



Dear Parent/Carer

## **ONGOING MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT AND COUNSELLING**

I trust this email finds you and your family well. During this time, students may feel anxious about the uncertainty which is affecting all areas of society at the moment. At Wellington, we have many mechanisms of support which we aim to continue with, during this period of closure.

### **Safeguarding**

At all times, the safeguarding of our students is paramount. Therefore, whilst the College is closed, I would like to draw your attention to the following sources of support which you may access, if you feel a student is unsafe or if you are a student who is feeling unsafe.

- You can telephone Social Services on 02890507000
- You can telephone the PSNI on 101 or 999 in an emergency
- You can access the Safeguarding Board of Northern Ireland (SBNI) App which will direct you to information and contact details for essential services across Northern Ireland
- You can telephone relevant agencies outlined in the document below  
<http://www.wellingtoncollegebelfast.org/documents/4986/Telephone%20Support%20Lines%20for%20Young%20People.pdf>
- You can email the school at [info@wellington.belfast.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@wellington.belfast.ni.sch.uk) which is monitored daily during the week. Please be aware, that due to remote working or illness, pastoral staff may not always be able to respond personally, but your concern will be appropriately forwarded to a relevant agency if need be.

### **Familyworks counselling**

We recognise that this is an unprecedented situation, but we are fully committed to supporting the mental health and emotional wellbeing of our students. These are unusual times and this brings unusual stressors on young people and their families. There may be anxiety about the lack of exam grades, what will happen in the future, personal health or the health of loved ones. There also may be grief over the loss of friendships, routine or people. Therefore, we want to give a response that is supportive and safe for all our young people.

In the light of the current health situation and school closures we are very pleased to be able to offer a continuation of the Independent Counselling Service (ICSS) for schools via the medium of online or telephone counselling. This is a confidential service for young people who would normally attend the College from the ages of 11-18 and will be delivered on the same day as it is usually delivered in the College, (Tuesday).

If your young person is already receiving counselling you don't need to do anything. This will continue via telephone or online. The school counsellor will be in contact with them in a few days.



If you have a young person who wants to refer themselves into the ICSS this can be done through the Familyworks website. The web address is [www.familyworksni.com](http://www.familyworksni.com). You can also refer your young person to the service but you should get their permission to do so first. You can do this by just asking them privately how they might feel about speaking to the school counsellor. It can help to make sure the young person has a quiet space to talk to the counsellor away from the rest of the family. There is a button on the website for parents and school staff to refer.

The service will be delivered to the same standard as in the College and will work under the College's Child Protection Policy so your young person will be kept safe.

A telephone Drop-in will also be provided and the number and time for this will be on the school website.

If your young person is already receiving help from CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) that help should continue during this crisis so encourage them to engage with that help.

### **Headspace**

The College's mental health support programme, Headspace, will still continue for students who wish to avail of it. Mr Roberts and Mrs Managh will support students through the Headspace Google Classroom that has been set up.

### **Action Mental Health**

There are additional resources giving guidance and information on positive mental health and well being. They can be accessed at - <https://www.amh.org.uk/resources-for-children-young-people/12-16-years-old/>

### **Keeping safe online**

As we move most of our lives online, we would encourage everyone to remember the safe practice guidelines we follow in school. A link to further information on the College website is below.

[http://www.wellingtoncollegebelfast.org/documents/4985/thinkuknow\\_secondary\\_parents\\_helpsheet.pdf](http://www.wellingtoncollegebelfast.org/documents/4985/thinkuknow_secondary_parents_helpsheet.pdf)

Hopefully, the support mechanisms above will encourage you all that we do not face these current challenges alone. In the spirit of the College's motto 'Una Discamus', I am reminded of the words of Helen Keller – *'alone we can do so little; together we can do so much'*.

I hope all our families enjoy a time of rest, respite and renewal over the coming weekend.

Yours sincerely

Mr S Lemon  
Vice Principal  
Wellington College Belfast