

**Headteacher:** Dr. J Bartlett – NPQH, PGCE, D.Phil, M.Chem **Specialisms:** Mathematics

4<sup>th</sup> May 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am writing to you to tell you about some of the activities which are happening in school that can have a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing.

Firstly, after a long break due to Covid 19, we have been able to recommence the after-school clubs for year 7 to 10. In addition to the sports clubs such as netball, football, and athletics there are many other clubs our students can join including, dance, cooking, journalism, Lego, jewellery making and music. Students will need to talk to their tutor, Pastoral Support Manager or Mr Vaughan to find out about which clubs are running for their year group. To ensure we follow Covid 19 guidelines and the school risk assessment, the clubs run for different year group bubbles on a different evening of the week.

Another exciting extra-curricular activity is being offered by Mr Thacker-Smith which is the opportunity for year 9 students to complete the DofE award. This is an excellent opportunity to take part in a variety of activities leading to Bronze, Silver and Gold awards. The DofE award can help develop skills, capabilities, and attributes that our young people need for their mental, emotional, and physical wellbeing. The award consists of four modules: volunteering (active citizenship), physical (sports and dance), skills and expedition. The DofE is a national programme and is well recognised by employers for developing resilient well-rounded individuals.

There has been extensive research into the link between good mental health and extra-curricular activities. Being involved in extra-curricular clubs builds mental resilience and self-confidence. After the isolation of lockdowns and online learning, being able to interact with friends, meeting new challenges and trying new things will help to boost self-worth and wellbeing for our children and I would ask you to encourage and support students with trying out one of the after-school clubs.

Secondly, I wanted to let you know that we have now appointed our student Mental Health Ambassadors and Peer Mentors. Our Mental Health Ambassadors will be working with me to promote positive mental health, and work to end the stigma surrounding mental health across the academy. The Peer Mentors will be working with Mrs Kent and myself to provide peer support to other students in their year group who may be struggling with their mental health. All our ambassadors will complete a training program with the National E-ACT Mental Health Lead and will be fully supported in their roles. I would like to congratulate them all on their selection and look forward to working with them over the coming weeks.



Shenley Academy & Sixth Form,  
Shenley Lane, Birmingham, B29 4HE

**T:** 0121 464 5191

**F:** 0121 464 3711

**E:** [shenley.enquiry@E-ACT.org.uk](mailto:shenley.enquiry@E-ACT.org.uk)

**W:** [www.shenleyacademy.E-ACT.org.uk](http://www.shenleyacademy.E-ACT.org.uk)

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Finally, I would like to inform you about a new initiative that is starting this week. From Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> May we will be launching the Shenley Wellbeing Zone in the library. We want every student at Shenley to feel safe and supported during their time in school. However, we are aware that there are times when our students may feel anxious, or struggle with social interactions. Break times may be particularly difficult for these students. For this reason, we are creating the Wellbeing Zone in the library on Tuesday and Friday lunch times so that students who want some quiet time or want someone to talk to can come and spend their lunch time with me. The Wellbeing Zone is open to all students, with each year group having a dedicated lunch slot on either a Tuesday or Friday. I will be providing some calm activities that students can take part in such as reading, colouring, dominoes, and cards; thus providing the students with the opportunity to relax and focus on their personal wellbeing. Your child's mental health and wellbeing is important to us so please talk to your child about the Wellbeing Zone and encourage them to drop in if you think it could be of help to them.

We are constantly looking at ways we can support your child's wellbeing. As always, if you would like to discuss any of the above then please do not hesitate to get in touch with the school at [shenley.enquiry@e-act.org.uk](mailto:shenley.enquiry@e-act.org.uk)

Kind regards,

**T Corbett-Lees**

Ms Tracey Corbett-Lees

Mental Health Lead

