



# MENTAL HEALTH Bulletin

**21<sup>st</sup> June 2021**

Hello everyone,

Well, another week has passed, and we are rapidly approaching the end of the academic year so I thought it might be good to look back on the last year and reflect on the year in terms of our mental health.

What a year it has been! When we all arrived at the start of term in September little did we know that we would still be living with Covid restrictions today. We have lived through self-isolating, bubbles, lockdowns, and online learning. Exams for year 11 were cancelled and replaced with an 8-week evidence gathering period. We have gone through gallons of hand sanitiser and hundreds of face masks and lateral flow tests.

In spite of all this, throughout the whole year and running alongside the curriculum, mental health has been a key focus.

The mental health activities were launched in October with #HelloYellow Day. The foyer was decorated with balloons and bunting and there were several challenges and activities that took place in tutor time. I was able to drop in and say hello to many students during tutor time and see the work they were doing to mark the day. Many of us dressed up in yellow to show our support for each other and make it acceptable to talk about our mental health. Since then, we have had several mental health days: Children's Mental Health week and Time to Talk Day, with the aim of us ending the stigma surrounding mental health and having open conversations with our families and each other about our wellbeing and how we are feeling. Most recently we have celebrated National Mental Health Day and despite the heavy rain, some of us did get out to enjoy nature and explore the academy grounds! Getting out and enjoying nature is proven to be good for our mental health.

In the autumn term we launched Thank You Thursday and hundreds of students took part and wrote thank you cards to Shenley staff. There were some lovely messages of thanks and appreciation, and many staff were a bit emotional reading them. We will be running a third TYT event before the end of term giving students the opportunity to thank staff for their help, support and care over the academic year.

Once we were back in the academy, during the Spring term, we eventually managed to recruit the Mental Health Ambassadors and Peer Mentors. We currently have 30 students in the team and they have completed their full training now and are ready to get to work promoting mental health and supporting their peers. They are a fantastic group of students and I know they will be amazing at their jobs. As the word has spread many students have asked how they can be involved and there will be plenty of opportunities in September.

The Wellbeing Zone was set up in May and is becoming very popular with some students, who are now regulars. This was running twice a week but is temporarily only running on Fridays for the next couple of weeks. I am happy to say that following a visit to the zone to have a chat with me, some students have been able to access advice and support or just have the chance to spend some time focusing on their wellbeing.

This is just a short reminder of some of the activities and events from this year, but we should not forget the Covid Recovery programme and PSHE mental health focus during tutor sessions, as well as the weekly bulletins, newsletters, Twitter notices and website articles.

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I am looking forward to the next year and the lifting of Covid restrictions and getting back to normal in the academy. There are lots of plans I have for next year, including a mental health after school club, so watch this space and come and join the mental health team and get the message out there that 'Mental Health Matters' and end the stigma surrounding mental health. If you have any ideas for things we can do, then please come and share them with me in the Wellbeing Zone.

Students, as we approach the end of term and end of year assessments in your academic subjects, if you are feeling at all anxious or worried, please make sure you talk to someone. Your class teachers can offer you advice on what you need to revise and how to prepare. Alternatively come and talk to me in the Wellbeing Zone about revision plans and how to approach exams if you feel stressed.

Have a good week everyone and stay safe and well.

Ms Corbett-Lees  
Mental Health Lead

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