

Feb 26 Health and Wellbeing Update from Clare

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Notes from Family Champs Meeting 18.2.26

1. Work goes on by the Health and Wellbeing Team to roll out **the new Positive Relationships Policy**, which replaces what used to be known as the Anti-Bullying Policy, and incorporates an Equality and Discrimination Policy.
2. The Active Travel element of the team continues to use its funding from Transport Scotland to support schools to encourage active travel to and from school. **We can apply for financial help if we have any ideas around this** – sheltered bike racks, for example. Any other ideas welcome!!
3. Next there was a speaker called Kerry Hutchinson from **Smile Counselling**. This is charity that promotes **mental health and wellbeing for children and young people aged 11 – 26 in the West Lothian Area** (though they are hoping to expand to support younger children soon). Children who are suffering with low mood, worry or stress that is impacting on their sleep, schooling etc. can refer themselves and are usually offered twelve counselling sessions at the base in Livingston. If further support is needed after this, Smile will signpost to this. They also mentioned Play Therapy and Music Therapy being on offer. Due to significant demand, Smile now ask families to make a donation if they can – they suggest £10 per session. They say many children are unaware that they can access counselling if they need it so we need to spread the word. Counselling is a safe and confidential space, where children can talk and learn ways to cope with whatever is going on in their lives. Parents can attend for the first few minutes, but are asked to leave and allow the majority of the session to be confidential for the child. Sessions run throughout the school holidays and are available 9am till 7pm on weekdays. 95.8% of children report that Smile Counselling had a positive impact after they had accessed the service. Referrals can be made on their website: [SMILE Counselling - Support for 11-24 year olds West Lothian](#) and the waiting list is around 8 weeks (if you are flexible about what time your session can be). Smile also go into schools and do sessions and they have a specialist in supporting Neurodiverse children. They run parents and carers sessions, which they advertise on their social media.
4. Lastly we heard from Helen McKay who is the **Mental Health and Trauma Lead at West Lothian Council**. When she came into post, she recognised that children and young people were lacking easily-accessible mental health support. She saw that WestSpace existed for adults, but that it needed to be adapted for children and young people. She created **Listen and Link, which is the ‘front door’ to children’s mental health services**. Anyone aged 5 – 24 years old can access this by calling the service directly on 01506 283160. They are given validation and reassurance and asked what kind of support they need and want. They are then directed to the right services. If there is a waiting list for that service, Listen and Link keeps in touch with the child in the meantime.
Families can apply for up to £200 Self Directed Support money to find supports that are meaningful for them; for instance, a child might use that money for a trampoline, sensory aids, a weighted blanket, a sports class, or art therapy, a night away, etc..
Helen also reminded everyone of the Mental Health pathway rolled out last year and attached below. The VOICE text messaging service offers an hour of free support via text

message, and is monitored by clinical psychologists. (this is the pathway portrayed on a poster at the door next to Mrs Munroe's Office, and which Mrs McGuigan promotes in every newsletter).

[West Space | C&YP](#)

Other Updates

1. Big thanks to Linden O'Neill (Mum of Rosa in P1) who prompted us to register as a School for Junior Park Run; having done so, St Josephs was officially welcomed on Sunday 21 Feb, and all the children and teachers who went along thoroughly enjoyed themselves.
2. Thanks also to Scott Cockburn (Dad of Rosie and Murray) who has suggested an addition to our Health and Wellbeing Padlet (link below and also always available in the newsletter). He has pointed out the importance of Sports and Exercise in parents' mental health, so we added a section that covers this.

<https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fpadlet.com%2Fwlcatherinemcguigan%2Ffamily-health-and-wellbeing-at-st-joseph-s-linlithgow-nsnvbsqkob08yuf6&data=05%7C02%7C%7C200da75fda9c4deacb8e08dd20087f27%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C638701943051859076%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIlwLjAuMDAwMCIslIAiOiJXaW4zMilslkFOljoitWFBpClldUljoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=d%2FM3n2rXnR%2BGF7dqs2j4roDmbIYNSuW8XAWayGCMSGE%3D&reserved=0>

3. You may remember that last year we planned a 'Marketplace' event to promote local services available, it was to be held on the day of our Sports Afternoon and unfortunately we had to cancel due to bad weather. This is an early warning that we hope to try again this year. We had a lot of visitors lined up to attend, but we would welcome any further suggestions of bodies / organisations that might attend. The main focus was health and wellbeing but of course this can include financial wellbeing, social wellbeing, physical health, etc. etc..

Please always feel free to drop me a line with any ideas!

All the best,

Clare (Frankie and Grace's Mum)