



APRIL 2023

A welcome from Director of Pupil Wellbeing, Jo Downie.

As we begin our Trinity Term, it is a good time to reflect on the terms passed. Lent Term offered lots of pastoral opportunities. Our sixth formers continued with their listening skills course, our Year 11 cohort enjoyed some exam wellbeing sessions to help prepare them for their upcoming GCSEs and we had a series of events for Children's Mental Health Week.

Children's Mental Health week coincided with National Safer Internet Day this year and the week provided lots of opportunities to raise awareness of the importance of conversations and connections in keeping safe and well online and in the real world. Our pupils were encouraged to try mindfulness in form time and were invited to complete a guided meditation in the Jenifer Cole Room on 'Tranquil Tuesday'. Mrs Procter the school nurse, and Mrs Crawley, Head of Food Technology, hosted a Wellness Wednesday event in the library: pupils were treated to healthy snacks and were encouraged to complete sleep diaries to highlight the importance of sleep and nutrition for mental health. To mark Safer Internet Day the Debating Society ran a special motion, based around the Online Safety Bill which sensitively considered the challenges surrounding restrictions on social media platforms. FemSoc similarly grappled with the stigma surrounding mental health, considering the presentation of women in literature, such as Bertha Mason, 'the woman in the attic' in Bronte's Jane Eyre. Throughout Children's Mental



Health Week our sixth form peer mentors visited form classes to deliver small group activities designed by national children's charity Place2Be to encourage pupils to connect.

As we enter the final term of the year, I encourage that theme of connection to continue. It is great to see pupils supporting themselves and each other through techniques learned through our pastoral provisions in form time and co-curricularly. As exams and other end of year pressures loom, connecting and looking after our mental health is increasingly important and we are here to support our pupils to tackle these pressures confidently and resiliently.

Wishing you all a successful Trinity Term.

Rainbows to reflect Children's Mental Health Week

During Children's Mental Health Week our lower school girls' form groups worked on Place2Be's Taskmaster challenge of making creative rainbows to reflect the diversity of our school community. Year 10 buddies and Year 12 peer mentors visited form classes to work with younger pupils on their projects and to help them reflect on their own mental health. As the theme of Children's Mental Health Week is 'Let's Connect' it was great to see that connection between our younger and older pupils. After much deliberation, Head of Girls Lower School, Ms Ward, selected the winners of the best rainbows from Year 7, 8 and 9 and we think they're fantastic!



Ms Ward said: "It has been super to see both pupils and form teachers engage so positively with this challenge. Our wonderful form teachers underpin the Schools' outstanding pastoral care, and this has been a great example of the ways in which they engage their tutees and

encourage them to develop positive mental health habits. While working on their rainbows, our Year 7 pupils told us that their form sessions were a key way to help them feel part of the school, referring to recent work they did on self-worth. In addition, our Year 8 and 9 pupils were able to make links to our Attributes for Success, speaking positively of building the key skills of collaboration, resilience and creativity."



An A-Z of Mental Health

During Children's Mental Health Week our sixth form mentors worked on creating posters focused on the A - Z of mental health, each letter signifying an element of mental health - be it positive ways of managing it, recognising when it may be poor and how you can support yourself and others through challenges to your mental health. They were then displayed in the library for the rest of the school to see and reflect on.

Our sixth form mentors also visited form classes in Years 7 to 9 to deliver activities based around e-safety and good mental health: pupils were asked to design collaborative postcards and write positive messages to one another.



Managing Wellbeing during Exams Workshops



With exams just around the corner, some pupils will inevitably feel pressure and stress. This term we held a special 'Managing Exams' workshop for our Year 11s. The sessions started with a hot chocolate in the dining hall as a way to remind pupils to take time for themselves even during times of revision and high pressure. They then went to the hall and focused on some of the main triggers of exam anxiety and how to mitigate these.

Mrs Waugh, Head of Middle School in the Girls' School, who organised the session said: 'Exam time can be a

period of high stress and anxiety and we want to reduce that as much as we can. These sessions aim to give pupils the tools they need to manage their time, their workload and most importantly, their anxiety around exams, so they can focus on performing the best they can.'

Year 11 pupil, Jasmine, said the session was really useful: "It gave us coping strategies and showed us how to practically deal with exam anxiety. I also liked how it gave you tips to help your friends if they panic too."

Classmate Izzy added: "The mock exams are a good way to help you see where you went wrong and what you can do to fix it. The session this morning was similar in that it helped you recognise when you're nervous and what you can do to help."

In the boys' school, Year 11 pupil Aaron said: "The workshop was really useful for helping me manage my stress and I'm feeling much more confident about my exams than I was before."

Dame Allan's Attributes for Success



At Dame Allan's Schools, we are committed to developing pupils who fulfil their potential and have the skills to be highly successful in their chosen fields. This takes more than excellent academic provision alone; during their time with us at Dame Allan's, pupils are also given opportunities and support to develop the character attributes that will underpin their future achievements.

In order to expand and enrich our character education provision, the senior schools introduced the 'Dame Allan's Attributes for Success' in September 2022. This framework provides an overview of the traits that we value as a school,

and which we believe are at the heart of our pupils' achievements. It gives staff and pupils a common language with which to discuss these often intangible concepts.

The attributes are divided into four key areas: respect, motivation, strategy and meta-thinking. Within the Dame Allan's framework, each of these core areas is divided into a further four associated attributes.

Over the course of the year so far, pupils in Years 7 to 9 have been learning about and discussing each of these attributes in turn during a series of form time sessions and assemblies. They have had an opportunity to reflect on their progress in developing these skills during lessons and co-curricular activities, as well as through termly questionnaires. Teachers have been impressed with pupils' engagement with the attributes and their thoughtful discussions about the value of these traits.

Next academic year will see the roll-out of form time sessions on the attributes to all year groups. We look forward to seeing the further impressive academic and personal development of our pupils.

Ask the Team

In this section we aim to answer some commonly asked questions from parents and this term it's all about homework!

Question:

How can I help my child manage their homework workload?

Answer:

The amount of homework a pupil should be doing each night is stated in their planners. Pupils need a quiet, well lit, dedicated space to do their homework. They also need a good chair - homework is best done sitting at a desk rather than on the bed or in front of the tv. Ideally homework should be done on the night it is set, with opportunities for help sought the next day

if there are issues. The catch up room is open everyday (except Tuesday) where pupils can go and do their work in the presence of a Head of Year who can give or signpost pupils to extra support. There are also sixth form academic mentors available to help in the catch up room too. Homework should not take more than the allocated time and if it does, parents should make a note in their child's planner that they have worked for the set time, but have not been able to complete it. The class teacher can then look at why it took longer than the set time. Homework should not cause stress or conflict at home! If a child really is struggling with homework, either in one subject or across the curriculum, parents are encouraged to drop their child's form teacher a note so help can be given.



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