

Tuesday 12 January 2021

Dear Families,

Re: Mental Health and Well-being

Thank you for all you are doing to support your child and their home learning. The three way partnership between child, family, and school is more important now than ever. All staff at DCA really appreciate what you are doing to ensure that your child completes all of their work on Google Classroom, and in particular, how you are ensuring that: they have a quiet place to study (free from distractions), you are testing your child on what they have learned and how you are checking the work that they have completed each day.

Your child's learning is essential for their academic success. However, we also know that your child's mental health is essential for their happiness and well-being. During previous lockdowns, the mental health and well-being of young people and adults has been affected. I wanted to share some guidance and advice on how to keep healthy and access support if needed.

Mental Health Support for our students

Mental Health is a way of describing social and emotional well-being. Good mental health is essential for a child to develop physiologically, socially, and cognitively.

NHS 5 top tips for mental health (see this [link](#))

1. Connect with other people. Good relationships are important for your mental wellbeing. They can: help you to build a sense of belonging and self-worth, give you an opportunity to share positive experiences provide emotional support and allow you to support others. There are lots of things you could try to help build stronger and closer relationships:

- if possible, take time each day to be with your family, for example, try arranging a fixed time to eat dinner together
- try switching off the TV to talk or play a game with your children, friends or family
- make the most of technology to stay in touch with friends and family. Video-chat apps like Skype and FaceTime are useful, especially if you live far apart

2. Be physically active. Being active is not only great for your physical health and fitness, evidence also shows it can also improve your mental wellbeing by:

- raising your self-esteem
- helping you to set goals or challenges and achieve them
- causing chemical changes in your brain which can help to positively change your mood

3. Learn new skills. Research shows that learning new skills can also improve your mental wellbeing by:

- boosting self-confidence and raising self-esteem
- helping you to build a sense of purpose
- helping you to connect with others

4. Give to others. Research suggests that acts of giving and kindness can help improve your mental wellbeing by:

- creating positive feelings and a sense of reward
- giving you a feeling of purpose and self-worth
- helping you connect with other people
- small acts of kindness towards other people help others and make you feel good

5. Pay attention to the present moment (mindfulness): paying more attention to the present moment can improve your mental wellbeing. This includes your thoughts and feelings, your body and the world around you. Some people call this



awareness "mindfulness". Mindfulness can help you enjoy life more and understand yourself better. It can positively change the way you feel about life and how you approach challenges.

My child / those in my family are struggling with their mental health, what should I do?

- Talk. Encourage the person who is struggling with their mental health to speak to a family member / trusted adult.
- **Childline:** is a free service which provides help, advice and counselling to children and young people, they also have an app which you can download. For more information please visit their website (<https://www.childline.org.uk/>) and you can also call them on: 0800 1111.
- **Samaritans:** is a registered charity aimed at providing emotional support to anyone in emotional distress, struggling to cope, or at risk of suicide throughout the United Kingdom and Ireland, often through their telephone helpline, you can call them on: 116 123. You can find more information of other ways to get in touch on their website (<https://www.samaritans.org/>).
- **Guide-Line / Mind in Bradford:** is a confidential telephone helpline which provides mental health support and information, you can call them on: 0800 1884 884. There is also a live chat service which can be accessed via their website (<https://www.mindinbradford.org.uk/support-for-you/guide-line/>).
- **First Response** is a crisis support service for those who need urgent mental health support. You can call them on: 01274 221 181. For more information, please visit their website (<https://www.bdct.nhs.uk/services/first-response/>).
- **SHOUT** is a free text service for anyone in crisis, anywhere, it's a place to go if you're struggling to cope and need immediate help. For support, text Shout to 85258. You can find more information on their website (<https://giveusashout.org/>).
- **PAPYRUS** is for young people who are not coping with life. You can call them on: 0800 068 4141, text them on: 07786209697, or email them at: pat@papyrus-uk.org. For more, information please visit their website (<https://www.papyrus-uk.org/>).

I feel my child is struggling with their mental health / well-being but I am not sure how to talk to them?

- The Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families is a children's charity dedicated to providing training and support for child mental health services. They have produced the following guidance to support conversations between parents / carers and children around mental health. You can find the guidance by clicking this [link](#). You can also find out more information on their website (<https://www.annafreud.org/>).
- MindEd is a free learning resource about the mental health of children, young people and older adults. They have also produced guidance on supporting conversation between parents / carers and children around mental health. You can find the resource by clicking this link. You can also find out more information on their website (<https://mindedforfamilies.org.uk/>).

If you have any questions or need any support, please contact your child's Head of Year in the first instance.

Head of Year 7 – Mr Jones: RJones@dixonsca.com

Head of Year 8 – Mr Thacker: C.Thacker@dixonsca.com

Head of Year 9 – Mrs Clay: nclay@dixonsca.com

Head of Year 10 – Mr Amjad: U.Amjad@dixonsca.com

Head of Year 11 – Mr Sparks: J.Sparks@dixonsca.com

If you need any further support, please feel free to contact me by email at: M.Sanderson@dixonsca.com, or by phone on: 01274 776777.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Sanderson

Vice Principal and Designated Safeguarding Lead

