



Wellbeing Matters

March, 2023



Dear Parent / Guardian,

I am delighted to introduce the first Wellbeing Matters newsletter. This is a new initiative designed to share information about all aspects of wellbeing that we work on as a school. We have always done a huge amount of work in this area, but felt recently that we were perhaps not publishing it as widely as we should be. Hence the first newsletter. This will now come out three times a year to inform parents about his area. We hope that you find it informative and as always welcome your feedback if you have any.

Mr Hodges, Headteacher

Wellbeing Provision at the Math

Ms A Gibson - Wellbeing Lead:

Here at the Math, we take the wellbeing of students and staff extremely seriously. Not only is it fundamental to our health and happiness, but if we fail to take care of our mental, emotional and physical wellbeing, we will find ourselves unable to cope with the challenges that life throws our way.

Everybody at some point or another encounters more challenging times, times perhaps when stress levels are high, when life has thrown us a curveball and we find it difficult to find the joy in life. In these times, when life seems to be getting on top of us, we want to encourage our students to speak about it and to seek help. Sometimes just speaking to someone makes all the difference, knowing that someone is listening and cares can, at times, be all that someone needs.

However, on those occasions when we need a little more support than this we have a whole host of mechanisms in place to provide the support needed to get our students back on track. I wanted to take this opportunity to share the provision we have to empower you to reach out should you ever feel the need:

Pastoral Support:

Lower School, Middle School and Sixth Form all have designated Heads of School, Heads of Year and trained Pastoral staff in order to support the students with any concerns, worries or issues. 1:1 pastoral support is readily available to all students as needed, and parents should contact the pastoral teams as a first port of call if they wish to discuss their child's wellbeing.

Mental Health First-Aiders:

Whilst we encourage students to speak to any member of staff in school with whom they feel comfortable, we have 14 members of staff who have been specifically trained to support students with their mental health. These Mental Health First Aiders are often our first port of call in terms of giving students the opportunity to speak and offload about the problems they are facing. The names and photos of these staff are displayed in classrooms to enable students to easily identify them.

ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant):

An educational psychology led intervention for promoting the emotional wellbeing of children and young people. A six week course of sessions allows students to focus on a particular issue, unpick their problems and learn new strategies to confront these situations in the future.

MIND 1:1 sessions:

These sessions are delivered by a representative from the charity MIND and focus on specific areas that students may struggle with: anxiety, self doubt, anger management, stress management, emotional regulation

CBT (Cognitive Behaviour Therapy):

A talking therapy that can help you manage your problems by changing the way you think and behave. This therapy focuses on thought patterns and processes.

Counselling:

We are fortunate enough to have two fully qualified, experienced counsellors who work with our students on a one-to-one basis. This is our highest level of support available to students and staff.

Should you have any concerns about your child, please contact the relevant pastoral team or SEN Department to discuss this further. Staff will then be able to put the appropriate support in place:

lowerschool@sjwms.org.uk middleschool@sjwms.org.uk sixthform@sjwms.org.uk sen@sjwms.org.uk

Further information regarding Wellbeing at SJWMS, as well as our Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy, can be found on the school's website:

<https://sjwms.org.uk/academy-life/wellbeing/>

Wellbeing Award for Schools

The **Wellbeing Award for Schools** was developed in partnership with the National Children's Bureau (NCB), and is intended to help schools prepare and equip themselves to promote emotional wellbeing and positive mental health across the whole-school community. The Award encourages the use of a 'whole-school approach' where all aspects of the school experience are harnessed to promote the emotional wellbeing and mental health of pupils, staff and parents. Over the years we have made significant steps forward in being able to provide a menu of support, and as a school we are proud of the proactive and forward thinking approach we have adopted. This commitment and provision was recognised when we were awarded the Wellbeing Award for Schools in February 2020. The school will be working towards recertification for this Award over the course of the 22/23 academic year.

Junior Prefects

In September 2022, we recruited five Junior Prefects. Their role is to look out for and support their peers, as well as knowing when to signpost them to the relevant adult. These students were chosen for their clear enthusiasm to help and support others, as well as their ability to be effective communicators. In Terms 1 and 2, these students undertook a series of intensive training sessions with Mrs Huxted and Martin Komorowski (our school counsellor) to prepare them for the demands of the role. We wanted to ensure that students in KS3 have someone within their peer group that they can turn to for support. It is our aim to empower our students to support others. As this initiative continues, eventually all year groups will have trained students within their peer group to reach out to, who are able to recognise the signs when someone needs further assistance. I'm sure you will all join me in congratulating the following Year 8 students:

Michael Cooper, Alex Guerin-Hasset, Brandon Herrero-Llinas, Jackson Limer and Joshua Peake

Inclusion and Wellbeing Prefects

Term 2 saw a group of ten Year 12 students appointed as our inaugural Inclusion and Wellbeing Prefects. These students are working to coordinate events which celebrate the diverse nature of our staff and student body and to recognise and value the traditions, events and celebrations that matter to our community. Our school is extremely diverse and this rich experience of life is something we wish to share with our student body to educate, recognise and celebrate the diversity amongst us. The prefects are currently working on tutorials, assemblies, displays and we will be sharing with you shortly, details of a Diversity Day we will be hosting at the school. Please join me in welcoming the following students into this important role:

Ibrahim Abedin, Al-Hamin Adefioye, Gbemi Adejumobi, Marvellous Akintola, Inigo Beltran, Ifeoluwa Bosede, Christian Jackson, Harry Tullet-Stone, Rebecca Wotton, Oyinmiebi Youdeowei

North Kent Mind Parent Training Sessions

On Friday 11th November 2022, North Kent Mind (a mental health charity the school have been working with for a number of years) delivered a virtual training session to parents of Year 11 and 13 students on 'Practical Solutions for Supporting your son/daughter with their Exams'. The session, which was conducted virtually over Zoom, focused on equipping parents with as much knowledge and information as possible around this area of wellbeing. A further Mind Parent Training session is being held on Friday 3rd March 2023, on 'Supporting Your Child's Wellbeing'. Although this course is fully booked, if you would like to discuss any concerns regarding your child, please contact the relevant pastoral team or the SEN Department.

Wellbeing and SEN Surgeries

Our Wellbeing and SEN surgeries have been proving popular with parents. These surgeries are an opportunity for parents to drop in to speak to staff about any concerns they may have surrounding their child. There is no need for an appointment, **please sign in at reception** and make your way to the relevant office for a one-to-one discussion about the matters that concern you. Next session details are below:

Wednesday 22nd March from 3.10pm-4pm in the DaVinci block

Wellbeing surgery: Ms Gibson, Assistant Headteacher, Senior Mental Health Lead

SEN surgery: Mr Alderman, SENCo

Five Ways to Wellbeing

Below is a link to 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' on the North Kent Mind website. This includes tips to improve wellbeing through five key areas which some families may find useful:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-at-work/taking-care-of-yourself/five-ways-to-wellbeing>

Spotlight on Exam Stress

Below are some tips from Young Minds regarding supporting with exam stress and preparation for exams, as well as a link to further information and guidance on the Young Minds website:

- Work with your child to find what revision style works for them.
- Encourage your child to take revision breaks and find a balance between studying and doing things they find enjoyable and relaxing.
- Make sure they are eating and drinking at regular intervals.
- Encourage them to take some time after revising to wind down.
- Reassure them – reinforce that you are and will be proud of them no matter what happens.
- Remain positive and hopeful!
- Plan a treat or an activity together to mark the end of the exams.
- Set aside one to one time so that they can talk to you about any worries.
- Let them know their feelings are valid and normal, but also offer support and solutions where possible.
- Anxiety is often worst at night and this means it is useful to encourage a good bedtime routine.
- Work with them to develop relaxation techniques.
- If anxiety and stress start impacting their day-to-day life, seek help from your GP.

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/coping-with-life/exam-stress/>