



Guiseley School

How are You?

Hello to you all and hope you've had a good week. The last week or so has been very different and a refreshing change. Most of you know we have welcomed back year 10s into the school and it's been going very well and the students have been adapting fantastically! Mr Carney has written you all a letter in the light in the lockdown section in which he will be giving you more information. It really has felt like a big move forwards for us and one step closer back to school life as we knew it which is truly something to celebrate. For all you year 10's, you're doing brilliantly!



Self-Care: Social Connection

I have made a last minute change to this week's subject because this week has brought up on several occasions the importance of social connection. I will be looking at mindfulness next week but I just wanted to discuss with you all this week the importance of interaction with people and the unbelievable effects it has on our mood.

Socially distancing social connection! - Quite the mouth full isn't it? However as we have seen the last few weeks it is possible. I have seen countless videos on social media platforms of people coming together on walks and garden meetings- it really has been a beautiful glint in what has been a dark time.

Why is social connection so important? - We have a basic human need to be around others, to feel we belong, that we have our tribe. The friendships we build in our lifetime are the

cornerstone of our happiness. Feeling connected with people gives us the chance to feel supported in our low times, it enhances the joy in our good times and the more effort we put into maintaining these relationships the more we feel positive emotions. It's a necessity as part of our self-care routine.

In times of crisis - I've mentioned this before but it is so important that you fight against the urge to hide away in tough times. I can't think of a more perfect example of a crisis than this current lockdown situation. I recognise that when you're feeling low or stressed that it can feel too much to be in social situations but that can lead you to rapidly entering a spiral of being alone all the time which leads to you feeling even worse. So, try with all your might to fight against your normal reaction of pulling away and



step forward instead. Accept those phone calls, facetimes, reply to those texts and even more wonderfully go on socially distanced walks etc

The biggest mood booster - Last week I met a friend for the first time since all this began. The urge to hug her was overwhelming but once we established that was a no go, we got chatting like we'd never been apart. I can honestly say it was the calmest I'd felt in a long time. It was the connection I felt to my friend ...in actual real life! There is so much that our phones and social media can do but I don't think anything comes close to having face to face conversations. It doesn't even matter what the topic is, it's the ease in which you talk to each other that makes it such a powerful mood booster.

Identity - I don't know about all of you but I think its been very easy to forget who we are during these last few months. I went back to work last week and I found myself standing in front of the wardrobe thinking "what did I used to wear to work?" I know I'm not alone in the fact that I've been spending a lot of days in leggings and sweatpants. I genuinely forgot they made clothes without elastic waistbands and was quite frankly horrified. Forcing yourself out of the house to socially distance with your friends really gives you a jolt to remember who you were before this...even if that does mean saying goodbye to the elastic waistband's sometimes.

Our circle reminds us who we are – I have spoken to lots of year 10's this week and understandably some of them were anxious at coming into the school. The most common thing they all said was seeing their friends, people they knew and simply being back stopped them worrying very quickly. Being back near their friends massively reduced their worries and the conversations I had with these students were really positive.

Show you care - With all the stress and juggling that we've been doing recently we can let the contact slip. There have been times over the last three months I've been ashamed that I don't know what some of my friends have going on in their lives. I've tried to fix that recently and I'm so glad I have. Even if we can't get to our friends face to face, we can feel more connected in little ways. A lot of my closest friends live in York and I found myself drifting from knowing what was happening in all their lives. Once I realised the effect this was having on me, I began to text more, ring more and feel much more connected and happier. Another great one is sending photos of random parts of your day to your friends, your family members, it keeps the connection going and that is just what we need right now!

Make a list - of all the people in your circle and when you feel the urge to pull away in low times look at it to remind you of who you have waiting to support you.



Light in The Lockdown! Guiseley School welcomes back year 10

Here at Guiseley School we have been incredibly excited to welcome back Year 10 and Year 12 over the past seven days. Our students have risen to the challenges of public transport, social distancing and re-acclimatising from online learning heroically and we were pleased to see over 85% take up the offer of some face to face contact to support the online learning offer that will continue in the coming weeks. Of course, all of this was made even more exciting by the fact so many students were able to experience our brand-new Sports and Arts Block for the first time.

While much of our communication with students has been through Teams, and we have been in regular contact with many families, we also took the opportunity to survey students around how they were feeling about the return to school. At the time of writing, we have had well over 150 responses and we are pleased to see that many students and families have coped well with the challenges brought about as a result of Covid-19 and the national lockdown. Students were given the opportunity to signpost where they felt they would benefit from further support and this was hugely useful in targeting our pastoral and wellbeing resources to ensure students in need were able to receive the support quickly. Similarly,

where students reported feeling anxious about coming back to school, we were able to have wellbeing discussions and many reported feeling better as soon as lessons began, or when they saw friends and other familiar faces in their classes. Many also reported feeling very positive about the new build and we, as a school, cannot wait to share the rest of this exciting new facility with them.

Importantly, School Leaders have been able to evaluate the data from the survey and, alongside our discussions with students, will now be able to plan even more pro-actively for the return of Years 7 -9 in a manner that helps to manage anxiety and increase confidence further.

Our vision for supporting students back to school is to return to school-based routines, and therefore to return to learning, as quickly as possible. We believe that this is what most students and families want from school. However, we will continue to refine our processes around targeting support wherever it is required. We know from our work over the last three months that, although many families have coped well, many have also faced struggles. Therefore, alongside the traditional school routines, we will be looking to 'flood' our pastoral support and ensure we have enough capacity to



support children and families wherever this may be required. There is absolutely no shame in asking for assistance.

Finally, I am excited to report that this week's offer has been successful and, crucially, the safeguards we have put in place around

managing the risk of infection have been effective, so we are now hoping to increase contact for Y10 further. It is wonderful to be moving back towards the busy, friendly school environment that is so valuable to our community.

Guiseley School Students in the Media

We were very pleased to see that the Wharfedale Observer picked up the excellent work of our talented musicians who have been performing throughout their lockdown and put together a group ensemble of Bill Wither's 'Lean on Me'. You can read the full article here: <https://www.wharfedaleobserver.co.uk/news/18526122.lean-lockdown-video/> or watch the video on the school website here: <https://guiseleyschool.org.uk/news/2020-06-08-lean-on-me>

