

Wellbeing and Mental Health Newsletter No. 2

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Who are the Wellbeing Team at St Stephen's CE Primary School?

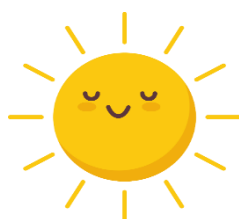
- Michael Schumm - Headteacher
- Sally Bouwman - Assistant Headteacher/Senior Mental Health Lead
- Yasmin Bill - Relationships and Health Education Lead
- Theresa Kyeyune - School Counsellor
- Tami Gibb - Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA)
- Marian Blackmore - School Nurse
- Crystal Luk - Clap and Toot Music Therapist
- Lia Pereira – Librarian, Quiet Spaces Ambassador
- Val Bridgeman - Midday Meal Supervisor/Chief provider of staff snacks

After the success of last term's Wellbeing and Mental Health Newsletter, we have compiled together a new version to share all the work being done at St Stephen's to support the wellbeing and mental health of our children, families and staff.

Please do continue to let us know how we are doing after reading.

Sally Bouwman - Senior Mental Health Lead

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Spring Term 7th February 2025

Children's Mental Health Week

On Tuesday, St Stephen's joined many schools across the country by taking part in the Great Big Live Assembly for Children's Mental Health Week. Throughout this assembly, the focus was on understanding our emotions as part of this year's theme '**Know Yourself, Grow Yourself**'. This theme is all about helping children understand who they are and giving them the tools to thrive. Together, they explored how recognising and naming our feelings, whether they're happy, sad, big, or small, can help us face life's challenges with courage and hope.

With 1 in 5 children now experiencing a probable mental health condition, this is a vital opportunity to show children across the UK that they are seen, heard and supported. By joining the Great Big Live Assembly, we can send a united message: **You are not alone and your story matters.**

As part of their RHE lesson this week, each class focused on mental wellbeing and the importance of looking after it. The children completed different activities, ranging from creating affirmation cards, playing games such as Island of Personalities and completing 'Who am I?' quizzes to allow self-reflection time to develop an understanding of likes and dislikes, recognising potential triggers.

Today, the children came to school in their favourite scarf, which was representative of them, to mark our 'Wear your SCARF to School Day' all in support of Children's Mental Health Week. At Stephen's, SCARF forms part of our RHE curriculum and represents our values for children: Safety, Caring, Achievement, Resilience and Friendship. In their classes, the children had the opportunity to share what their scarf means to them, celebrating individuality and promoting the importance of children's mental health and wellbeing.



Spring Term 7th February 2025

Wear Your SCARF to School Day!

Today, St Stephen's wore their own scarves to showcase their individuality and how we are all unique.



'My scarf is special as it is my mum's and my family are important to me.'



'Bright colours and bold patterns remind me of my personality.'



'I love spring and my scarf has all the colours of spring on it.'



'My scarf represents me as my dad is Welsh and the national flower of Wales is a daffodil which is yellow.'



'I love reading Harry Potter so I wore this scarf today to show that.'

Top Tips for Families

1

Encourage journalling

Just like Riley, encourage your older children and young people to express their emotions and thoughts through journalling. It can be less confronting than speaking out loud and is a helpful way to process what is going on.

2

Make space for reflection

When children and young people reflect on their different emotions, it can help them better understand themselves and what they need. Go for a walk, drive, or try some mindful colouring or baking together.

3

Be visual

Use imagery, such as emojis or flashcards to help children and young people recognise and label their feelings.

4

Practice mindfulness

Try mindful activities, and quiet family time, to enjoy being in the present moment. This can help children and young people be aware of their thoughts and emotions and learn a useful new coping technique.

5

Communicate

Feedback is crucial for helping us see our blind spots and gain greater insight. Children and young people are no different. Creating safe and supportive ways to share your own experience with your child can help them understand themselves and their impact on the world around them.



Spring Term 7th February 2025

Neurodiversity and Support Systems Talk

On the 27th February, we held an evening of talks and discussion around the topic of Neurodiversity, which everyone agrees can have an impact on children's mental health. School staff shared the support systems available to children and parents. Parents then ran their own discussion time exploring challenges at home and sharing strategies. Miss Tami and Ms Theresa offered 1:1 meeting slots. Feedback from attendees at the event has been extremely positive.

Book Recommendations

Thinking about mental health, here is a Library favourite at Stephen's...

'Words and your Heart' by Kate Neal

A clear and simple meditation on the power of positive communication, Kate Jane Neal's picture book gets to the heart (pardon the pun!) of how we can hurt or heal each other with our words, and presents its message with charming and appealing illustrations. It is a great book for discussing friendship and feelings.

<https://www.booktrust.org.uk/book/w/words-and-your-heart/>

We will be looking at a range of books in library sessions during **Neurodiversity Week** commencing 17.03.25, one of my personal favourites is '*Isaac and His Amazing Asperger Superpowers!*' by Melanie Walsh. This is a great picture book, which explains Autism Spectrum Disorder in a simple, gentle and positive way to very young children.

[Isaac and His Amazing Autism Superpowers! By Melanie Walsh \(9781529525427/Paperback\) | LoveReading4Kids](#)

Lia Pereira

Thoughtful words from Crystal - Clap and Toot Music Therapist

Regulating with children is like playing an accordion.

An accordion requires constant movement to make music and so does working with children. If we allow too much freedom for unfiltered expression, it may feel unsafe for children; if we allow too little space for expression, children may feel restricted.

Instead, children feel safe and listened to when we respond to their emotional needs flexibly. Offer space for expressions and model healthy boundaries as needed.



Pupil Voice

Finally, let's hear what the children have got to say about their learning from Children's Mental Health Week...

I think we deal with mental health really well, in particular we are lucky to have Miss Theresa and Miss Tami. If I were feeling upset at school, I would go and see an appropriate adult.

EH – Year 6

This week, we have learnt that everyone is different in a good way. We are all strong, brave, kind and important. We made affirmation cards that said, 'I am Kind' and 'I am Strong'. We are going to use these as bookmarks to remind us of how important we all are.

CK – Year 4

In assembly, we learnt that it is not about solving people's problems, it is about trying to help them feel happier. You could help them with this by asking them what they need help with and comforting them.

EP – Year 3

As part of Children's Mental Health Week, we have spent time thinking about ourselves so we are more self-aware. We looked at our: favourite colours, songs, books, our friends, our likes and dislikes, what makes us laugh and when we feel uncomfortable.

JC – Year 5

Our Affirmations

