids

Mermaids work with young people who feel at odds with the gender they have been assigned. They also work with parents and carers of young people going through these feelings.

As well as reading information on their website, you can also call the Mermaids helpline on 0344 334 0550 (Monday-Friday, 9am-9pm) if you'd prefer to talk to someone. Mermaids also operates an emergency text service – if you need help now, text 'Mermaids' to 85258.



### **Gendered Intelligence**

Gendered Intelligence runs projects for young people who identify as trans.

Their <u>Knowledge is Power</u> resource is a great place to start educating yourself about trans people and trans issues. They also have information for parents and families, as well as for adults who work with young people (such as teachers and youth workers).