

## Lower Sixth Well-Being Programme

Mental well-being can be defined as:

‘... a *dynamic* state, in which the individual is able to develop their potential, work productively and creatively, build strong and positive relationships with others, and contribute to their community. It is enhanced when an individual is able to fulfil their personal and social goals and achieve a sense of meaning and purpose in their society.’

The Foresight Report: The Government Office for Science: 2008

Evidence suggests that in order to help achieve positive mental well-being we can actively focus on developing five key areas in our lives; these key areas form the foundations of the L6th Well-Being programme:

- **Relationships** - *connecting* with the people around us and developing and nurturing our relationships with them is central to our self-perception and self-value.
- **Activity** – eating healthily and taking regular physical exercise by engaging in an enjoyable activity can help reduce stress, ward off anxiety and feelings of depression, boost self-esteem and improve sleep.
- **Achievement** - pushing ourselves to learn new skills, venturing outside our comfort zones and facing exciting, fresh challenges, or simply just completing a task that needs doing, can provide a sense of achievement and promote self esteem.
- **Altruism** - acts of giving and unselfishness (however small) can be hugely beneficial in raising our levels of happiness and self worth and promoting attitudes of compassion and appreciation.
- **Awareness** – developing an increased awareness of our feelings, thoughts, physical self and the surrounding world, in the present moment, helps to introduce a greater sense of calm and control into our lives, enhancing our sense of well-being and levels of productivity.

The L6th Well-Being Programme comprises four elements:

1. The Well-Being Carousel - a weekly carousel of activities.
  2. Weekly mindfulness classes.
  3. A programme of visiting speakers.
  4. Two half day weekend courses offered in the Lent and Summer terms.
1. **The Well-Being Carousel** is a rolling program of activities, where students spend three weeks on each of five different topic modules:
    - Sex and Relationships Education (SRE)
    - Skills in Happiness and Well-Being
    - Healthy Body Healthy Mind
    - People Skills in the Workplace
    - Yoga or Cooking

## Rationale and Outline of Carousel Content

Sex and Relationships Education – In order to promote good emotional and sexual health in our students and encourage them to make responsible and informed choices in their sexual relationships, students will:

- Explore issues surrounding sexual ethics, gender equality and sexual orientation.
- Learn the symptoms, prevalence, dangers and cures of common STIs and understand the great importance of condom use in protecting their sexual health.
- Learn about the fact and fiction associated with pornography and related potential dangers.

(See separate SRE policy)

Skills in Happiness and Well-Being – In order to develop an increased awareness and understanding of what happiness is and how it affects us and explore how we can alter our own levels of happiness and well-being and those of others, students will:

- identify important factors that affect levels of happiness and self-esteem and look at ways in which we can be proactive and take responsibility for promoting the happiness and well-being of both ourselves and others.
- explore the issue of body image and examine how gender is presented in the media and how this affects our self-esteem.
- Explore the importance of accepting difference and challenging prejudice in our society, considering in particular, issues surrounding gender inequality and sexuality and homophobia.

Healthy Body Healthy Mind – In order to encourage students to take positive steps to look after their own mental health, they will:

- identify and explore some common issues surrounding mental health eg. depression, OCD, bereavement.
- Become equipped with a range of coping strategies for when the going gets tough.
- Explore the importance of diet, exercise and sleep in maintaining good mental health.

Personal Skills in the Workplace – In order to develop both intra and interpersonal skills to help achieve personal goals and enhance future career success, students will:

- Explore the importance of soft skills and positive personal presentation.
- Identify ways in which they can build their own levels of confidence and resilience.
- Identify their strengths and interests and develop greater self-awareness.

Yoga - In order to promote mental health, well-being and all-round productivity, students develop skills in self-awareness and concentration through practicing mindful breathing and relaxation using basic Hatha yoga postures and techniques.

Cooking – In order to encourage students to be brave and experimental cooks and cook with confidence and self-reliance, they experiment without recipes with unfamiliar ingredients, create affordable, delicious dishes and learn a range of basic culinary techniques.

An aide-memoir for each carousel activity will be placed on the Well-Being VLE, giving students the opportunity to revisit the content and reflect on each session. They will also be encouraged to rate and evaluate each session via a short questionnaire on the VLE which will help inform future planning and well-being provision.

2. **Weekly mindfulness classes** with a highly qualified mindfulness practitioner are offered to all L6th pupils on an optional basis.
3. **A programme of visiting speakers** is provided. See below 'Talks by Visiting Experts and Inspirational/Motivational Speakers'.
4. **Two half day weekend courses offered in the Lent and Summer terms** aimed at challenging, empowering and inspiring students:
  1. Conflict Management - Students are taught skills in communication, behavioural awareness and self-defense, helping them learn how to recognise and defuse potentially aggressive situations and if necessary, defend themselves.
  2. Circus Skills – Students have fun and a sense of achievement as they learn challenging new skills.

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