**Mental health and wellbeing: template letter for parents**

**Our mental health and wellbeing programme in** *[Insert year group/key stage]*

Dear *[Name of parent]*,

At *[Insert school name]*, we believe that mental health and wellbeing is the basis for a happy and successful life at school and beyond. Wellbeing plays a key role in our school ethos, and shapes our policies and procedures implicitly and explicitly. We strive to improve the wellbeing of our students and staff in everything we do, seeking to build resilience, identify and monitor concerns, and support students and families who face challenges.

**Building resilience**

By creating an environment that is both caring and challenging, encourages risk while permitting failure, and provides opportunities to step out of their comfort zone, we seek to develop resilience in our students. Alongside a varied curriculum, encouraging all our students to take part in activities such as *[Insert as applicable: music; dance; drama; photography; community support; Combined Cadet Force; Duke of Edinburgh in Year 10]* allows them to gain experience from which we hope they learn, develop and grow as individuals. We also look to develop resilience through:

* *our tutor programme, a forum for discussing all aspects of teenage life*
* *PSHE lessons, in which we discuss topics such as choices, friendships and relationships*
* *whole-school and year group assemblies, in which external experts speak to each year group several times a year on issues such as body image and social media*
* *our wellbeing programme, which provides a carousel of activities to Year 9 students including sessions on mindfulness, yoga, helping others and also sessions on our farm or Woodland School.*

Through this programme, we deliver a clear, coherent message: positive mental health is attainable. We also take opportunities such as *[Insert as applicable: Children’s Mental Health Week; Mental Health Awareness Week; World Mental Health Day]* to emphasise the importance of mental health and maintaining an open and positive environment.

**Monitoring and supporting students**

Our tutorial system allows tutors to meet with tutees several times weekly. This acts as a robust ‘first line’ to support students individually and in small groups. We encourage students to raise any concerns with a member of staff to whom they feel comfortable talking, and teaching and pastoral teams work together to identify any changes in behavior and monitor any concerns. We carry out pastoral tracking through *[AS tracking and an online journal that helps key staff stay informed about how to best support students]*.

Students can access mental health and pastoral support via:

* *the medical centre, which is open from 8.00am to 6.00pm every school day*
* *the school counsellor, who can be booked for an appointment up to twice weekly by any student*
* *the school listener, a 24-hour confidential phone service available to any student who needs to talk to someone*
* *our peer mentors, who are trained to support other students in their houses and year groups.*

We also have access to a number of *[Insert as applicable: counsellors; social workers; psychiatrists; occupational therapists]*, who are available to work with individual students during or even outside the school day. However, our main strength is our well-trained pastoral team, who are on hand at any time of day. We continue to develop our staff so that they can better support our students, most recently by *[offering Mental Health First Aid training to all members of staff]*.

**Supporting families and the wider community**

As with every aspect of school life, effective support for students’ mental health and wellbeing depends on the strength of input from our families and the wider community. Through our *[Insert as applicable: parental surveys; wellbeing focus groups; weekly feedback time]*, we make sure that parents have every opportunity to help shape our approach. We are also pleased to offer parent information evenings on topics ranging from *[transition]* to *[drug and alcohol abuse]*.

This letter is the first we will write to keep you informed about our mental health and wellbeing programme, and suggest ways we can work together for the wellbeing of our students. We also continue to encourage an open dialogue with all our families and would value feedback on any of the above, or otherwise, that may help us improve wellbeing throughout the school.

Yours sincerely,

Name: ……………………………………… Date: …………………………………

**Frequently asked questions**

**What is wellbeing and why is it important?**

There are several definitions of wellbeing, but most are based on health and happiness. It is important because this is what we truly want for our children. Research has proven that without emotional and physical wellbeing, students will not be able to reach their full potential.

**How does the school provide a healthy and welcoming environment?**

Hopefully the above letter has made it clear how seriously we take the wellbeing of your child. The health and happiness of our students is a consideration at every level of decision making, and is part of the success criteria by which we judge our performance as an organisation.

**How can we support our child’s wellbeing at home?**

By encouraging your child to engage with the school’s wellbeing programme, and getting involved yourself, we believe there is a significant amount to gain. Simply by being there for them and spending time talking with them you will be helping them develop the skills they need to overcome challenges in later life. By working together, we can support our children more effectively.

You can access further information on how to support mental health and wellbeing via *[Insert as applicable: the school’s parent portal; the Department for Education website; Young Minds website]*

**Who can we speak to if we’re concerned about our child’s wellbeing at school?**

For any concerns about a child's wellbeing, please contact their *[Insert as applicable: tutor, head of year/house]*. For any general concerns please contact our designated wellbeing lead, *[Insert name]*.