



July 2021

## Goffs-Churchgate Mental Health + Wellbeing Newsletter

### Summer 2021

Hello everyone and welcome to our final newsletter of this academic year. What a year it has been! What has struck us most is the resilience of our students, staff and wider community as we have dealt with lockdowns, online meetings, year bubbles, and one-way systems around the school. That we have all managed to do this with a certain resolve, and often with smiles on our faces, just shows what an amazing community we have, and which continues to thrive.

We would like to take this opportunity to update you with some of the events and news stories since our last newsletter at Easter and tell you about some of the exciting projects that will be happening in the new academic year.

#### **The Breakout Room**

The Breakout Room is now fully furnished. The room was officially opened on July 9<sup>th</sup> at the start of our Health and Wellbeing Day by our Mental Health Champions, Sir Charles Walker, Helen Barnett, and Martin Griffiths. We have purchased a plaque to commemorate the opening, which will be displayed in the room.



## Mental Health Awareness Week, May 2021

We marked Mental Health Awareness week with a series of events at the school. Herts MIND hosted a Year 11 workshop on exam stress and anxiety. Natural Flair Coaching completed taster sessions on Mindfulness to groups of students from Years 7-10. The students really engaged in these sessions, feeding back, 'Miss helped me focus on my concentration. I'm grateful that I'm here' and 'I liked it when we did the breathing exercises'.



Students also took part in 'Wellbeing Wednesday', a series of presentations on wellbeing and ambition. Students said that they really enjoyed the sessions, finding them inspirational and motivating.

Staff attended a presentation on 'Staff Wellbeing' from the Broxbourne Mental Health Support Team. It was an engaging and inclusive meeting. Staff enjoyed it so much that the meeting overran and had to be completed the following week!

Year 9 students performed a piece of mental health and wellbeing drama in their assembly, featuring the school mental health anthem, 'Something Inside So Strong'. The assembly was watched by a small group of parents who had come into school for the first face to face, socially distanced wellbeing coffee morning. One parent tweeted, *'It was great to see the Year 9 drama group at @GoffsChurchgate, delivering a #mentalhealth related performance to their peers during their assembly. They demonstrated how mental health can affect our everyday and just how important it is to share how we feel'*.

## 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Health and Wellbeing Day, 9<sup>th</sup> July

Our Health and Wellbeing Day goes from strength to strength. This year the event was opened by Sir Charles Walker, MP. The Mayor of Broxbourne also attended the event and was very impressed with the wide variety of sessions that took place. This year we hosted sessions involving personal trainers, GK Icon football, Taekwondo, Herts MIND, Samaritans, Andy Lopata, (a local author), and Dance. Our Year 9 students ran netball and basketball sessions and the Year 10's ran rounders sessions. They all did a superb job.



I would also like to mention Cuffley and Northaw Tennis Club. This was their first time with us. Feedback from staff included, *'The guys were great with the kids and were supporting them throughout. There was a great competitive nature to the session and ALL the students were involved and looked to be loving it! Something I would recommend for the future using the guys who led the session!'*

A particularly special mention must go to our other Mental Health Champions, Helen Barnett and Martin Griffiths. This was Helen's first visit to the school. She drove up from Worcester to be with us. Helen spoke openly about the incidents which led to her living with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and was asked some great questions by students. Helen posted on her Instagram page, *'What an honour to be invited as Mental Health Champion to Goffs-Churchgate Academy..... What a fantastic school with such friendly staff and pupils'*.

Martin and his team gave presentations on first aid at this year's event. Feedback included, *'This was one of the best sessions I've attended in school based on the fact that it was very clearly presented in a way everyone understood. In addition, there was full student involvement and I heard them saying they are glad they learnt something new and useful. I also enjoyed it as I learnt all the steps to apply to ensure the subject was kept safe, how to give CPR and how to position a collapsed person so they don't choke on their body fluids. A very positive and useful experience for me and the students'*.

A particular thanks must go to the following students without whom the event would not have been the success that it was – Marinela Tsepa, Annie Shackleton, Jake Rowley and Callum Button. They attended the school on numerous occasions to help plan the logistics for the event. Thank you!

### Other news

Our school had an article printed in the June edition of the Hertfordshire wide CAMHS Newsletter. The article highlighted our Breakout Room, 5 school Mental Health Poetry competition and our mental health anthem, *'Something Inside So Strong'*.

Broxbourne Mental Health Support Team is represented at the school by Molly Webster. Molly is a Children's Wellbeing Practitioner and works in the Breakout Room. She will be at the school on Thursdays from the start of September. Molly has delivered 1-2-1 and group sessions for students and workshops for staff and parents.

## New Projects

Earlier this year we were approached by the CAMHS Communications & Engagement Manager at Hertfordshire County Council. We discussed our Mental Health Poetry competition involving four other schools earlier this year. They have asked us to host a county wide competition later this year, which of course we are happy to do. Our first planning meeting will take place on our return to school in early September. I will keep you updated with any progress.

As part of an Oracy and Wellbeing initiative I am going to be working with Mr Alfie Wise, one of our English teachers, to host a debating challenge with other schools here at Goffs-Churchgate. We believe that there is a strong link between being able to communicate in a clear and confident manner, whilst respecting another person's point of view, and personal wellbeing. We hope to host this event in the Autumn term.

## Digital Safe Area

As we enter the Summer holiday period, I'd just like to remind you of our Digital Safe Area, which is free and accessible 24/7. It is very easy to access and contains lots of information on mental health and wellbeing for all ages. Just go to the school website, click on 'Students' and you'll see Digital Safe Area/ Breakout Room in the right-hand column.

You can find information and contact details for a whole host of mental health and wellbeing agencies, as well as inspirational speeches, and videos from Jurgen Klopp and Prince William. There is a link to the BBC website, 'Headroom', and free online jigsaws, colouring and painting. There are also Yoga, Meditation and Breathing videos.



I would like to take this opportunity of wishing you all a happy, restful, and peaceful Summer break. Hopefully, we can see a light at the end of the tunnel, regarding the pandemic. We know however, that there are bound to be further 'bumps in the road'. I'm sure that I can speak on behalf of all of us when I say that what sustains us is the strength of our school community, and in particular our students.

Take care.

Jim Clune, Mental Health Lead