



ST. ALBAN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Learning together, side by side with God.

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Head teacher Andrew Monaghan Deputy Head teacher Kate Johnson

Monday 6th January 2020

Dear Parents / Carers,

As you are already aware, St Alban's Voluntary Academy has been working towards being accredited with the Carnegie Centre of Excellence for Mental Health in Schools Award.

The Carnegie School of Education, based at Leeds Beckett University, along with Minds Ahead CIC have developed the School Mental Health Award to give schools and academies a framework for whole school mental health development. By embracing the ideals of the award, we are demonstrating a deep commitment to working towards excellent practice as we place the mental health and wellbeing of our pupils and staff at the core of our school. This is alongside our commitment to having a rich whole school culture where all members of our school community can thrive.

Further information about the award can be found on the Leeds Beckett University website <http://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/schoolmh>

In order to measure the impact of an element of the Mental Health in Schools programme, staff, parents and pupils completed a wellbeing survey at the start of the programme and we are now inviting all groups to repeat the surveys. The parent wellbeing survey will be available to complete at the Parent Evening sessions in March.

As a school community, we have developed our practices in relation to mental health and wellbeing over the past few months in a variety of ways and wanted to share a few of those developments with you:

- **MH Governor** – One of our governors, Stuart Olivier, has been nominated as having a focus on MH and wellbeing within the school community. He can be contacted through our school office.
- **PSHE Matters** – We have invested in a new scheme of work for Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE). This scheme is used throughout the school from year 1 to year 6. It provides a structured and up to date approach to PSHE and in doing so it improves pupils' emotional literacy, provides knowledge on how to stay safe and healthy and helps to prepare pupils for life and work by developing 'skills for life'. All of this is in line with the new statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) for Relationships, Health and Sex Education that will be in place by September 2020.

- **Zones of Regulation** – This is another approach that we use across the school from years 1 to 6 that is focussed on recognising and reacting to a range of emotions and learning how we can help ourselves to regulate our emotions. It equips the children with the language and skills to identify how they are feeling and strategies to use to deal with their emotions at school or at home. If you would like to know more about this, please speak to your child’s class teacher.
- **Whole school themes** – On World Mental Health Day, we launched a ‘**Happiness**’ theme across the school. The children are regularly prompted to recognise what makes them feel happy and to focus on positive thoughts. **A good idea at home would be to spend five minutes as a family talking to each other about what has made you happy. Ask each other the question ‘What has made you smile today?’ This could then lead in to a night time prayer, thanking God for the good things that have happened throughout the day.**
The theme of ‘Happiness’ will be continued throughout this academic year with ideas from a whole school approach ‘Spread the Happiness’ by Shonette Basson-Wood, an international speaker.
- **Peer Mediators** – A small team of children have been trained to support their peers at play-time to resolve small conflicts between groups or individuals. They are supported by adults with this task.
- **Nurture support and nurture area** – We have increased our nurture support to enable us to help more children that are in need of extra emotional support. In school we have created a space dedicated to this where a variety of sessions can take place.
- **Creative Expressive Therapy (CET)** – We are extremely lucky to have made links with Derby University and as a result we have a third year student who comes in to school to work with small groups of identified children to help boost their confidence and self-esteem using creative media such as Art, Music and Dance.

Some useful website links can be found below:

Young Minds <https://youngminds.org.uk/>

Place2Be <https://www.place2be.org.uk/>

Heads Together <https://www.headstogether.org.uk/>

Mental Health Foundation <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/>

A useful website for parents and carers:

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/make-it-count-guide-for-parents-and-carers>

(Adults) Complete a short quiz by Every Mind Matters (NHS) to create your own Mind Plan that provides you with tips and advice specifically for you.

https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/your-mind-plan-quiz/?WT.tsrc=Search&WT.mc_id=Brand&gclid=EAIaIQobChMIjccAtu7f5gIVxrTtCh35GQ_rEAAYASAAEgLiDPD_BwE

A Youtube video on wellbeing - children

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ju2G3KtKNA>

A Youtube video on wellbeing - adults

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RJqgHalbXs>

Just a reminder too about **Qwell** – a free online Mental Health and Wellbeing platform for adults that offers articles and advice on a range of issues, as well as providing the opportunity to chat to an online counsellor confidentially and to also be part of a supportive online community and live forums.

www.qwell.io

As part of our focus on mental health and wellbeing, we want to support our whole community so as well as the children, we aim to support our parents and staff as much as possible. If you would like to discuss any of the above in more detail or if you feel we can be of any support to you and your family, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Johnson

Deputy Head teacher and Pastoral Lead