

NEWS UPDATE

SAFAPLACE: WORKING FOR MENTAL HEALTH IN SNS AND THE COMMUNITY

NO 1: JANUARY 2018



Our aims

1. Support positive mental health and wellbeing of students in Stoke Newington school via education and awareness-raising for all
2. Make Stoke Newington school a centre for positive mental health awareness for young people, schools and those connected with education.



SAFAPLACE
Working for Stoke Newington's mental health

WE NEED YOU

Tell us what you think of the Safaplace logo design above, get digging in the quiet garden or help us plan a great fundraiser - if you'd like to help, contact us at whitelisle@btinternet.com

Building hope after loss

In the past 15 months our community has been struck by the loss of two of our young people, Harry and Rachel.

The school in the last year has been working both with those who are grieving and has developed support and education for all students about positive mental health. Input from Safaplace has enhanced this work.

Since January 2017, and from donations initially collected by Harry's friends, Safaplace has funded several different initiatives aimed to improve wellbeing and address mental health issues; now we are applying for charitable status.

Ranging from a bench and tree in Clissold Park in Harry's memory, to peer listener training and sessions for families as well as for school staff, we are working to bring mental health to the fore in our community.

Whether we're taking on board the inspiring words of Reggie Dabbs, an amazing and empowering speaker whom many of our pupils met this year, or putting in physical work on the new reflective garden, our efforts will firstly be about Stoke Newington pupils. At the same time, it will also be about our whole community - because mental health is about all of us.

Sessions for teachers about dealing with their own stress and workload are part of the holistic approach.

Fundraising events are envisaged; in 2017 several teachers ran in the Hackney Half marathon, helping to boost funds and run more activities; we hope to build on and repeat that successful experience in 2018.

Continued overleaf



The changes we made **Growing a green headspace**

Here are some things that have been done in school this year, and more are planned.

- A confidential 'post box' was set up for pupils to anonymously inform teachers of peers they are concerned about.
- Noticeboards with information about helplines and other resources were installed.
- Tutor group sessions, aimed to build understanding about emotional and mental health, were held; more are planned, to develop pupils' ability to talk openly and to listen actively.
- Year group meetings were organised to discuss concerns amongst our pupils.
- Special assemblies focusing on wellbeing were organised from September 2017.
- Regular parents' forums are being held.
- Pastoral staff numbers were increased, to support the school community
- Links with NHS and additional services were made or improved, including with Homerton Hospital. The school is part of a wellbeing project with CAMHS and the Learning Trust. Headteacher Annie Gammon will now participate in Hackney's safeguarding bodies.

A space for reflection - or just talking to each other - is being created in the school playground.

Led by Rose White, the reflective garden project is well underway. An award-winning designer contributed to the work and a local furniture-maker has volunteered with the project, with hard landscaping scheduled in early 2018.

Plans to have pupils' hands-on involvement via D&T classes are afoot. We will be looking for helpers to dig and put in plants later in the year. When completed, the garden will be available for pupils, staff - and for wider community use.

"We aim to create a calm place away from the usual bustle of school" says Rose.

Building hope after loss

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"A conference, SAFAPLACE '18, is planned in Spring; it will draw from and add to expertise and ideas in our community," explains Michael Collins, Head of Year 7, who is a Safaplace trustee and the lead for wellbeing in the school.

Mr Collins, alongside Safaplace's other three trustees; headteacher Annie Gammon, and parents Rose White and Sarah Finke, has plans for research and for outreach to other schools. Links to the Amy Winehouse Foundation and relevant charitable associations have been made, including Stem4, MIND, and Papyrus. Concrete discussions have been held with the Anna Freud Centre, a child mental health research, training and treatment organisation, about starting a research project.

