



The
Henrietta Barnett
School

FOUNDED IN 1911

Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE)

Student Handbook

Information, Organisations and Advice

What this guide is for...








If you've got a problem or are worried about someone you know, deciding what to do to make things better can be difficult.

As well as giving information about common worries, this guide tells you about some of the sources of help and advice on how to deal with your worries. You may be too embarrassed to talk about them. You may think others won't take you seriously or understand you. You may worry that they will tell someone else when you don't want them to. You may find it hard to trust adults. It can be very hard to talk.

But some problems just don't go away if you ignore them or try to sort them out by yourself. You don't have to manage on your own.

Your Rights

Whatever your worries, you have the right to...

-  be listened to and be taken seriously in all matters that affect you
-  have an education and grow up healthily
-  a good enough standard of living, including a place to live, food and clothing
-  not be discriminated against
-  have your cultural background and identity valued
-  have your best interests put first when decisions are made about you
-  be protected from harm, abuse and violence.

Adults and organisations should never harm you in any way. If you are hurt, adults must do something about it. The law says that some people have a responsibility for your safety. This includes the school. The school's approach to many of the issues contained in this guide are covered in detail in the school's policies, all of which are available on the school's website.

What is Abuse?

When you watch TV or read newspapers or magazines, you may see news stories, documentaries, letters or story lines about abuse. Abuse is a word that people seem to use more and more. But we are not always clear about what the word means. Most people talk about physical or sexual abuse, but there's also emotional abuse and neglect. So things can be a bit more complicated than they first seem.

It's always okay to ask if you are unsure about something and to find out more about different kinds of abuse in order to keep yourself safe. You might want to do this through covering certain topics in PSHCE, or speaking to any member of staff at school (including the school counsellors).

Young people may be hurt by adults, or other young people in lots of ways. A rough guide to types of behaviour that are considered to be abuse is below:

EMOTIONAL ABUSE might include constant name calling, being threatened, being made fun of or made to feel small, and/or seeing violence between the people who care for you.

PHYSICAL ABUSE might include being kicked, being beaten, being punched, and/or being hit with an object/implement. This may be on regular or one-off occasions.

SEXUAL ABUSE might include being touched in a way you don't like, being forced to have sex, being made to look at sexual pictures or videos, and/or anything else that makes you feel uncomfortable.

NEGLECT might include when you don't have somewhere to stay, when you don't have enough food to eat or clothes to keep you warm, and/or if you are not looked after properly.

If you feel that any of these issues affect you or anyone else you know then it is advisable to seek help. Use one of the sources of help in school or outside school - whichever you feel most comfortable with. Different ways of accessing help are covered later in this guide.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is another issue that can happen between people and needs dealing with.

Bullying includes hitting, taking a person's things, name-calling and making racist or homophobic comments. Discriminating or picking on someone because they are different is not acceptable. No one should suffer in silence or have to deal with these problems on their own. If you are experiencing bullying yourself, then you should try to get some support to help it stop and to help you deal with how you feel. If you are aware of any member of the school community being bullied it is your responsibility to tell a member of staff as soon as possible. Bullying is something that is covered in PSHCE in Year 7, but if you would like to discuss this in PSHCE lessons in older years this is always a possibility: please ask your PSHCE teacher.

The school's approach to bullying is covered in its Anti-Bullying Policy which can be found on the school website.







Cyberbullying






Cyberbullying is when a person or group of people use the internet (including emails, instant messaging, chatrooms, video broadcasting sites and social networking sites), mobile phones and/or other communication technologies to bully, threaten, intimidate or abuse someone.

The risk to your safety online can include exposure to inappropriate material; inaccurate or misleading information; illegal downloading of copyrighted materials; and bullying (which includes untruthful, hurtful and abusive comments or imagery intended to denigrate or humiliate another person).

We will cover online safety and cyberbullying through PSHCE and tutorial times as well as in your computing lessons. You will find it addressed in displays and information around school. You will also be asked to sign an online safety agreement.

Here are some ways to avoid cyberbullying and stay safe online:

-  Don't reply to abusive messages, as this may encourage the bullies.
-  Keep copies of any abusive messages you get and show them to an adult you trust.
-  Never give out any personal details on the internet.
-  Don't post any photos or videos that you wouldn't be happy for anyone to see.
-  Be aware that people can create fake profiles on social networking sites and they might not be telling the truth.
-  Don't add anyone you don't know to your list of friends.






-  Don't arrange to meet someone you have met online without a trusted adult being there as well.
-  Only give your mobile number to friends and people you trust.
-  Keep your passwords private.
-  Avoid internet sites for adults.
-  Remember that anything you post on the internet becomes public property.

If you want to report cyberbullying or online abuse, go to www.thinkuknow.co.uk and click on the "report abuse" button – and look out for this button on other sites you use.

What is Peer Pressure?











Peer pressure is when other people, especially your friends, put pressure (whether directly or indirectly) on you to do something. Sometimes that can be a positive, and the people around you may inspire you and influence you to do things that are beneficial to you. However, sometimes it might be pressure to something that you don't really want to do or that makes you feel uncomfortable.

If you are experiencing negative peer pressure, here are some ideas to help you to cope:

-  Suggest activities that you and your friends can do together that you all feel good about.
-  Try saying **"No"** in an assertive way – making clear how you feel without insulting them or getting angry. Your friends should respect this and realise that trying to force you to do something against your will doesn't work.
-  Try to find friends who you can trust and who have interests more like your own.
-  Find at least one other friend who will stand up to peer pressure with you.
-  Pay attention to your own personal feelings and beliefs.

Exam/Work Pressure

Exams are important, but they are not the only key to a successful future. Try to remember this! You will talk about ways to deal with exam and other stresses in your PSHCE lessons; here are some ways to beat exam stress:

-  Consider asking parents or carers to give you encouragement and support, but not to put pressure on you. Explain how you are feeling to them.
-  Arrange with them when you can have your own quiet time and space in the house to study without being disturbed.
-  Have a revision timetable.
-  Buy revision guides.
-  Try to answer past exam papers.
-  Find a routine that suits you best.
-  Give yourself time each day to relax.
-  If you are finding the pressure from home, school or your friends difficult, talk to a member of staff about it. They can try to offer more advice and help you to manage the expectations and anxieties you or your family are feeling.
-  Try not to compare yourself to your peers: focus on your own progress.
-  Keep a sense of perspective: remember that although exams are important, they are not the be-all and end-all. Exam success is not the only measure of success!

There is a useful booklet that talks about how to deal with exams (specifically GCSE exams) on the website of the Charlie Waller Memorial Trust. You can access this booklet for free at <https://www.charliewaller.org/resources>, as well as other useful booklets and information packs.

What is Mental Health?

We all have a level of mental health, just as we all have a level of physical health, and just as there may be times when our physical health is less good, there may also be times when our mental health is less good. And just as we can help to keep our bodies healthy, we can help to keep our minds healthy, to lessen the chance of illness.

There are many things that you can do to help you look after your mental health and emotional wellbeing. **Remember: it is very important to look after and make time for yourself.**

You will learn further about mental health and emotional resilience in your PSHCE lessons and through the tutorial programme in school. If there are other aspects that you would like to be covered, please discuss this with your PSHCE or form teacher.

There are signposts to some excellent websites with further information and support on the HBS Website here <https://www.hbschool.org.uk/about-us/pastoral-care/mental-health-and-wellbeing/>. For some valuable advice from some of our students on mental health please see the Annex at the back of this booklet and resources on wellbeing and mental health are often circulated via your year group Google Classrooms.

Getting help and advice

When you are unhappy or scared, or worried about someone else, you may feel that there's no way out of your problems and/or that nothing can help. In addition, if you're experiencing abuse, you may be pressured not to tell anyone. But there are people you can turn to for help. Talking can help you to understand the choices you or others have and help you find a solution or a way of making things better. **Talking is often the first and most difficult step.**

It can be hard to find the words to talk about your problems. Writing down your feelings can sometimes help you to find these words. It can help you to feel more confident to tell someone you know and trust. If you are worried that you or someone you know is being abused or in danger, it is usually best to talk to an adult. This is because you will probably need help from professionals to stop it from happening. Likewise, if your friend tells you they are worried about being abused or in danger, listen to them. Encourage them to talk to an adult they trust.

This can include a Head of Year/Key Stage, Form Tutor, School Counsellor, or another member of staff in school. They will not be shocked by what they hear, they will not do anything without keeping you informed and they will offer the help that you need.

If you tell someone your worries and they don't hear you the first time or will not listen, tell them again or talk to somebody else you trust.

What happens if I tell someone something?

The idea of talking about what's happening in your life can be scary. If you or someone you know is being abused or harmed in some way, you might be worried about what will happen if you tell someone. Don't be afraid to ask questions.

You control how much information you want to share.

If you request confidentiality all members of school staff will respect this as far as possible. However, if we feel you, or someone else, is in danger, we may have to share this

information with other professionals. We would never do this without talking through different options with you first.

We always encourage you to seek advice and support when you need it.

The following pages give further information about support and agencies available to help.

Support in School

As a student, your Form Tutor, your Head of Year/Key Stage and any of the teachers and other adults in school are there to help you with anything that they can. In addition to this, there are also other options available that you can explore.

These include:

- support from other members of the Pastoral Team (Mrs Leek or Ms Green)
- counselling sessions with the school counsellors
- peer mentoring with Year 12 Well-Being Prefects
- activities in the Well-Being Hub
- group workshops on well-being topics
- appointment with the school nurse

Please pop in to the Hub or use the following link to book a short slot to discuss what support is best:

<https://calendar.app.google/RWRPwjyDtSd2sbU47>

Note, counselling services are confidential unless there are safeguarding issues involved. Appointments with counsellors will take place in the Health and Well-Being Hub.

We also have a SENCO (coordinator for students with special educational needs and disabilities) who you can meet with.

Support outside of School

You might want to access support outside of school. If so, you may want to approach your GP. Talking to a GP may feel daunting, but it can be one of the best ways to access help if you have concerns about your physical and/or mental health.

You are allowed to have an appointment with your GP on your own, and you don't necessarily need to tell your parent/carer that you are doing so. Even if your parent/carer comes with you to the appointment, you can ask them to leave and so speak to the GP alone. You can talk in confidence to your doctor and if you are worried you should talk to them about how this works. The exception to this is if they think that there is a danger that your safety or that of someone else may be at risk. Even if this is not the case, they might encourage you to tell someone like your parent or carer, or they can speak to them for you if you would prefer that. This is because it can be important for those looking after you to know what's going on, as they may be able to help or support you.

You can be referred to CAMHS and other mental health services through your GP. CAMHS stands for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service and it is a service provided by the NHS. There is at least one CAMHS service in almost every borough in London, including one in Barnet. CAMHS teams are made up of a range of different people, such as nurses, therapists, psychiatrists, psychologists, support workers and other specialists, such as eating disorder specialists. The services offered by CAMHS in each borough may differ slightly. To find out more information about Barnet CAMHS, visit <https://www.barnetlocaloffer.org.uk/pages/mental-health-zone/how-to-get-specialist->

[help](#). You can find your nearest CAMHS, as well as more information about the service in general, at <https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/your-guide-to-support/guide-to-camhs>.

Kooth is a free, safe and anonymous online support for young people and can be accessed at www.kooth.com. You can find more information about Kooth in the 'National Services' section later in this booklet.

If you are in immediate crisis, you can text 'Shout' to 85258 and a trained Crisis volunteer will text you back to give you support (<https://giveusashout.org/>).
If you are in immediate or imminent danger then you should always phone 999.

The next pages set out some other external services that can offer a range of support.

Barnet Services - Sexual Health

Vale Drive Clinic:

free screening, treatment + advice for STIs; contraception + emergency contraception; pregnancy testing

Tel: 020 3317 5252

Address: Vale Drive, Barnet EN5 2ED

Web: <https://www.sexualhealth.cnwl.nhs.uk/clinics/vale-drive-primary-care-centre/>

Barnet Services - Drugs, Alcohol and Smoking

Barnet Young People's Drug + Alcohol Service: provides advice, information and support to those aged up to 18 who struggle with drug or alcohol problems

Tel: 0300 303 2866

Web: <https://www.changegrowlive.org/barnet>

Barnet Stop Smoking Service: provides free advice and support to people who want to stop smoking

Tel: 0800 382 2784 [freephone]

Barnet Services - Emotional Wellbeing/General

Canada Villa, Mill Hill: confidential drop-in service staffed by experienced Youth Workers able to give info and help with things such as careers; drugs and alcohol; sexual health and contraception; housing; careers; and access to mental health support

Tel: 020 8359 5281

Address: Pursley Road, Mill Hill, NW7 2BU

Web: <https://www.nhs.uk/services/service-directory/canada-villa-youth-centre/N10504514>

National Services

Al-Alon: helping you cope with a parent/carer who drinks too much.

Tel: 02074030888

Web: www.al-anonuk.org.uk

Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families: children's mental health charity; website contains lots of resources and links to support

Web: www.annafreud.org

Anti-Bullying helping young people cope with being a victim of bullying.

Web: <https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/>

b-eat: a national charity that helps people who struggle with disordered eating.

Tel: 0808 801 0711 (youth helpline) / 0808 801 0677 (adult helpline)

Email: fyp@b-eat.co.uk

Web: www.b-eat.co.uk

Brook: advice about sex for under 25-year-olds

Tel: 0300 123 7123 [national sexual healthline] [free]

Web: <https://www.brook.org.uk/>

Charlie Waller Memorial Trust: a national charity helping young people to cope with depression and to maintain emotional wellbeing (includes lots of useful resources)

Web: <https://www.charliewaller.org/>

Childline: a support line for children and young people, helping with any worries or difficulties

Tel: 0800 1111 [freephone and does not show up on a phonebill]

Web: www.childline.co.uk

Cruse: helping you cope with the death of someone you love

Tel: 0808 808 1677 [free]

Web: <https://www.cruse.org.uk/>

Forced Marriage Unit: providing help and legal advice about forced marriage

Tel: 020 7008 0151 (in hours); if out of hours, call 020 7008 1500 & and ask for the Global Response Team

Website: www.fco.gov.uk/en/fco-in-action/nationals/forced-marriage-unit

FRANK: helping young people answer questions about drugs.

Tel: 0300 123 6600 [free]

Web: www.talktofrank.com

Kidscape: helping children and young people cope with bullying.

Web: www.kidscape.org.uk

Kooth: offering free, safe and anonymous advice and online counselling for young people.

Web: www.kooth.com

LGBT Switchboard: helping people to challenge discrimination against the LGBT+ community.

Tel: 0300 3300 630

Web: www.switchboard.lgbt

The Mix: advice and support for young people about a whole range of issues; also offers one-to-one chats; a telephone helpline; an email service; and telephone counselling

Tel: 0808 808 4994

Web: www.themix.org.uk

NHS Choices an NHS website providing information and advice specifically for young people who live, work or study in London.

Web: <https://www.thegoodpractice.london/nhs-choices-health-links>

NHS Go: a website acting as the online 'front door' to the NHS, providing information and advice about a range of different health problems, and how to access help

Web: www.nhs.uk

Tel: 111 (for non-emergency health problems)

NSPCC: a national charity helping children and young people affected by abuse and/or mental health problems

Web: www.nspcc.org.uk

Samaritans: helping people to cope with sadness and/or suicidal thoughts.

Tel: 116 123

Web: www.samaritans.org

SANE: helping you answer questions about mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Tel: SANELINE: 0300 304 70000

Web: www.sane.org.uk

thinkuknow: helping people who are worried about the people contacting them online.

Website: www.thinkuknow.co.uk

(You can also report online sexual abuse to the police at www.ceop.gov.uk.)

Stonewall: a national charity campaigning for rights for and offering support to LGBT+ people.

Tel: 08000 50 20 20 [free]

Website: www.stonewall.org.uk

Young Minds a national charity offering advice and support to children and young people, as well as their parents and carers, who struggle with mental health problems.

Website: <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/>

If you notice any incorrect information in this guide, please inform Mrs Leek.

ANNEX: GUIDANCE FROM FORMER STUDENT 'MENTAL HEALTH AMBASSADORS'

Although we would always ultimately encourage you to seek advice from a trusted adult, so that they can take responsibility for making sure that you are safe, it is often very reassuring and helpful to talk to friends first about any concerns you have. This may be because they have experienced similar things themselves, they may have a useful objective perspective to offer and/or because they may simply be very empathetic listeners.

We have some fantastic and passionate students who are working closely with members of staff to reflect on and find ways to improve the whole-school approach to mental health. Some of these ambassadors have written the very wise advice below about a number of issues addressed in this booklet which we wanted to share:

MENTAL HEALTH

There are a number of simple, everyday things that you can do to look after your mental health. Here are some ideas:

- *Talk about how you are feeling.* Bottling up your worries or concerns will not help you, and sharing how you are feeling with another person, whether this is a friend, a parent/carer, a teacher, a GP, or another trusted person can make your problems seem more manageable. It is always good to be truthful about how you are feeling and what's bothering you.
- *Exercise.* Getting active – whether that's dancing, running, walking, swimming or something else entirely – can make you feel calmer, more relaxed, more ready to concentrate and happier. You don't need to be a sporty person, and even gentle exercise can help you to keep well. Try to build exercise into your daily routine, but don't over-do it.
- *Eat well.* Eating a healthy, balanced diet is good for both your body and your mind. Remember also to drink lots of water.
- *Keep in touch with loved ones.* Connecting with people makes you feel good and isolating yourself from others can make you feel lonely, unhappy and worried. Try talking to someone new, asking someone how they are and really listening to what they tell you, or having a face-to-face conversation with a friend instead of sending a text.
- *Do something you're good at.* Having hobbies that are not related to schoolwork are a great way to unwind and relax, and also help to improve your confidence and self-esteem. Try to build these hobbies into your routine: they will give you something to look forward to and space to unwind.
- *Sleep properly.* Sleep is so important but is often something that we neglect. People who do not get enough sleep are likely to feel angrier, more irritable and more stressed and are more likely to focus on negatives. Teenagers really need between 8 and 9 hours of sleep a night. Try unwinding or relaxing before you go to bed so that it is easier to go to sleep, and don't exercise, work hard or look at screens for at least half an hour before you go to bed. You can calculate a time that you should be going to sleep based on your sleep cycles at <https://sleepytime.cc/>.

- *Accept who you are.* This is a difficult thing to do, but it is so worth it. Accept that you are a human being just like any other, and so will make mistakes and have flaws, but this does not mean that you are not an amazing and worthy individual. Accepting yourself can be very hard, especially if others make negative comments about you, because as a society we don't really value self-esteem and often confuse it with arrogance, which it is not. See the 'ideas to help with low self-esteem' below to find some more tips on how you can accept yourself.
- *Take a break.* It often feels like we are expected to always be busy or working, and this often means that we end up neglecting ourselves. However, it is also important to make time to relax and unwind. If you make time to relax every day you will find that it becomes easier, and you will also find it easier to cope with stressful situations. Relaxation could be through exercise, a hobby that you enjoy, using specific relaxation techniques, meditation, or a combination of these things. The website www.helpguide.org/articles/stress/relaxation-techniques-for-stress-relief.htm has some good relaxation techniques, and there are many free meditation apps. Two recommended ones are Headspace, which has a free 'Take 10' programme, and 'Stop, Breathe, and Think', which is also available as a web app.
- *Ask for help.* Asking for help is not weak – in fact, it is one of the strongest and bravest things to do. There is more information about how to get help from a variety of different sources in this booklet.
- *Care for others.* Helping other people can make you feel valued and can help to improve your self-esteem. Caring for others can be something as simple as helping a friend or stranger, caring for a pet, or donating money to charity. Volunteering can also help you to stay mentally healthy – look out for opportunities in your local area, such as at a community garden or care home, or through school.
- *Take notice of the present.* You have probably heard of mindfulness, or living in the present, and although mindfulness may not be something that you are used to practising, it can help you to feel calmer, more realistic and more able to make decisions. Meditation can help you to become more mindful, but it's not the only way: just taking a bit of time to focus on what's going on around you can help. Take some time to enjoy the moment and the environment around you, and to feel grateful for the good things in your life. Here are a few ideas: get a plant for your workspace; have a 'clear the clutter' day; take notice of how your friends are feeling or acting; take a slightly route on your journey to or from school; visit a new place in your area.
- *Remember that you are important and try not to compare yourself to others.* This is very hard, especially in a competitive environment such as school. Try to remember that just because other people are achieving things it doesn't mean that you aren't as well: everyone does things at different speeds, and **everyone** is an important and worthy individual. Try to sit down and think of positive things about yourself, and things that other people value about you – this might feel odd at first, but it is **not** arrogant or vain, simply realistic. Remind yourself that you are amazing, and that everyone else is too! Celebrate small achievements, even if it feels like they are nothing.
- *Challenge yourself.* Set yourself non-academic targets that you know you can achieve, because achieving them will challenge you to learn a new skill and will improve your confidence and self-esteem.

It might feel strange or difficult to do these things at first, especially if you are not used to making time to look after yourself. But they are all helpful and will help to keep you mentally healthy and happy.

DEALING WITH STRESS AND WORRY

We all face periods of stress or worry at some point in our lives, and this is totally normal. What is important is that we know how to deal with and handle stress and worry, so that we can build our resilience and make sure that it doesn't impact our day-to-day lives. You can use many of the ideas listed above to help you when you are feeling stressed or worried, and here are some more ideas to help you:

- Try to work out what exactly is worrying you. It is easy to feel generally overwhelmed and stressed, but this sort of feeling can be very hard to tackle. If you try breaking your worries down into specific problems, it can make them feel more manageable and makes it easier to deal with them.
- Talk to someone about how you are feeling. You might feel like your worries are silly or insignificant, but they're probably not, and anything that is bothering you is important. Talking to a friend can help and talking to an adult such as those in school, your parent/carer or another trusted adult, or using a counselling service such as Kooth can make you feel calmer and more able to tackle what is worrying you.
- Don't forget to look after yourself. When you are worried or stressed it is easy to forget to do basic things such as eating and sleeping. However, it is especially important to keep doing these things when you are worried or stressed. It is also important to practise self-care, such as doing things that you enjoy and making time to relax.
- Practise thought-stopping techniques. A worried brain often makes the situation seem worse than it is, and can make worries spiral out of control, leading to a thought pattern that can go something like this: 'I don't have enough time to do all the things I need to do, so I won't get everything done, so I'll do badly, so I'll do worse than other people, so my teachers will be angry, so other people are better than me, so I'm a bad person, so I won't achieve what I think I should achieve, so I'll never achieve anything in my whole life and am therefore a terrible human being.....'
- Looking back we can see that this sort of thinking is completely unrealistic, but when we are worried we often take it at face value and believe it, making us feel even worse. Notice your thoughts and question them: are they realistic? what is the evidence for and against them? how much do you believe them? what would you say to a friend who said this about themselves? what can you say to yourself when you start thinking like this? At first it is often helpful to write down these thoughts and the answers to these questions, until over time the thought-stopping process becomes automatic.
- Prioritise. It might seem like you have everything to do and no time to do it, but by prioritising tasks you can work out what needs to be done now and what can be done later.
- Practise meditation and mindfulness. As explained earlier, meditation and mindfulness can help you to stay calm, especially in times of stress.
- In times of stress, try the grounding method '5 4 3 2 1'. Find 5 things that you can see, 4 things that you can hear, 3 things that you can touch, 2 things that you can smell and

1 thing that you like about yourself. This can help to keep you grounded and bring your attention to the present.

- Exercise. Exercising is a great way to work off anxious energy. It is very difficult to get things done when you are stressed or worried, and exercising is an excellent way of clearing your mind and helping you to concentrate.
- Make a plan. Planning how you are going to do something or how you are going to tackle something can help you to stop worrying about it. It's best if you've already become good at using thought-stopping techniques before you make a plan, otherwise the plan could just turn into another source of worry.
- Find a non-academic hobby and try volunteering. Finding a hobby that you are good at and enjoy will give you something to take your mind off work and help you to feel calmer and building it into your routine will give you something to look forward to. Volunteering or helping others in another way is very rewarding and can help you to feel better about yourself.
- **Keep a realistic mindset.** You are an important and worthy human being. **Everything will be ok** – you may face challenges, but you will also have happiness, and even if things seem bad right now, there are **always** better things to come. **You are not alone.**

Dealing with exam pressure in particular:

- Try not to talk about exams or grades at school: although it might seem like everyone is doing it, it does not improve the school environment, and can make you feel stressed, unhappy or not as good as other people. Try making an agreement with your friends that you will not discuss how long you have revised for, what you think the exam will be about, what the exam was about, or what marks you got and how you feel about them. You may find that you actually have more interesting conversations, and it will help everyone to feel calmer.
- It is always more important to make time to look after yourself and to make sure that you are happy and healthy than it is to have stellar exam results, no matter what other people might say.

SELF ESTEEM

We all have times where we feel better or worse about ourselves, but if you find that you are constantly thinking negative things about yourself or disliking yourself for who you are then this is a problem. We sometimes confuse self-esteem with arrogance but, in reality, having high self-esteem makes it easier to cope when things go wrong and allows us to accept ourselves and become more peaceful and open-minded.

If I have high self-esteem, does that mean I'm arrogant?

Many people think this, but it is actually false. People who have high self-esteem are able to be kind to others because they know that in doing so they won't take away from the kindness that they give to themselves. They realise that everyone is different and don't hold this against people, because they understand that just as they themselves are worthy and brilliant human beings, so is everyone else, and difference interests them. They try not to be jealous when other people achieve things or let this reflect upon themselves: they realise that other people have qualities and talents that they themselves do not possess,

and that this works both ways – they have talents that the other person does not have, and both people are equally valid.

How can I improve my self-esteem?

High self-esteem doesn't happen overnight, but there are things that you can do to help you build up your self-esteem. All the ideas in the 'looking after your mental health' section of this booklet can help, and here are some more specific ideas:

- Use the thought-stopping technique explained in the 'ideas to help you with stress and worry' section to help you challenge negative thoughts about yourself. Try to work out where these thoughts come from and challenge them when they appear in your mind. Constantly remind yourself that you are worthy, valued, and loved, even when you don't feel like it.
- Forgive yourself. It can be difficult to forgive ourselves for our perceived 'failings', but only by doing this are we able to feel comfortable and happy with who we are. Learn from your mistakes and apologise when you upset people, trying to see the situation from their point of view as best you can, but move on, reminding yourself that you cannot change the past, only the future.
- Connect with people who make you feel good about yourself. People who are positive, non-judgemental and supportive will always make you feel better and more valued than people who are negative and judgemental. Try speaking to new people and connecting with people who have similar interests to you, for example through clubs.
- Don't make self-deprecating comments or jokes and encourage other people not to either. Lots of people make self-deprecating jokes, but they aren't funny and can make the environment toxic and unhappy, especially at school. Try focusing on what went well in a situation and compliment other people (preferably on things not related to grades or appearance). Positivity is often catching, and can make the environment much happier, kinder and calmer.
- Focus on positives. This can be so difficult, but really is worth it. Every day try thinking of at least three things that went well or made you happy; perhaps write them down. Soon it will become easier for you to keep a positive mindset.
- Accept who you are. You are a person, just like any other, and just like any other person you are unique, special, and valued. It can be hard to remember this, and hard to accept yourself for who you are, but try to remember that all humans have flaws and things that they find difficult – these do not take away from your worth or brilliance.
- Write down the things that you like about yourself and look back on them when you are feeling down. You could try an activity with some of your close friends where you write letters or send texts telling each other why you love and appreciate them – it may sound like it would be awkward, but it can be a great experience and encourage positivity and kindness. It's also ok to pick out areas that you would like to better yourself in (e.g. 'I would like to be kinder'), as long as you also have things that you already like about yourself (e.g. 'I am resilient'). You can write down the things that you like about yourself, or quotes or words that keep you inspired, on post-it notes or pieces of paper and stick them in places you often see them, such as above your bed.
- Challenge yourself and set goals. Going outside your comfort zone can be an incredibly rewarding experience. Trying new things and completing non-academic

goals can help you to feel calmer and happier, as well as taking your mind off school and work.

- Help others and volunteer: not only can it make you feel calmer, it can also make you feel valued.
- Be aware that there's no such thing as 'perfect'. We are always striving to be the best, to get 100% in everything and to have an amazing life, but it simply isn't possible. Remember that things will not always go to plan and that everyone achieves things at different speeds, and this is ok. There are different types of achievement and success, even if they're not things that we talk about, and the most important thing is always to feel happy and calm inside yourself.
- Remember that it's ok to have bad days, and everyone has them. The most important thing is knowing how to deal with them so that you don't get stuck in a slump.
- Celebrate other people's successes; realise they don't detract from your own. Other people will be better and more talented than you at certain things. That's ok! You will be better and more talented at some things too. And just because someone else is good at something, it doesn't mean you're not; more than one person is allowed to be good at the same subject or activity. It doesn't mean that you are not a worthy human being, or that other people aren't worthy too.

ACCESSING SUPPORT FROM A GP

It can be very daunting to speak to a GP, but it is often a very important step to getting help.

It is useful to have made notes about what you want to say to your GP before you go. These should include: how you are feeling; how long this has been going on for; specific problems you are having, such as a lack of motivation, self-harm, eating problems or relationship problems; any factors that might be influencing the way that you are feeling, such as problems at home or problems with alcohol or drugs; and what you would like to happen next. The GP will ask you questions, and you should always answer these as truthfully as you can. They should tell you what services are available, what they are going to do to help you, and how you can help yourself in the meantime.

There is a very useful website called Doc Ready (www.docready.org/#/home), which gives you information and advice on talking to a GP about mental health, explains your rights, and has free software in which you can build a checklist for the things you would like to talk about.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT A FRIEND

If you're worried about a friend it can be really difficult to know what to say. They may tell you about how they are feeling, or they may not, and in either situation it can feel hard to know what to do. Remember that it's not up to you to 'fix' your friend. You are not a professional, and you are not qualified to give them professional help - all you can do is be as supportive and loving as you can.

Letting your friend know that you're thinking of them and doing little things, such as sending them a text, doing something enjoyable with them or telling them about your day, can help them to feel more valued and included. Think about what you say in front of

other people – we constantly absorb what those around us say and you may be putting down your friend, even if you don't realise it.

Remind your friends as often as you can why they are valued and why you love them, and remind them that your love for them is not determined by what grades they get or how they look (even though these sorts of things are often what we focus on about ourselves). Giving compliments might feel strange at first, but soon it will come naturally and it will make the environment in which you are in happier and more loving, and therefore better for everyone.

Remind your friend that you care about them and that they can talk to you whenever they need to. You don't need to have advice or answers; just giving them a space to talk and listening to their concerns can make them feel a bit better.

It can be hard to know what to say if someone tells you that they are struggling with their mental health. Encourage your friend to talk to a trusted adult such as a parent/carer, an adult in school or one of the counsellors, to use a service such as Kooth or to call a helpline – this might not be what they want to hear, especially if they don't feel like they can pull themselves away from their problems, but in the long run it is likely to be very helpful and may prevent many further problems.

Conversely, if you do not feel you are in a position to support your friend then you should also tell them that and encourage them to seek help elsewhere. It's ok to tell your friend that you don't have the answers. As it says elsewhere in this booklet, if you are worried about one of your friends at school you can also talk to Mrs Leek, Ms Green, your Head of Year/Key Stage or your Form Tutor. They should be able to provide more information and advice about how you can help your friend, and about how that friend can access help themselves.

If you are very worried about a friend who is or appears to be at risk of harm, you should always talk to a trusted adult.