



### **'Promoting resilience, courage and respect'**

*The Rupert House pastoral team highlight the ways in which the school is - promoting mental health and wellbeing among its pupils and staff.*

Research has proven that mental health and academic performance are intrinsically linked. The pastoral care and wellbeing of our pupils is at the core of everything we do at Rupert House and every member of staff has a pastoral responsibility.

Growth mindset is fostered throughout all age groups and aspects of school life at Rupert House where the children are encouraged to take risks, learn from mistakes and overcome setbacks. Resilience, one of our school values, together with courage, creativity and respect, is promoted throughout the whole school and the students are praised for their efforts and willingness to persist when they are finding something difficult.

Staff take time to listen to pupils and to each other. In addition to the form teachers, our Mental Health First Aid qualified staff members offer 'Winnie Talk Time' sessions to all children who want to express themselves or confide in a trusted adult. Quincy, our trained assistance dog, is also happy to lend his ear to listen and he makes all the children smile. To support this we have staff who are trained in developing emotional literacy.

Important contributors to wellbeing such as healthy eating, connecting with others and the community, learning new things, and being physically active are constantly encouraged at Rupert House. Our 'Move to Think' initiative ensures that the children start their day with physical activity (e.g. yoga, running, skipping) which energises them and facilitates increased focus in lessons, in addition to mindfulness sessions, which mentally prepare pupils for the day ahead.

Rupert House pupils are also given regular opportunities to connect with the community by taking part in local events, raising money or collecting donations for charity and visiting local care homes.

Kindness to others and to oneself (which is one of the main ingredients of good mental health) is encouraged throughout school life. The children are supported in developing their own self-care strategies such as spending time in nature, taking exercise, making music, engaging in the creative arts and practising mindfulness.

As pupils progress through the school, they explore a range of issues in their PSHE and citizenship lessons, which place emphasis on boosting their self-esteem, self-knowledge and self-confidence. This is delivered via a structured programme of work called Jigsaw. This programme also focuses on improving emotional literacy, which is helpful in developing good communication skills and nurturing respectful relationships. Wellbeing sessions are embedded in the curriculum for pupils in Year 5 and Year 6.

Our dedicated pastoral team offers weekly sessions called 'The Happy Hub' to small groups of prep children to promote mental health and wellbeing. These are relaxing and fun sessions. This initiative covers different aspects of mental health such as self-esteem and resilience, friendship and teamwork, managing strong emotions and dealing with stress and anxiety. The groups are flexible to accommodate the needs of the children who develop their emotional intelligence through fun activities.

Our Staff Wellbeing Leads regularly organise activities to promote staff wellbeing which, in turn, are an essential part of supporting our pupils.

Finally, Rupert House offers parents resources, webinars and presentations with external speakers on different aspects of children's mental health. This week Rupert House hosted a webinar with Dr Mei Simmons, an experienced child and adolescent psychiatrist working in the NHS in Oxford and author of 'A guide to the Mental Health of children and young people'. She shared valuable tips to support children's mental health with parents and staff. A recording of the webinar will be available shortly.

The partnership between school and parents is crucial to promote the wellbeing of the children effectively. We will continue to provide relevant and interesting resources to help you support your child's mental health in the Big Blue Door. We hope that you feel you can come and discuss anything relating to your children's wellbeing anytime with us.

Mrs Brown, Mrs Newman, Mrs Harris, Mrs Morley, Mrs Lamb, Mrs Pettifer, Mr Wuestner, Mrs Sheriff