

Safeguarding at More House

Parent Bulletin December 2016

Mental Health Bulletin

Mental health will affect 1 in 4 of us at some point in our lives and right now, the under 25 age category is particularly vulnerable. Most people react to mental health symptoms, rather than take preventative steps. This is why More House school as an organisation is so determined to play its role in preventing problems occurring by promoting good mental health as well as physical wellbeing.

Ideally, your child will be getting around 60 minutes of physical activity per day. This could include walking part of their journey to school, taking the family pet out for a walk, or joining one of the many extra-curricular activities that More House offers. A healthy, balanced diet is critical in achieving all round well-being. There is an abundance of information on the internet, with websites such as the www.bbcgoodfood.com being excellent in providing recipe ideas. Staff members routinely witness the academic enhancements that result from a routine incorporating plenty of water, the avoidance of calorific and processed snacks and eating the recommended 5-7 portions of fruit and vegetables per day.

Finally, an issue perhaps more pertinent in today's social media age than ever, is that of sleep. It is recommended that teenagers get around 9 hours of sleep per night, whilst current studies show that they are getting on average just 7.5. That may sound like a lot to an adult but a teenager's sleep needs are very different to those of their parents.

Getting 8-10 hours of sleep per night has huge benefits on your child's academic performance, enabling better concentration, focus and improving memory function. It also helps to promote better mood and combat stress. Small actions like enforcing a night time routine, using an alarm clock rather than a mobile phone and a 'digital blackout' 1-2 hours before bed can help your child to wind down after a long and stressful day and promote a better quality of sleep.

What does the school do to promote good mental health?

At More House we offer a very wide range of extra-curricular activities, tailored to different age groups, which promote well-being, creativity, good health and social skills. Girls have an impressive array of sporting activities, music groups and lunchtime clubs in which to get involved, all of which will have a beneficial effect on their personal development. Sixth form girls do a six week mindfulness course as part of the curriculum.

Our comprehensive Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education programme promotes self-esteem, resilience, good nutrition and general well-being.

We recently introduced a programme in which a group of year 10 pupils have been trained as peer mentors to help younger girls overcome some of the challenges that they may encounter as teenagers.

How can my daughter access support at school?

At More House we pride ourselves on the quality of our pastoral care. There are a number of ways in which girls can seek help or support. They can of course speak to any member of staff. Their form tutor and assistant form tutor (or, in the case of sixth form, personal progress tutor) will know their tutees very well and are always on hand to provide support.

Girls are able to communicate concerns via the pupil concern form on Firefly if they prefer. The members of staff responsible for safeguarding (including mental health issues) are Mr Keeley (Designated Safeguarding Lead) and Miss Brown (Assistant Designated Safeguarding Lead).

We have a school counsellor who works three days a week. Girls or parents are able to speak to Miss Brown if they would like further information about this service. More House is promoting good mental health by way of a 'well-being week' beginning 16th January 2017. More information will follow at the start of the Spring term.

What can I do to promote good mental health in my daughter?

Top Ten Tips

1. Model good mental health habits such as getting regular exercise, plenty of sleep and relaxing.
2. Make sure they get enough sleep: sleep is the one of the building blocks of mental health and well-being.
3. Encourage your daughter to exercise.
4. Encourage creative outlets such as art or music.
5. Provide a space of their own: girls of all ages benefit from having some space of their own where they can think.
6. Talk about their troubles: a problem shared is a problem halved.
7. Help them relax: make sure your daughter has a hobby or activity that helps her to relax.
8. Good routines: put in place routines for getting up, coming home, eating meals and going to bed.
9. Foster volunteering and helpfulness: encourage your child to be connected to and help others in any way possible.
10. If you see your child constantly stressed or overwhelmed by events, change the mood by going to a movie, joining them in a game or seeking other ways to have some fun.

You can find further information here:

Young Minds Website: http://www.youngminds.org.uk/for_parents/worried_about_your_child