

# Enhanced Healthy School Stories 2019/21



Enhanced  
Healthy  
Schools

# Southend High School for Boys

The lowest scoring questions for all groups were: I've had energy to spare and I've been feeling relaxed.

## What Training took place

### Via the EHWB Health School Award:

- Safe to Learn Course – Two members of staff
- Youth Mental Health First Aid – Four members of staff
- EWMHS- Helping the Anxious Child - Four members of staff
- Stonewall - Tackling bullying and language - One member of staff
- Sleep training - Two members of staff

Our link educational psychologist delivered information to staff on understanding the nervous system

We have explored a model based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, to identify when and what support may be required - this has been shared further via the EP Outreach YouTube channel.

In addition, members of the LSA team have completed a wide range of online courses/ training including:

- Meet the Mental Health Needs of Pupils with SEND
- Break the cycle of emotionally based school avoidance (school refusal)
- understanding depression, anxiety & CBT
- supporting students with bereavement
- support young people to break the cycle of self-harm
- Young people and their mental health
- Spot the warning signs of poor mental health
- Understand Anxiety
- Communicate calmly with a distressed child
- Understanding depression and low mood in young people

## What was the impact?

The school's knowledge base has increased, and a number of staff now feel more confident identifying and supporting those who are struggling with their mental health and wellbeing. When restrictions allow, this knowledge will be shared further, through pastoral and teaching teams.

When working with young people, we often refer to aspects of the nervous system and use this to help pupils understand why they might be feeling a certain way – we have also purchased a *Heartmath* sensor – this gives instant bio-feedback based on heart rate variability and we have used it with pupils to help them calm-down during a time of crisis, or prepare themselves for the day ahead.

As the profile of mental health and wellbeing is raised, and more staff explore CPD opportunities in this area, conversations and the sharing of ideas becomes more commonplace and embedded in our everyday approach to supporting pupils.



▲ The 'Den', a quiet, comfortable room that pupils may use if they are feeling overwhelmed



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▲ Covid-19 safe physical activity

## What activities / interventions were put in place?

SHSB was chosen as a 'trailblazer' school to host a Mental Health Support Team (MHST): We have two Trainee Educational Mental Health Practitioners based in the school one to two days a week to complete their training and offer individual and group support.

We have worked alongside the Educational Psychology service to offer small group interventions to help pupils struggling with anxiety and social communication needs.

We have a school counsellor who, under normal circumstances, is in school every day.

A small office space has been developed into the 'Den', a quiet, comfortable room

▼ 'Bootcamp' cookery course

that pupils may use if they are feeling overwhelmed. This has been used by a number of pupils and been of real benefit – so much so that we are expanding this provision with the development of a wellbeing room.

We have not let Covid-19 restrictions stop many of the activities that pupils find most beneficial - sports practices have been modified and re-arranged to allow pupils to safely participate in a wide range of extra-curricular sport, including cross-country, football, basketball and rugby. Likewise, we have made adjustments that have allowed inter-house sports competitions to continue, a particular highlight of which was House Cross-Country – a challenging course, including obstacles, was set-up on the school field and runners were cheered on by other pupils in their year-group. This event that really brought the school together at a difficult time.

Sixth form wellbeing activities have continued – students can choose from a range of activities, from bootcamp on the field, to cooking courses.

Throughout the lockdowns, we have endeavoured to keep pupils connected with school - in addition to the remote learning



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## ► Celebrating the Stonewall cake sale

provided house activities have continued, particular highlights being art and robotics.

Whilst Covid-19 has impacted opportunities over the past year, under normal circumstances there are number of staff social/wellbeing activities available, including: Yoga, badminton, 5-aside football, colouring club and prayer group. Throughout the year, end of term celebrations bring the whole staff together, with nearly all attending our staff Christmas meal and summer BBQ.

SHSB is very proud to have received the Equalities Award for our work in promoting equality and diversity within the school. This work has been driven by the SHSB Equality Group - a group of staff and pupils who have strived to raise awareness in the school community.

The group has created and presented assemblies on a range of issues, including: Disability History Month and how disability affects some of our students personally; Pride Month and LGBTQ+ issues; and Black History Month. Members have also organised several weeklong celebration events around school to promote matters of equality - these include: a Stonewall cake sale and students offering 'disability drop-ins' across several lunchtimes, to encourage other students to ask questions they perhaps may have felt uncomfortable asking previously.

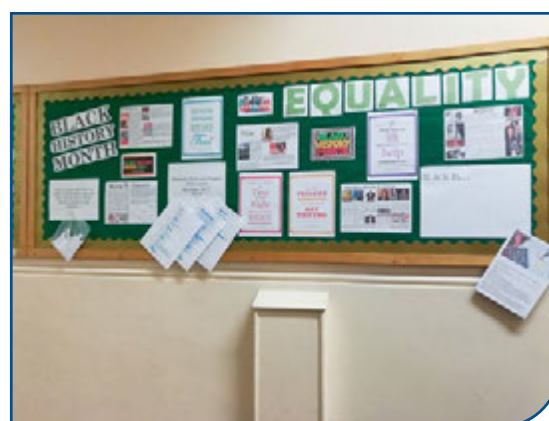
Events have also been organised to celebrate Black History Month over several years. We have had celebrations of black culture, music, fashion, and food as well as themed weeks. In these, students could spend their lunchtime engaging with black

## ▼ Celebrating Black History Month



culture such as watching films, trying on clothes, and attending food stalls where the money raised was donated to Sickle Cell charities. Many staff and students have reported these events as the highlight of the school calendar as they bring together our school community to share in each other's cultural heritage as well as engaging with topics we perhaps previously knew little about.

The equalities group aim to encourage every person in the school to feel part of the wider SHSB family and in doing so offer the community spirit, unity and drive for change which will encourage students to stand with them in fighting inequalities wherever and however they present themselves - whether it be in school or beyond.



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## What were their impact? What was achieved, and how did we know?

Extra-curricular activities have always been a very important part of school life at SHSB and pupils have been very happy to see them continue – large numbers attend, and this clearly has an impact on both their physical and mental health.

The EP, MHST and counselling provision have had a huge impact on the specialist support we are able to provide – all have met with a number of pupils, across all year-groups, and the feedback from these pupils has been overwhelmingly positive. They were also able to continue offering support remotely during the lockdown periods.

During the period of remote learning, in February 2021, all pupils were given the chance to complete the *Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale*. Alongside this survey, they were asked: *“Remember, we have lots of support at school - If you are worried, would like some help, would like to speak to someone or would just like to get something off your chest, please let us know here....”*

It was a powerful message in itself that nearly 750 pupils responded – key observations are summarised below:

- The overall scores are actually higher than October '19. This is perhaps skewed by higher scoring lower years, who did not take the survey previously, but the only year-group that scored lower overall than 2019 was Year 13 – further to this, a number of Year 13 alluded to anxiety that is being caused by uncertainty around exams/grades.
- Whilst there are different patterns within each year-group, the questions “I’ve been interested in new things” and “I’ve been feeling interested in other people” were low scoring for nearly all year groups (and noticeably lower than Oct. '19, where both questions were amongst the highest scoring).
- Two questions that scored particularly highly were: “I’ve been able to make up my own mind about things” and “I’ve been feeling loved”?
- It is also worth noting that the scores for the question “I have energy to spare” were much higher than when this question was asked in October 2019!
- It was both impressive and touching to read how eloquently some pupils expressed their feelings.

As a result of this survey, pastoral leaders were able to follow up with pupils who had particularly low scores or wrote something that may be a cause for concern. They have also celebrated those areas in which there were high scores and addressed those in which there was a general low score in virtual assemblies.

The data has been shared (anonymously) with the MHST, who are using it to produce a series of interventions for pupils, staff and parents, and the school counsellor and Educational Psychology service, who will be using this information to inform their support of pupils at SHSB.

## What will we do next?

There were a number of activities we had planned, that we were unable to complete due to Covid-19, we look forward to implementing these in the coming weeks and months. For example:

- Including a presentation from the Educational Psychology team in our Yr11 parents' evening, to provide information on supporting young people through the exam period.
- Lockdown hit before we were able to share the sleep training information with parents - we intend to run a workshop as soon as restrictions allow.
- Continue to develop our use of data collection to monitor wellbeing. The previous surveys have had a great response and been incredibly useful in focusing support
- As the Den has been so useful, we are developing a wellbeing hub – This room will include a chill-out area, as well as spaces pupils can use to work individually, or in groups. It is in a quiet part of the school and will be available throughout the day and after-school.



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We now also face the challenge of helping pupils re-connect with school life, returning from a range of contexts and circumstances. As with our support of mental health and wellbeing under 'normal' conditions, a tier-based approach is important - with specificity and intensity of interventions increasing with need. (At all stages the input and advice from specialists in this area - counsellors, MHSTs & the EP service - will be sought and used.)

## Environment/Culture:

- Ensure, where possible, social and physical distancing measures in place to ease anxieties around safety
- Encourage open discussion and opportunities to raise concerns
- Model positivity in outlook and language – pupils return in a position of strength, not deficit.

## Curriculum:

- Address aspects of anxiety and Mental Health (particularly in relation to Covid-19) in PSHE and tutor activities.
- Ensure staff and pupils know where or who to go to for further support.

## Group Support:

- For staff, pupils or both.
- Focused on specific areas of need
- Led by MHST or EP service

## One-to-One:

- Same basis as group support above, but for those who are experiencing the greatest difficulty.
- Working alongside the school's current counselling provision.

## Senior leader quote:

“Our commitment to our pupils is to the ‘whole person.’ An educated mind is nothing without a cultivated sense of self-awareness, wellbeing, and the capacity to make good choices. Our journey towards this goal continues with ever-increasing expertise.👏👏

**Dr R Bevan, Headteacher**

## Parent quote:

“When our son was suffering with anxiety and his mental health was in crisis, the SHSB SEND team stepped in to assist. They organised close LSA support at home and school, regularly checking in with him, adapting his work so he could understand what he was required to do and providing him with reassurance, along with access to the mental health team. He suffered from anxiety surrounding food and with the programme they put together this has improved and given him a huge sense of achievement. Without their help and support he would have struggled to cope, achieve and reach his potential.👏👏