



DECEMBER 2021—EDITION ONE

## WELL-BEING NEWSLETTER

Welcome to Stowmarket High School's first ever Oasis newsletter! We are really excited to offer you this place of positivity and update you on matters happening across the school, all affecting our mental health. With 2022 almost here, we are all now somewhat used to the fluctuating restrictions, and "new normal". We have all overcome so much and are showing great resilience in this testing time. High demands are upon us all and we find ourselves dealing with a huge range of competing priorities. Our aim is to offer help and support to parents, pupils and professionals in this half termly newsletter and we have some fantastic strategies you can try out immediately. We will be introducing our Well Being team soon and you can meet a few of them in this edition. We hope this newsletter will offer something for everyone. Have a great Christmas break and best wishes for the New Year

The Wellbeing Team

### Mental Health Senior Lead



As an Assistant Headteacher here at the school I have recently taken on the new role as senior mental health lead and will be working hard to develop and continually improve the school culture around mental health. My role will involve working side by side with our Safeguarding lead, Mr McLellan, to ensure that the students, parents and staff feel safe and supported. Helping people recognise the importance of everyday mental health and ensuring our community feel able to engage, feel connected and respond well to challenges in their lives is a key driving factor for me. Being mentally healthy isn't just about the absence of anxiety or feeling depressed, it's about being able to live a connected, engaged life day after day. We want our students and their families to feel ready and able to face the challenges the day brings, even if it isn't always with energy and gusto, but simply getting through the day—even that is a win. Mrs Broxton (Assistant Headteacher)

### Watch this space! Exciting news!

We are currently working with Suffolk Educational Psychologists to work through the Sandwell well-being charter mark. We will be sending out parent surveys and inviting you to focus groups to talk all things well-being across the school. We want to hear your voice!



Grace and Sophie



## Action for Happiness Calendars

We hope these are a source for ideas for how to bring some positive moments into your day-to-day lives, this month it's, 'Do Good December', all centred around acts of kindness.

[Action For Happiness](#)

## MIND: 12 Emotional Needs

To help you stay well, Suffolk Mind use an 'organising idea' that we all have physical and emotional needs and a set of skills and resources that we're born with to meet those needs.

Each edition I will add in one of the 12 Emotional needs that we need met in order to remain mentally healthy. This edition is about Emotional Connection:

Sharing an emotional connection with another being, whether it's a partner, close friend or relative, colleague or pet, is essential for mental health and wellbeing. And losing a person we are close to, human or animal, is distressing.

Warning signs which arise when our need for emotional connection is unmet can be seeking emotional intensity in other activities; overworking, gambling, drinking alcohol to excess or spending money we don't have on things we don't need.

A feature of modern life which is challenging for our mental health is that as societies have become more fragmented, and people's need for community is less well met, we tend to rely upon a smaller number of relationships. If these relationships breakdown we can find ourselves isolated and struggling to cope.

This means that we need to work on those relationships and not taking them for granted. We also need better knowledge of how to protect those relationships and keep them healthy.



## Meet (some) of the Team

Hi I'm Sophie and I work for The Mix Stowmarket, my role is as the Lead School's Youth Worker. I oversee all the work we do in High Schools and work alongside many students to support their emotional fitness and wellbeing, to help them thrive in school and wherever life may take them. I love finding new ways to help young people problem solve and am pretty good when people are in a panic. Some fun facts about me are:

- I used to work in the Spa & Health club industry so I can fix Jacuzzi's & swimming pools but also taught myself to do gel nails.
- I had a fantastic science teacher in sixth form who just so happens to be Mrs Broxton!



## Tips for Parents and Professionals

Show Empathy by using phrases such as 'I can see you're having a difficult time getting started' / 'I notice you're having trouble focusing right now'

Use tangible rewards sparingly. Maybe, instead help your child to develop intrinsic motivation by changing your language slightly (i.e. wow, you must be so proud of yourself' or 'I bet you're happy you did such a good job')







## OASIS Rooms



We are fortunate this year to have been able to develop an Oasis room for our students. This is a new space from where our well-being team will be based. This will provide a calm, nurturing environment for our students to work with their 1:1 support network and to feel safe, protected and calm. This space is away from the main building and consists of two rooms. The one pictured above is for use with 1:1 support, group workshops and also as a space for those whose emotions are dysregulated and need time to calm and reflect. The second room is exclusively for 1:1 support and workshops. There are systems and processes in place to refer students to our wellbeing team and for use of the Oasis rooms. As a parent you will be informed if your child is being supported by either using this room or if they have been referred for support.

### Meet (some) of the Team

Merry Christmas! My name is Grace and I work as a School Youth Worker and Drop-In Leader at The Mix Stowmarket. I help to provide both 1-2-1 and group support to students in schools focusing on their overall well-being. Our Drop-In sessions at The Mix Stowmarket are based around creating a safe and enjoyable environment for young adults to discover themselves. I am very fortunate to say that I love my job and take pride in helping others!

I have a degree in Primary Education with Special Educational Needs, alongside a specialism in English. I have previously worked in many mainstream, private and special needs settings from ages 4-18. I have also gained experience in recruitment roles and working with ex-offenders, helping them back into employment. My passions are sports, drama, and anything active!

I look forward to meeting many more students in the new year!



### **CALM Ambassadors Kem and Amber are on a mission to simplify self care**

Celebrities are campaigning for us all to look after ourselves better. If you would like a 'quick fix' of self care then head on over to the link and click on the random generator. This will give you something to do straight away, to look after YOU

[ITV2CALM](#)

### *Recommended Mental Health Apps*

**SAM—self help anxiety management**  
**Worry Box—Anxiety self help (Android only)**  
**Whats up (Android)**  
**Mindshift**  
**Fear Tools—Anxiety Aid**  
**ThinkNinja—designed for 10-18 year olds.**



## **The Mix Stowmarket - Working in partnership with Stowmarket High**

***Our promises: to see you, to hear you, to believe in you, to walk with you.***

The Mix is a youth work charity based in Stowmarket. We work with young people from across Mid Suffolk and beyond.

We run a multipurpose facility, a wide range of provisions for young people and have a trading arm that employs young people and invests its profit into the charity to enable us to continue to grow our impact.

We are very proud of our growing partnership with Stowmarket High School.

Our youth work in schools project is about being available for young people and to support them with any challenges they are facing. We do this through 1-1 coaching & mentoring, group work, breaktime drop ins and a range of wider initiatives delivered in partnership with the school.

If you see us around school, come and say hello!

<https://www.themixstowmarket.org>

### **THE MIX WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU**

What would you be interested in regarding activities/ Drop In ideas at The Mix?

Connect with the QR code and let them know



### **Meet (some) of the Team**

#### **Sam Petersen**

I have worked at The Mix Stowmarket for a little over 7 years. My role is Youth Work Director and I am immensely proud of the team and all they do to support, guide, inspire and empower young people.

A few quirky facts about me...

- I used to work as a chalet host in the Alps
- I was an extra in a James Bond movie
- I love learning and am currently training as a child and adolescent psychotherapeutic counselor





## Top 12 Tips for wellbeing at Christmas

Mental health doesn't take time off at Christmas, and with all the added stresses that can come with the festive season it's very important to care for your wellbeing.

### 1 Plan ahead

Avoid unnecessary stress over the festive season by planning as much as possible in the run up to Christmas and being careful not to take on too much. You're not being selfish by saying "no" to some things or asking for some help. For example, if you're hosting Christmas dinner, could you ask some of your guests to bring a starter or dessert?

### 2. Make time for you

At Christmas it can be all too easy to get swept up into other people's ideas of fun. It's important to make sure that you do something you want as well – this is your holiday too! If you know this will be hard, try booking something in advance or setting a free day or two aside just for you.

### 3. Avoid comparisons

If you do decide to use social media over the festive season, avoid comparing your experience to those of your friends. Remember that most people only share the best bits of their lives online and you don't know what's going on behind the smiling selfies and prezzie pics!

### 4. Pace yourself

Give yourself time to relax over the Christmas period – don't be afraid to take time out to go for a walk, listen to music or have a nap if you need it. If you're hosting, try to plan this in advance.

### 5. Get outside

Going for a wintery walk – even if it's just around the block – can be the perfect way to get some fresh air and exercise along with a change of place. Being in the same house for too long can get a bit intense, so a change of scenery will do everyone good!

### 6. Try to eat healthily

While it's normal to overindulge a bit over Christmas, try to keep your diet as balanced as possible with lots of fruit and vegetables. This will help you to avoid energy lows that can have an effect on your mood.

### 7. Alcohol in moderation

While a bit of alcohol can make you feel relaxed, don't forget that drinking too much can leave you feeling irritable and low. Drinking within the recommended guidelines means you'll get to enjoy a Christmas tipple, while reducing the negative effects on your mood. Alcohol can also play a big part in arguments and disagreements, so it's sensible to drink in moderation.

### 8. Get enough sleep

Feeling sleepy can also leave you feeling low, so try to keep to regular sleep patterns as much as possible over the Christmas period.

### 9. Talk to someone

If you're worried about Christmas or feel overwhelmed or under pressure, don't be afraid to talk to someone about it. Have a chat to someone you trust.

### 10. Keep active

Exercise can be great for mental health and there are still ways to keep it up over Christmas! Have a boogie to some festive classics or head outside for a walk in the fresh air. If we're lucky enough to have a white Christmas, you could even get some people together for a snowball fight or go sledding!

### 11. Christmas alone

If you're spending Christmas alone, have a think about what you want to do beforehand. You may decide to curl up with a favourite movie, book yourself a getaway or arrange to go to a lunch.

### 12. Volunteer

It's no secret – giving something back can help you feel good about yourself and there's no more perfect time to volunteer than around Christmas Head to [do-it.org](http://do-it.org) to check out current opportunities. There's even the option to volunteer from home too!

Sometimes in life  
you just need a hug.

No words, no advice,  
just a hug to make  
you feel better.

[tinybuddha.com](http://tinybuddha.com)

