



WELTBIBLING.

Autumn 2023

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Welcome to the first edition of our brand new Wilson's Wellbeing publication. We are very excited to be able to bring you tips on staying healthy and happy, articles on the links between science and mental health, reminders about where support is available, and reviews of wellbeing methods, tried and tested by members of our very own Sixth Form Wellbeing Team. If you wish to get involved in future issues, there are details at the back of the issue. We hope you enjoy it!

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Editing and graphic design: Bharanie, Jiaen and Ms Banner

What is Wellbeing?

By Ms Banner, Pupil Wellbeing Lead

Wellbeing can be defined as “the state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy.” However, it is important to realise that wellbeing is a much broader concept than moment-to-moment happiness. Our wellbeing is about how we feel, how we function and how satisfied we are with our lives.



Is it the same as 'mental health'?

Yes and no. Mental health is an integral and essential part of overall health defined as "a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity", which lays as much importance on our emotional wellbeing as it does our physical. Having good mental health is a *huge* part of our general wellbeing and many people use the terms interchangeably.

The charity MIND says:

“Good mental wellbeing doesn't mean that you're always happy. Or that you're unaffected by your experiences. And having good wellbeing doesn't always mean that you don't have a mental health problem. You may live with a mental health problem, but have good wellbeing right now. Or you might not have a mental health problem, but be struggling with your wellbeing at the moment.”

So, wellbeing is about how happy we generally are and how resilient we are when things aren't going to plan, even if you are experiencing mental health problems.

So why is wellbeing important?

If we have good wellbeing, we can:

- realise our abilities,
- cope with the normal stresses of life,
- work or study productively
- make a contribution in our community.

It is fundamental to our ability as humans to think, emote, interact with each other, earn a living and enjoy life. At various points in our life we might find that we struggle with our mental health, and for some this might offer more of a challenge to wellbeing than for others.

How can I improve my wellbeing?

- Try to relax and reduce stress.
- Make time to do hobbies and have interest outside your studies.
- Have good sleep routines.
- Spend with friends and family.
- Limit the time you spend online.
- Get fresh air and appreciate nature.
- Keep active.
- Set small, achievable goals.
- Focus on the present.
- Talk about your feelings

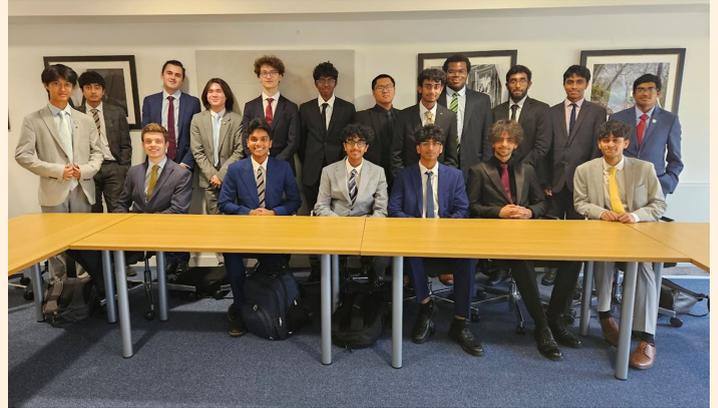
Introducing the Wellbeing Team

by Mars and Ewan

G.K Chesterton said, “if something is worth doing it’s worth doing poorly.” Unfortunately, our approach to wellbeing is not to tell people not to do their homework, but perfectionism is a large issue throughout all years of the school. One of the hardest parts of completing a project is deciding when to call it finished and the only real way to combat this is to take the plunge and submit it. Importantly wellbeing support can run into similar issues. Sometimes it can feel like there’s a “correct way” to go about it. We want to make sure that nobody is too paralysed by the idea that they could be doing something better to seek out help.

World Mental Health Week fell before half term. Each year as a school we select a theme to focus on, and this year it was “mental health is a human right”. The way we interpreted this is that there is an overarching goal to make wellbeing support accessible to all. Obviously, wellbeing and mental health are important but discussions amongst the team have highlighted the importance of wellbeing to all aspects of your life, both in and outside of school. Because of this importance, we hope you all understand how vital we think it is to make support and advice as easy to access as possible.

This year our approach to wellbeing will be almost entirely student led; we want to be the faces and voices you hear on this topic. We’re here to help you, so what the students of the school need will always be our top priority.



As a team we’re from a wide range of backgrounds and have varying experiences with mental health but obviously we can’t cover every base, so we want to hear from you as much as possible.

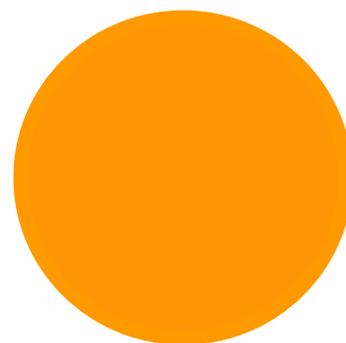
Pupil voice is something we want to utilise this year. Whilst we’ll never expect someone to come up to the front of the class and share their personal experiences, we want to hear from as many people as feel comfortable. To this end, a survey will be sent out for anyone to anonymously submit ideas. We also want each form’s wellbeing reps to be in frequent communication with us, so do pass on any concerns to your form rep.

School tries hard to provide for its pupils’ needs, and many of us on the team joined specifically to provide the accommodations we would have appreciated to others. Rather than making all of you join the team to make your ideas heard, we just want to hear from you often.

For more personal concerns we are debuting our pupil mentoring team. The team has had training with NHS psychologists to make sure we can provide the best possible help. Whether you're struggling with stress or low mood or anything else, we're here for you to talk to us. We have drop in sessions in the wellbeing centre at lunch and will be on the playground as a friendly face to come and chat to. We can't stress enough that there is no problem too small. We will always try to listen and give you advice or put you in contact with someone who can, so there's no reason not to come and have a chat, if nothing else just to check the problem isn't something to be worried about. We're here for you to use us as a resource, so please do. We also provide one on one mentoring sessions over a few weeks that you can talk to your head of year or Miss Banner if you think that is something that would benefit you.

Hopefully the main takeaway is that there are many ways to access wellbeing support at school and hopefully there is one that everyone feels is at least not impossible. We know how sensitive a subject mental health and wellbeing can be and tackling it is deeply personal and hard. We're trying to provide as many routes for support as possible, because the first step is always the hardest and finding help is always worth doing.

Student Mentors (pictured below) are on duty most lunchtimes outside the Wellbeing Centre/Library and also in the Playground. They are identifiable by the orange badge they wear. Please feel free to speak to them when you see them and if you want to be paired with one, speak with your form tutor.



L-R top: Mars, Ewan, Thusanth, Jihoon,
L-R bottom: Bhuvan, Edward, Thenutan, Jioen

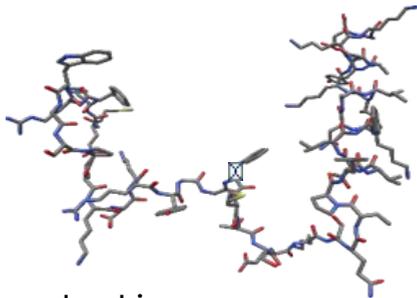


Sports and Mental Health: The Science

by Muhammad



From helping you to lose weight to strengthening your muscles and bones, exercise has many benefits for your physical health, but research shows it also improves your mental health. Many of you likely do some form of physical activity and are likely well aware of that feeling of euphoria following particularly vigorous exercise, known as runner's high. How can we scientifically explain this and the general improvement in mood following physical activity?

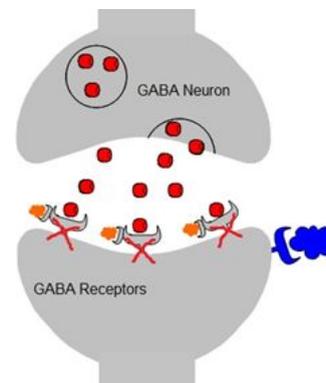


Beta-endorphin

Endorphins are proteins which act as neurotransmitters in the brain. Despite 20 different types existing, beta-endorphin is the one most relevant here. Synthesised primarily in the pituitary gland and released during exercise (as well as other pleasurable/stressful events), beta-endorphin interacts with many systems in the body to produce a positive mental state.

One theorised effect of beta-endorphin is that it reduces stress. Its exact mechanism is unknown, but studies show beta-endorphin to be involved in controlling the pituitary gland during the stress response. As a result, they may potentially (directly or indirectly) inhibit the release of stress hormones such as cortisol and adrenaline.

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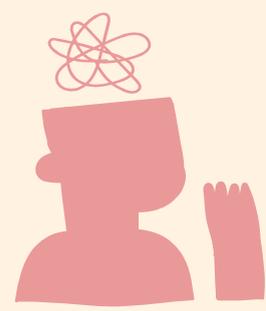
Inhibition of GABA
Blue = Beta-endorphin

More significantly, beta-endorphin stimulates the release of dopamine, which you may know as the 'feel-good chemical'. This effect arises due to the

mesolimbic pathway, the brain's reward system, encouraging you to do certain things, like exercise, again. Usually, GABA (another neurotransmitter) controls dopamine release; however, beta-endorphin inhibits the release of GABA, subsequently increasing dopamine levels. This dopamine rush causes the aforementioned 'runner's high' and mood improvement.

Sources

- BEP neuronal cell bodies are primarily localized in the arcuate nuclei of the hypothalamus, and its terminals are distributed throughout the CNS, including the PVN of the hypothalamus (Kawano & Masuko, 2000).
- The role of endorphins in stress: evidence and speculations (S Amir, Z W Brown, Z Amit, 1980)
- Understanding Endorphins and Their Importance in Pain Management (Sprouse-Blum, Smith, Sugai, and Parsa, 2010)



Meet: Monika

School Counsellor

How would you describe your role?

I am here to provide a safe, dedicated, quiet room for someone to explore whatever is making their life difficult at that moment in time.

Why might someone benefit from seeing you?

Pupils report in feedback that it has given them more clarity in relation to where they are stuck or encountering hurdles. There might be things that cannot change and I can help them learn how to manage it in a way that is helpful for them. Sometimes young people have little time to reflect and process. The quiet uninterrupted environment allows for this. I have been working with young people for over 15 years and this has enabled me to be aware of the struggles young people face and can help them understand them. A number of hurdles they face in modern life, friendships, schoolwork, family, bereavement, stress, anxiety, LGBTQ+ issues and neurodivergence to name just a few.

What is the biggest misconception people have about counselling?

Some come in very wary, because they don't know what to expect. They have found that conversations with people they know have not always worked well, but I can be someone who works alongside the school but not directly with them. If talking isn't the right method, there are other things we can do such as play therapy or guided interaction. It is always suggestive and the young person directs what we do so they can explore more freely what is on their mind.

Would you ever have to speak to a teacher about what we discuss?

If a situation should arise within the counselling setting where extra support or input from the school would seem beneficial, I shall discuss with the pupil how best to do this and we can put this into action with pupil's consent. Pupils can nominate a teacher or we decide who would be best person to help such as Pupil Support Manager or Tutor. If I am worried about your safety this does have to be passed on to the safeguarding team, who will deal with it discreetly and professionally.

If you want to know more, please speak to your form tutor.

Is it banter or bullying?

In November anti-bullying week focused on the difference between banter and bullying. This article, written by Martha Evans, Director of the charity Anti Bullying Alliance, addresses this issue.



The difference between bullying and banter has been talked about for decades. Where does playful 'joshing' turn into something hurtful and potentially bullying. Early on in my career I was confronted with this very dilemma within a training session with volunteer sports coaches. At the session, I put out the question to the group 'What is the difference between bullying and banter?' The room went quiet until a very confident hand popped up at a table at the back of the room: 'The difference is if I call you a bad name when I don't know you, that's bullying. But if I call my mate here ...' a sheepish looking man sat next to him started looking nervous 'a fat [word I won't repeat], then that's banter because he's my mate.'

The room went silent and with it being one of my first training sessions I delivered, I had a choice. Do I challenge what he said and potentially make the embarrassment for his friend last even longer? Or, do I skip over it and pretend it didn't happen? I'm ashamed to say, being relatively inexperienced, I skipped over it. But it stuck with me and I've replayed what I would have said repeatedly since. What I would have said was: No, what you've done is change what might be a joke between two friends into a public sphere with a lot of people who don't know your relationship or the context within it.

It actually doesn't matter whether or not the man thought what he said was just joking around. It was clear from his friend's face that he was uncomfortable and hurt by it. Banter is part of the reason why at ABA we bang on about the need for a shared understanding of bullying. In this incident, the power of the relationship between the two of them shifted when he included the whole room in it.

Bullying is hurtful, repetitive, intentional and involves an imbalance of power. When you are confronted with the decision: bullying or banter? Think carefully about the power relationship between the parties. Has the person experiencing it said they don't like it? Does it involve numerous people? Does it target an aspect of their appearance or personality?

Banter involves people with equal power, where there is no hurt involved and no intent to cause harm. In no way are we saying that people can't make jokes but just be aware of the tipping balance.

When does banter become bullying?

1. Think before you speak. Would it be funny if someone said the same thing to you?
2. Don't pick on someone's insecurities, that's a low blow.
3. Be aware whether someone is clearly not enjoying the 'banter'. If they're not, STOP!
4. Don't laugh along if you're not finding it funny.
5. Saying something is 'just banter', doesn't mean it is.

Trying it out: Kooth

Kooth is an established mental wellbeing website from the NHS. It allows users to seek anonymous help, including online counselling, forums and articles.

All year groups heard from Kooth representatives in their assemblies this term.

Year 13 Mentor Thenutan has tried it out. Let's see what he thought.

As soon as you login you are greeted with a journal tracker that asks how you have been feeling which I find extremely helpful in being able to express my emotions. It also serves to allow the Kooth team to get in contact if there is any need as they do periodically review these entries.

You can also talk to others on the forum to ask questions, for advice or just to strike up a general conversation. However one downside of Kooth is that its forum is quite inactive except for posts made by the Kooth team. If you do post on the forum it is unlikely you'll get many replies due to the low usage of the live forums (only 10% of users). However, the primary focus of the site is to provide mental health help rather than a social media service so this is expected but not a major problem.

Talking to the Kooth team is much easier, as there is a specific page dedicated to you being able to message the team as well as having a live team to talk to you. I feel like this is the main aspect that allows this platform to be one of the best online mental health services as you are able to talk to dedicated staff that will have a real conversation with you, giving you advice and allowing you to express your feelings.

Although the Kooth team won't be able to talk to everyone on the live chat you can always send them a message which they will always respond to, almost like having an anonymous friend that you can release all your problems onto without judgement or fear of their thoughts.

Activities range from breathing exercises to expressing yourself through art. They only take about 5 minutes but each activity has clear steps and asks to evaluate how helpful the activities were for you.



For example, I did a mini-activity on bubble breathing for five minutes and it helped reduce my anxiety and allowed me to feel more calm. These mini-activities are one of the best features on the platform and are also very popular with many Kooth users.

The articles are also used due to their wide range of topics like bereavement, bullying, relationships as well as creative writing such as poems and short stories which you can contribute to as well. These are one of the most used features of Kooth with 55% of users regularly using them, showing the variety of topics that are available.

In conclusion, Kooth is an amazing tool to help you maintain your mental health anonymously and while it is limited in its ability to talk to and communicate with others using Kooth, it makes up for this with being able to communicate to the team as well as great resources from articles, activities and personal trackers. It's a worthwhile website to sign up for all students no matter what you are going through.

by Thenutan

Trying something new...

Exploring new things is like a refreshing breeze for your wellbeing. It's not about grand adventures; it could be as simple as trying a different cuisine or picking up a new hobby. These small shifts break the monotony, inject a dose of excitement, and, surprisingly, make you more adaptable to change. It's not about becoming a master at everything new; it's about the process, the learning, and the small wins that come with it. So, why not sprinkle a bit of novelty into your routine? Your wellbeing might just thank you for it.

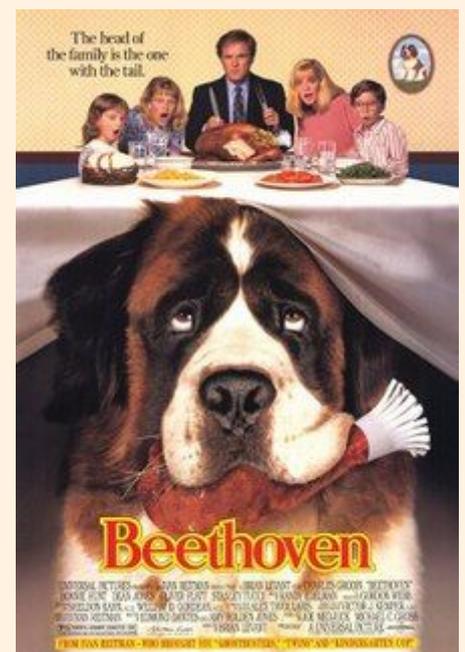
Engaging with books and movies not only introduces variety into your daily life but also plays a significant role in enhancing your overall wellbeing. Reading has been linked to stress reduction, improved focus, and better sleep. The immersive nature of a good book provides a mental escape, allowing you to unwind and relax. Similarly, movies offer a visual and emotional journey that can evoke a range of feelings, from laughter to tears, acting as a cathartic release. Moreover, the shared experience of discussing books or movies with others fosters connections, strengthening social bonds and promoting a sense of belonging. These seemingly simple activities, when integrated into your routine, become powerful tools for maintaining emotional balance, expanding your perspective, and nurturing your mental health. So, next time you pick up a book or settle in for a movie night, know that you're not just entertaining yourself; you're investing in your wellbeing.

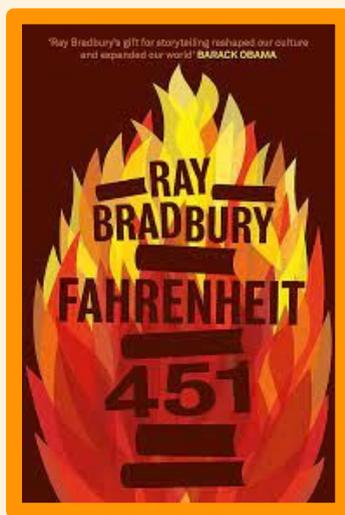
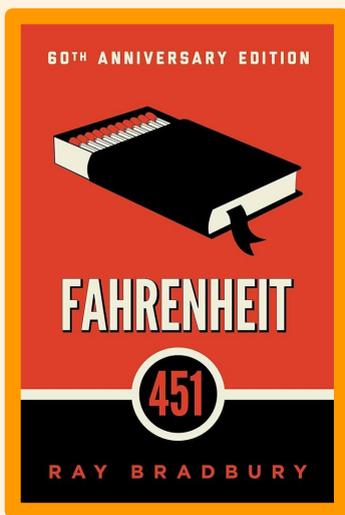
By **Bharanie**

Film Review: Beethoven

This is a highly sentimental, conservative film, but it's about a big dog so I love it. As a puppy, Beethoven escapes from an evil vet who wants to run experiments on animals. He ends up at the home of the Newtons, a perfect family with a pristine home. As he grows, he causes destruction to their soft furnishings but works his way into their hearts, rescuing the daughter from drowning and the dad from a bad business deal. But the vet is determined to get his hands on Beethoven, and lies to the family that the dog needs to be put down. This time, it's up to the humans to rescue Beethoven...

by **Ms Wells-Cole**
KS3 Pupil Support Manager





Book Review: Fahrenheit 451

by Nour

Ray Bradbury's 'Fahrenheit 451' remains a timeless masterpiece, a cautionary tale that resonates deeply in a world overwhelmed by information and technology. Set in a dystopian society where books are banned and intellectualism is suppressed, Bradbury's novel paints a haunting picture of a future where the pursuit of knowledge is deemed dangerous.

At its core, "Fahrenheit 451" is not just a story about censorship; it's a meditation on the consequences of a society consumed by distractions and superficial entertainment. In this world, firemen don't extinguish fires; they start them, burning books to ashes to maintain societal conformity. The protagonist, Guy Montag, is one of these firemen, initially content with his role until a series of encounters, particularly with a young neighbour named Clarisse, begin to challenge his beliefs.

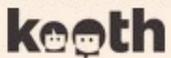
Without giving too much away out of fear for spoiling this amazing book, Montag's journey of self-discovery and awakening to the power of literature is both poignant and thought-provoking. Through Montag's eyes, readers witness the allure of forbidden knowledge and the liberating force of ideas that challenge the status quo.

One of the most striking aspects of "Fahrenheit 451" is its relevance across generations. Despite being written in the early 1950s, Bradbury's themes of censorship, technological dependency, and the loss of human connection remain profoundly pertinent today.

"Fahrenheit 451" is a literary gem that continues to captivate readers with its powerful message and timeless relevance. Ray Bradbury's vision of a future devoid of books serves as a stark warning against the perils of intellectual apathy and the erosion of critical thinking. It's a compelling call to cherish knowledge, embrace individuality, and safeguard the freedom to think and question—an imperative that resonates as strongly today as it did when the book was first published.

I initially questioned which book I should write a review for in this edition of the new Wellbeing Magazine (hello reader!!) but I think this book encapsulates a lot of important messages about the importance of individualism that, when lost, can leave us feeling alienated in our own body. This book is not only a great read but the end (which will remain a secret until read) helps to remind us all of our individual importance even in a world where we feel this might be taken for granted.

Kooth.com is a free, safe and anonymous online mental wellbeing community including live chat with the team, discussion boards, magazine with helpful articles and a daily journal.



[Childline](http://Childline.org.uk) offers confidential telephone counselling service for any child with a problem Call: **0800 1111** anytime or online chat with a counsellor.

childline

ONLINE, ON THE PHONE, ANYTIME

[Papyrus](http://Papyrus.org.uk) provide confidential support and advice to young people struggling with thoughts of suicide, and anyone worried about a young person Call: **0800 068 41 41** or Text: **07860 039967** 9am to midnight 365 days a year



[Samaritans](http://Samaritans.org) are here to listen and provide support 24/7 365 days a year Call: **116 123** or email: jo@samaritans.org

SAMARITANS

Urgent and other available support

The School website has a full list of support services available to you.



[Beat](http://Beat.org.uk) provide support to help young people who may be struggling with an eating problem or an eating disorder

Youthline (under 18's) **0808 801 0711** or Studentline **0808 801 0811** (9am – 8pm during the week and 4pm – 8pm on weekends and bank holidays)

[Off the record](http://Offtherecord.org) offer text-based online counselling and workshops for young people aged 11-25 in Croydon, Sutton and Merton.

0800 980 7475.
open 3pm-6pm
over the Winter
Holiday

TALK TO US

OFF THE RECORD

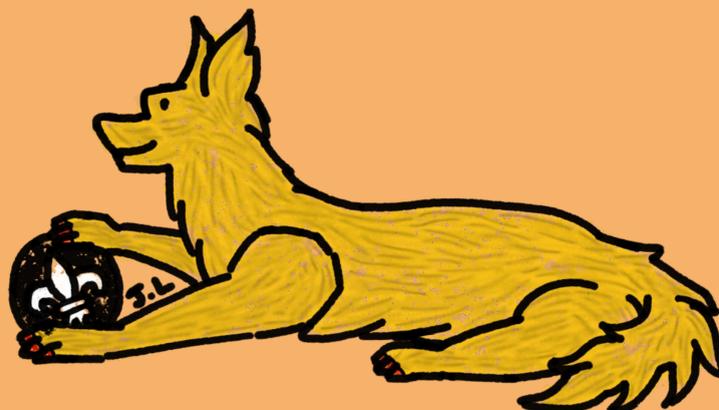
[The Mix](http://TheMix.org.uk) provides free, confidential support for young people under 25 Call: 0808 808 4994 (11am – 11pm every day) or Email

THE MIX

A&E and 999

If you feel at any point that you are unable to keep yourself safe and are in immediate danger, call the emergency services on 999, or go to your local A&E department to explain your situation to them, so that they can support you.

non sibi sed omnibus



Thank you to all members of The Wellbeing Team who contributed to this issue.

If you have ideas for items that could be included in a future Wellbeing Update, including articles, recommendations of books, apps, tips or activities, please speak to or e-mail:

- Ms Banner srb@wilsonsschool.sutton.sch.uk or
- Wellbeing prefect Ewan fergusine@wilsonsschool.sutton.sch.uk