



10th July 2020

Goffs-Churchgate Academy Mental Health Newsletter, Summer 2020

Hello everyone and welcome to the first Summer edition of the school's Mental Health Newsletter. What a tumultuous period we have been through, and continue to go through, with Covid-19! The impacts will no doubt be felt for a long time to come and in so many different ways.

Here at Goffs-Churchgate we have tried to engage with our students, their families and all members of staff to ensure that they are all OK and that their needs are being met. We have done this in numerous different ways ranging from weekly phone calls home through to interactive workshops and a variety of fun and challenging competitions.

What we'd like to do in this Newsletter is go through some of the many positive events that have happened during the lockdown and share some of our community's achievements with you. We'd also like to provide you with further mental health support and information and a glimpse into some of our ambitions for the future.

Messages of Support

At the beginning of the lockdown we asked students, parents and carers as well as staff to send in messages of support for one another, which we then shared with everyone. There were so many lovely messages that certainly helped to keep everyone's spirits up. Just one small example below came from a parent/carer:

"I would just like to say another big thank you to staff members who have taken the time out to call us checking how the boys are coping, if there's anything we need and also making sure us parents are ok and coping. We've had phone calls from three teachers now and it's so nice to have that phone call of support and reassurance, it's a lovely personal touch. Thank you"

Mental Health Awareness Week

In May we celebrated 'Mental Health Awareness' week. We asked students to submit poems based around 'Kindness' as well as evidence of 'Acts of Kindness'. To say that they rose to the challenge is a massive understatement!!! The quality of each and every one of the poems and Acts of Kindness submitted were superb! It was an extremely difficult decision to choose the eventual winner of what will now be an annual event, but the award eventually went to Erin Pipe from Year 7. Well done Erin!!

It's OK to say you're not OK

It's not OK to turn and walk away,
We've all got problems that we need to face.
Take my hand and lead the way,
I will be there to take the weight.
Breathe in deep, don't let yourself suffocate,
Close your eyes, clear your mind.
I will be here to take the weight.
I'm sorry if my actions hurt you now,
Things will get better, just let me help.
Let me smile with you,
Even for a minute.
Share your pain with me,
Share the weight, you're not alone.
Scream, shout, tell me you're not OK,
I will still be here.
Just take one step towards me,
Let the dark thoughts slip away,
Please don't hide away,
You are not alone,
Let me run a bath and brush your hair,
Let the beauty within see the light of day,
The nightmare will end,
Just take a breath.
I will walk beside you every step of the way,
Take my hand,
You are not alone.

Partial list of Acts of Kindness (Tia Dike-Stephens Year 8)

100 acts of kindness 🍷💕

- 1) Make dinner for family 🍲
- 2) Helped mum clean the entire house 🏠
- 3) called all my old friends that I don't usually talk to 📞
- 4) Read a long book to my brother 📖
- 5) Feed all the birds that fly over my garden 🐦
- 6) complimented everyone in my household ⭐
- 7) planted my own tomato garden (my brother loves tomatoes 🍅)
- 8) Smiled at everyone I saw when I went out 😊
- 9) made everyone's beds 🛏️
- 10) cleaned my room without being told 🧼
- 11) baked a cake for my neighbor 🍰
- 13) Made a hat glove and scarf sets for my best friends 🧤🧶
- 14) left all my old toys to my neighbours with babies 🧸
- 15) Gave a stranger a compliment 😊
- 16) helped mum load groceries into the car 🚗
- 17) I sent flowers to my grandad 😊🌸
- 18) made a playlist for my best friends 🎧🎵
19. mow the back garden

School Mental Health Anthem

In the Easter Newsletter we spoke about having to delay the recording of the school mental health anthem – 'Something Inside So Strong'. We also spoke about how determined we were to record the song though!! Well, unless you haven't already heard we HAVE now recorded it. Please go to the school website or type Goffs-Churchgate Academy into 'You Tube' and you will find the video on our school page. It's brilliant, genuine and very moving. We'd just like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who took part (at whatever stage), or encouraged and supported us through home and Zoom recordings. A special thanks must go to Ms Gemma Joyce for putting together the video – thank you!

Our Pledges



- ▶ **Continue to raise awareness of Mental Health both at school and in the wider community**
- ▶ **Remove the stigma which can be associated with experiencing Mental Health issues**

[Watford FC Mental Health Workshop](#)

The Year 7 students have engaged in Watford Football Club's Mental Health Workshops for six weeks as well. The quality of their work has been consistently outstanding. They have engaged so well with the workshop and have been a credit to themselves, their families and the school. Taylor Morrison, who works for Watford said that, *"Based on the large amount of worksheets you have sent me so far (so much more than other schools) we have been very pleased with Goffs-Churchgate's efforts, so thank you for that!"*

[Creative Arts Department](#)

Whilst talking about Ms Joyce, a special thank you must also go to the Creative Arts department. Mr Keever and Ms Joyce have been instrumental in putting together several fun competitions for the students to take part in, including, 'Movie On A Toilet Roll', 'Food Art Challenge' and 'Happy Hands'!!! Please see the fantastic effort from Christopher Antoniou from Year 8.



Virtual Health and Wellbeing Day

Today, Friday 10th July, we hosted our 5th Annual Health and Wellbeing Day. We were determined to run the event this year. We felt it was more important than ever to hold the day as mental health and wellbeing have really come to the forefront during the pandemic!! We had pre-recorded videos, including an opening speech from one of our Mental Health Champions, Sir Charles Walker KBE MP, a NSPCC Assembly, featuring Ant and Dec, mental health videos featuring Prince William, Arsenal and Spurs. We also held LIVE sessions with the British Red Cross, Natural Flair Coaching (managing worries, positive mindset) and two Herts MIND Webinars.

What's next??

We have plenty of ambitions regarding the forthcoming academic year. Of course we will have to show flexibility and a sure footedness should there be any further pandemic type issues. For example, we would like to host coffee mornings at the school; If, for any reason we can't, we would like to hold virtual coffee mornings via social media instead.

We will hopefully be moving into the 'old block', which is being refurbished, and have a 'Safe Space' for students who need some time in a quiet environment. We will continue to work with Herts MIND and the Samaritans as well as working with new partners like Watford Football Club.

Also on the agenda are the following plans and ambitions:

- We would like to set up parent, student and staff surveys to capture, and act on feedback about wellbeing and mental health support, within the school environment
- We will display some of the outstanding work that our students have created during lockdown, within the school. We want to celebrate our incredible students and their achievements
- We will continue to arrange for Herts MIND, Samaritans, Natural Flair and other appropriate organisations to come into school and complete presentations/ workshops to all year groups, to parents and staff on mental health and wellbeing
- We would like to arrange a Mental Health Conference, aimed at Year 6 students, where the main topics will be the transition to secondary school and stress/anxiety
- We have held a fact finding meeting with an organisation called 'Natural Flair' run by Sharon Lawton. I spoke to her specifically about Mindfulness, not only in relation to the Health and Wellbeing Day but the possibility of a longer-term collaboration where Mindfulness becomes the foundation of the school's mental health support
- We will continue to proactively seek out any opportunities to access information, support and help to increase our knowledge of good mental health and reduce the stigma of poor mental health

Last but certainly not least

We hope that we've given you some uplifting information about our continued help and support for each other, and our ongoing quest to improve our mental health services to you throughout these testing times. However, it is really important to make you aware of some of the fantastic services that you or your families can access to provide help and support:

- If you have any concerns about health and wellbeing (your own or loved ones), or indeed any ideas as to how we could improve provision and support here at Goffs-Churchgate, please don't hesitate to contact us (term time only please) at our dedicated email address – wellbeing@goffschurchgate.herts.sch.uk
- If you would like to speak to the Samaritans, you can call them for free on 116 123
- If you would like to speak to Herts MIND, you can call them on 0203 727 3600 or go online, type in 'how to contact Herts MIND' and follow the clear advice
- There are plenty of other mental health organisations your sons/daughters can contact by searching on the internet: 'Just Talk' for example!



We wish good mental health to you and your families.

Take care.

From everyone at Goffs-Churchgate Academy