

Health and Wellbeing Newsletter February 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian/Pupils,

We hope that you are all coping as best you can with the challenges that online learning brings and remembering at all times that 'your best is good enough.' This issue of the Health and Wellbeing newsletter aims to provide you with information on the types of Health and Wellbeing activities our pupils took part in last term. Despite the Covid restrictions, we were still able to begin some new initiatives to engage our current S1 pupils who made the transition to high school in such a difficult year. Our school community prides itself on working together as a team, and this team work was at the heart of many of these new initiatives, as was building positive relationships between our Senior role models and younger pupils. In addition, we have suggested some Self Care strategies for coping with Lockdown and Home Learning for the period of time before we return to school.



Mental Health Ambassadors;

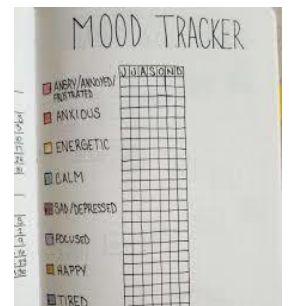
Time out Tuesdays



Time-out Tuesdays is a club which is mainly a crafts club, but with a sub focus also mental health. The goal of this club was to create a safe place for students to come and de-stress if needed and connect with others who may be feeling the same way. We did a lot of holiday themed crafts during Halloween and Christmas but have also created

mood tracker boards for a fun, easy way to keep track of your mental health. We took a lot of suggestions for activities from the pupils and with the help of Mrs McKean we want to continue when we back at school to make sure it's always the most fun for pupils, even if that means doing something not craft related. It was great to see the pupils enjoying themselves and learning new skills while talking with people who might not usually be within their social circles.

Erin and Rebecca S6 - Mental Health Ambassadors.



Meditation Club – Wednesdays (Drama Stage)

As one of the Mental Health Ambassadors, I am involved in the meditation club with my peer Morven and Miss MacAngus as the supervisor guiding us along the way! A huge aim for the club has to be to teaching people that if you ever feel stressed out during the day or even a little bit anxious, that it is okay to take a couple of moments to fix your breathing and bring yourself back to one, relaxing your mind. Primarily, those who attended our club were first years and we had a great turn out each week. We hope this will be helpful for them as they climb up the years and experience exam stress. They will now have knowledge to make them more peaceful and to help their friends too! For the certain individuals that dedicated each lunch time to joining us it was clear to see them enjoying their time to 'Zen out,' as Miss MacAngus would say! Taking time from a busy school day to reflect and gather themselves again. The club is a great and simplistic way to really clear your head and forget any stresses. Even better you learn techniques to help yourself and



that you can share. Keeping your mind healthy is just as important as your physical health! **Alysha Ahktar and Morven Nulty S6 Mental Health Ambassadors**

Writing Club - Thursdays

At the writing club, we give junior school pupils the opportunity to write in ways they enjoy. They work on creative writing, character building, short story competitions and so much. We meet on Thursday lunchtimes with Mr MacLeod also getting involved. We have had former English pupils in to talk to the club members about their experiences too. They give great, useful insight into how to build characters and storylines. Our space gives people a safe space to talk about their mental health if need be, or even write about it. Writing gives a great space for people to write about their current and past feelings, something we have found as a great support to our mental health.



Alastair Condie and Paige Dougall – Mental Health Ambassadors.

Music Mindfulness – Fridays



The Music Mindfulness club has been running on Friday lunchtimes in the school since October within the Music Department. Sam and I are available for the whole of lunch to help with learning new pieces of music, to listen to pieces you've been playing or even just to talk. The experience of running this club has been amazing as we have gotten to know so many brilliant young people and help them to explore their interests in a relaxed and fun environment. The hum of instrumentation helps to encourage people to talk openly to us about their interests and lives which is why I think the club has been so popular with the younger years. It both helps young, talented people explore music but it provides a space that is more intimate and friendly for those who might not be able to find that same comfort in the social area.

Jack Hamilton/Sam Jones S6 – Mental Health Ambassadors

Blog – Alastair Condie (School Captain)



Hi, I'm Alastair, and I write on my blog Scottish blethers. I try to talk about a range of things, including; my adventures, Gaelic, Scotland and just a sprinkling of Eurovision. I started it back in lockdown as a way to re-find my love for writing. In the future, as a Mental Health Ambassador, I hope to do feature articles on mental health and the stigma that surrounds it. If you are interested in reading more about my blog and to follow it, find it at; www.scottishblethers.wordpress.com

Communication Coaching

The backdrop of a very difficult year has highlighted the emotional challenges that our young people face in their day to day lives. Navigating the social and academic demands of secondary school life while managing the physical and mental transition from pre-teen to teenager can be overwhelming for many.

Communication Coaching offers

personalised support to help our young people with understanding their own feelings and communicating these feelings to those around them. It provides a safe space and encourages participants to view and express themselves in more positive ways.



Communication Coaching is run in collaboration with a variety of stakeholders including Support for Learning and Pupil Support and has already proven effective in supporting our young people through a wide range of challenges including anxiety, stress, depression, behavioural issues, aggression, eating disorders, learning difficulties, grief and loss. The sessions utilise elements of Drama Therapy such as role play, storytelling, voice work, movement, games, improvisations, and scripts. This targeted intervention strategy helps participants to develop self-awareness and self-confidence; investigate coping mechanisms and integrate physical and emotional well-being while promoting positive behaviour and personal growth. Sessions are tailored to the individual and are designed help those who want to help themselves by allowing young people to identify repetitive behavioural patterns that may have a negative impact on their wellbeing.

Despite the current restrictions, we are continuing to work remotely with a variety of pupils and are successfully helping them with coping methods and strategies to support them in their day to day lives. **Miss MacAngus**

Peer PE – K Doyle/A Inch



Peer PE is a new initiative that was introduced in Greenfaulds last term. Our Sports Leaders have, in previous years, spent the majority of their time working with our feeder primary schools. However, this year we decided to target some of our S1 pupils in the hope of building good relationships between the older role models and their peers in S1. Being

outdoors and taking part in physical activity clears the mind, releases stress giving a break from back to back lessons for some pupils who could do with some time out of class. The pupils involved were working one to one with

carefully selected Sports Leaders, taking part in some sort of physical activity after some ice breaking tasks following their initial pairing. As a result of restrictions, the main activities that were risk assessed to be safe in beginning the programme were walking, scavenger style hunts and cycling. The Sports Leaders who took part reported the following successes of the programme;

“Throughout the six weeks both myself and my S1 pupil were able to develop a close friendship as we had similar interests, therefore could share our opinions on hobbies such as football and computer games. In addition to talking about our hobbies and interests we also talked about school work which I think is beneficial for the 1st year as it gives them the opportunity to ask any questions that they have about their school work or how the structure of the school day changes as you progress through the school”

Jack Watson S6

“I felt like as a sports leader, I was able to make a connection with the younger peer and build a bond that had a mutual level of trust ... As time progressed, we both began to see we had a lot in common and could use that to build a stronger friendship which made the sessions flow a lot easier. It felt like it was beneficial in respect to having a familiar face. I think you could kind of sense that by having someone familiar to say hi to in the halls made the adjustment to high school a lot easier and not as scary.” Erin Smith S6

I felt this experience was very important and beneficial to myself as a leader. Getting to work with younger pupils in the school was really fun as not only did this help improve my leadership skills it also allowed the kids to express what they like and don't. It also allowed me to spend time and communicate with individuals on their own or in a group and got to know them better.

I think the group sizes were good however because it meant there wasn't that many pupils down and it meant they could stay focused and not get distracted as they might if it was a larger thing.

Lucy Steven S6

After evaluating the positives of the Peer PE programme, the Sports Leaders suggested ways that we could adjust the programme moving forward when restrictions are no longer in place in order to make the sessions even more worthwhile and enjoyable for the pupils involved.



“The only downside was COVID as there were a few restrictions on what we could do like indoor games or team work etc. I also think the length of the sessions could have been longer to give a better chance to get to know the pupils better, so they felt more comfortable.”

Rachel Simpson S6

“Due to COVID, it was a little limited to what we could and could not do, but in a normal atmosphere I think it could work much better.”

Liusadh McCulloch S6

NL Leisure Run/Cycle – Suicide Awareness Event



The school had a number of Health and Wellbeing events in the pipeline this year, including, a Health Week and a Men & Mental Health Football event. However, as a result of restrictions, it looks likely that these events will be postponed until next year. Therefore, an event we can take part in and support fully is North Lanarkshire's Run/Cycle Virtual event. Participants will complete their chosen running or cycling distance either individually or part of a team for a £10 entry fee regardless of distance. You receive a goody bag with water bottle, sports snood and bag then a t shirt and medal for taking

part. Donations from entry fees will be made to the Samaritans charity. We are looking for as many parents and pupils to take part as we can to lend our support to such a worthwhile charity. The event week will begin on Monday 19th April with sign ups opened now and running until Sunday 21st March. More information can be found on the NL leisure website.



Children's Mental Health Week 1-7th February 2021

The GHS Sanctuary Instagram have been promoting Children's Mental Health Week by suggesting pupils take part in a Daily Mile to lend our support in promoting positive activities for good mental practice, walking and getting outside being one of them. You child may also have been given the choice to do this during core PE this week too so please encourage them to follow the @ghs_sanctuary Instagram so we can highlight their efforts!

Wellbeing at home during this time

As you will be aware there are strategies that are suggested to try and relieve some of the stress of living during lockdown. The @BelievePerform twitter has a number of useful tools that suggest such strategies that could give you or your children some routines and tips for coping during lockdown such as the example below. Check out their twitter for other coping tools. Please see the next page for some of their suggestions for supporting teenagers through Lockdown.

HOW PARENTS CAN SUPPORT TEENAGERS DURING LOCKDOWN

 @BELIEVEPHQ



Encourage them to be involved in activities or tasks around the house (E.g. cleaning, cooking, gardening)



Be clear with them some of the things that you'd appreciate their help with and why their help is important



Don't get stressed if they have the odd sleep in. Try not to tell your child what to do. Instead suggest things that might help



Agree on some ground rules that you can all work towards together as a family. Respect each other's choices



Identify a physical or creative challenge that they can master over the coming days and weeks. Encourage them to keep practising it



Work together as a team who are looking to support each other



Support your child to find things to do which will help to reduce boredom



Encourage your child to stay connected to friends and family and to engage in activities that provide a sense of achievement



Encourage your child to schedule things into their week. This will bring back a sense of control over what they are doing



Identify some coping skills that you can test out and practise together. This is a great way to promote self care



Self-care is so important for us all and below are some activities that we would also encourage in order to support taking care of your own Mental Health.



Self-care



<p>Switch Off</p> <p>Switch off all work /school notifications outside of school/working hours add take some time for yourself in those evenings to binge watch your favourite tv show, read a book, chat to a friend or go for a relaxing bath.</p>	<p>Think Positive</p> <p>Try to think positive. If you are feeling negative then try and find a positive affirmation task or a mindfulness task which can help shift your mindset from a negative to a more positive one. There are examples of good self-affirmation/mindset practice via google. The Calm and Headspace apps are recommended.</p>	<p>Tune Out</p> <p>The news and social media can sometimes bring us down and make us feel overwhelmed. Try to get some screen free time to yourself by setting a limit on screen time available under settings in your phone.</p>	<p>Be Free</p> <p>We can all be guilty of working in our weekends. When things are closed it can be difficult to switch off from work/school, but try and plan for some work-free weekends and spend some time doing something you enjoy.</p>
<p>Sleep</p> <p>Sleep is important for our physical and emotional wellbeing. Try to get some early nights (or a long lie for the lucky few) Research does suggest however, that good mental health practice should be having the same sleeping window every night i.e. 11-7 as your sleeping and waking pattern. Why not try it?</p>	<p>Exercise</p> <p>With more time spent at home it is important that we try to get regular exercise. Go for a walk, try some yoga on YouTube or even try a workout. Set by the PE Department.</p>	<p>Eat Well</p> <p>Use your time at home to treat yourself to some lovely home cooked meals. Have a look online for some new recipes and get creative.</p>	<p>Be grateful</p> <p>In all the negativity try to remember what is important to you and the things in your life you are grateful for. Try to remind yourself of these at the beginning and end of each day.</p>

Thank you for taking the time to read this term's Health and Wellbeing newsletter and remember, if there are any initiatives or support the school can offer in terms of Wellbeing, then please don't hesitate to contact us.

GHS Health and Wellbeing Team