

Hope Heals

Mental Health Matters at Hope Community School

Spring 2023

Mental Health

Our Whole School Approach

Welcome to our first issue of Hope Heals! We hope that this newsletter will outline and explain the available resources we have to support our community with their mental health needs and we aim to explain our approach to mental health and wellbeing.

We take a 'whole school approach' to mental health, which means mental health is *everyone's business*. We encourage engagement across the entire community: staff, pupils, governors, parents and external services. The approach involves: early identification and intervention; staff wellbeing and development; and skills-based work for pupils, but above all it adopts a positive and universal focus on wellbeing.

We have always incorporated mental health into our policies at HCS and aim to provide many different ways to promote mental health with our students and families. There are many individualised programs we have to promote wellbeing for children according to their needs, such as Lego therapy club, Social skills club, CRIBS Unlimited mentoring, liaising with CHEWS and CAHMS.

As a whole school, we have participated in Mental Health Week and have student-led groups such as Friendship Ambassadors and Lighthouse Group that aim to increase wellbeing at school for all children.

Our Lunchtime Club is up and running, which provides a quieter, more structured space for children to create art or play table games. This has had a positive effect for many of our children.

The new Sensory Room is being used daily to help the wellbeing of children across the school, as well. This is used as a safe, calming space where children can regulate themselves and be ready for learning.



Community Connections

We are connected with New Gen Church who offer courses and help for the community. Please see their website:

<https://www.newgen.org.uk/>

Bexley council offer mental health support for adults and children. Please explore what is available on their website:

www.bexleylocaloffer.uk/

You can text **BEYOND** to **85258** for free, 24/7 support across the UK. Trained volunteers will listen to how you're feeling and help you think about the next steps towards feeling better.

Call **Samaritans 116 123**. They are available day or night for anyone who's struggling to cope and needs someone to listen.

Zones of Regulation

Which zone are you in?

We are currently teaching children to recognise when they are in different emotional states called 'Zones,' with each of the four zones represented by a different colour. In the lessons and activities, students learn how to use strategies or tools to stay in a zone or move from one to another. They explore calming techniques, cognitive strategies and sensory supports so they will have a toolbox of methods to use to move between zones.

Your child might say, 'I'm in the red zone right now!' This would mean they are angry, terrified or ecstatic. They recognise they are feeling this way and then decide if they should stay in this state or not. They then employ the tools they've been taught to change zones if it is appropriate.

Children will also learn these skills: how to read others' facial expressions and recognise a broader range of emotions in self and others, perspective about how others are feeling, insight into events that trigger their less regulated states, and when and how to use tools and problem solving skills.




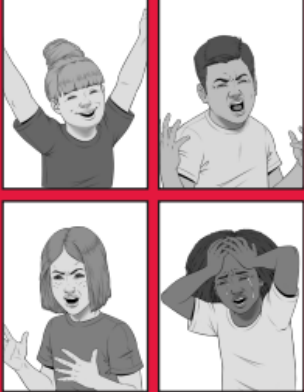
This has already made a massive improvement to the emotional wellbeing of students and has increased their awareness of how others around them are feeling.

You can use this at home! Use the same vocabulary we use at school and discuss ways they can make the transitions between zones at home. The stressors at home and school may be very different and therefore need a different approach.

If you want more information or support for using this at home, please speak to your class teacher.

You may also find this video helpful to create a zones check in at home: [zones-check-in-at-home](#)

We'd love to know if you create and use something like this at home.

			
<p>BLUE ZONE</p> <p>Sad Sick Tired Bored Moving Slowly</p>	<p>GREEN ZONE</p> <p>Happy Calm Feeling Okay Focused Relaxed</p>	<p>YELLOW ZONE</p> <p>Frustrated Worried Silly/Wiggly Excited Loss of Some Control</p>	<p>RED ZONE</p> <p>Mad/Angry Terrified Elated/Ecstatic Devastated Out of Control</p>

We are an Anti-Bullying School

You may view our Anti-Bullying policy on our website, or click this link:

[Anti-Bullying Policy](#)

We are an Anti-Bullying school and have taught the children what bullying is through lessons and collectives. Students have been taught that bullying is “behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally”. We have discussed the effects of bullying and how to report it. The children know we are committed to have a safe and friendly environment for all children and we will address any issues if they arise.

New Kindness Ambassadors at Hope

Our students are very excited about a new initiative that we are starting called ‘Kindness Ambassadors’. A group of students have volunteered to be ambassadors on the playground and around school. They will be on the lookout for any students who feel lonely or may just need a friend. These students will be having training on conflict resolution and they will be wearing yellow lanyards on the playground so other students can seek them out if they need a buddy. We are also looking forward to installing a ‘buddy bench’ on the playground, where people can gather if they feel they need someone to befriend them.

We have a brand new kindness display in school that anyone can add to. We want to celebrate kindness at Hope, so when someone does something kind for someone else, they can write it up and celebrate how their kindness made a difference. We look forward to this tree being filled soon!

