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## LEWIS IS ON COURSE FOR A GREAT CAREER IN MUSIC THANKS TO THE BACKING HE HAS HAD FROM SWANMORE COLLEGE



Nicki and Danny Smith live with their son, Lewis, aged 17, in Droxford.

### Good support

A devastating illness caused Lewis to miss more than a year of education, but thanks to the care and support he received from staff at Swanmore College he was able to return to school, pass his GCSEs and move on to further education. Lewis says: "My experience of Swanmore is that it is a great community, it feels safe and you get a lot of support."

### Exam success

Lewis left Swanmore in 2017 after taking his GCSEs. He got an A in Music and is now studying at the Academy of Contemporary Music in Guildford. He says: "I sing with a band and write my own songs and am now studying for a vocal diploma with a view to getting into the music industry."



### Bright start

Lewis started in Year 7, moving up from his junior school with a big group of friends. "I made a good transition from junior school to secondary school and got on well with the work. I enjoyed playing football and became captain of the Year 7 football team."

### Long illness

During the summer holidays, before going into Year 8, Lewis was found to be suffering from a severe brain infection. He says: 'It was caused by a bacterial sinus infection that had turned to sepsis and spread to the brain. I had to have a total of seven operations and part of my skull taken away. I now have a titanium plate fitted over the hole.'

### Helpful staff

"I missed the whole of Year 8 and part of Year 9 but never got behind with the work because I had home schooling. To begin with I went back part-time but I really wanted to go back full-time, so they put things in place to help me. It was important I didn't get injured so I couldn't do PE. I left each lesson five minutes early and had a room to go to at break and lunchtime with my mates. I was obviously still very fragile, but was well supported by the staff."

### Music academy

"I got into music after my operations. I couldn't carry on with football and was lucky enough to find something else I loved doing. I started off as a solo singer and taught myself

to play the guitar. Then I formed a band, The Collision, and started to write songs. I did my first gig at the age of 13, singing in front of an audience of 200 people in Swanmore Village Hall to raise money for prostate cancer. When Swanmore College held a careers fair, ACM, the Academy of Contemporary Music, had a stall and so I decided to apply there."

### Safety measures

Nicki says: "When Lewis became ill it was a terrible time for me as a parent but I was grateful for the support I had from the school. Mr Jonathan, the Headteacher, phoned personally to see how Lewis was. I was obviously worried about him going back. Part of his skull had been removed and he still had stitches in his head, but the school put Health and Safety measures in place."

### Caring Headteacher

"It was Lewis who was keen to get back and we were very proud of him and how well he has done since. It is wonderful that he has discovered music and performing because he had to give up football which he loved. From my perspective, the school improved with leaps and bounds after Mr Jonathan arrived. One of Lewis's older sisters, Ellie-Jay, was just about to take her GCSEs when she was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes but Mr Jonathan personally reorganised her timetable, which helped her get through her exams. I can't thank him enough for the help he has given my family."



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