## Message from the Wellbeing Department

## Dear Parents and Students

## This Shabbat, JAMI (the specialist provider of mental health services in the Jewish community) are shining a spotlight on mental health and what better time to do so?

The COVID-19 pandemic brings with it so many challenges, not least to our mental health. Did you know that almost a fifth of adults (19.2%) were likely to be experiencing some form of depression during the coronavirus pandemic in June 2020 (which has almost doubled since before the pandemic), or that in September 2020 in a survey completed by Young Minds, 69% of students described their mental health as poor?

At JFS, we take this very seriously. Your child’s wellbeing is of paramount importance to us and we, as a wellbeing team, are working tirelessly to help students to navigate these difficult times through assemblies, group sessions, 1-2-1 support, and more. Our aim is to provide all children with the opportunity to learn about and build their own social and emotional toolkit, enabling them to flourish and thrive in the modern world and we want to work closely with you in order to do this as best we can.

We know that some children are finding this incredibly tough and we wanted to share with you a few top tips for helping them to stay positive. These are of course not exclusive to students and we invite you to use them too, we know that parenting isn’t easy at the moment!

**Routine and structure:** Theseare so important. Maintaining a sense of normality will help. Set time aside for work, play, meals and of course exercise. Encourage your child to get out of bed, wash and put on clean clothes every day.

**Self-care:** Anything is fine – hot baths, Netflix, online chess – whatever makes you happy, make time for that!

**Screen breaks:** At the moment work and play is on screens for a lot of us. Don’t beat yourself up about that, but take breaks where you can and make sure the things you are watching on TV and following on social media are positive.

**Make time for friends:** Give them a call, reach out with a quick message, design an online quiz. It doesn’t really matter what, just as long as you stay connected.

**Practice gratitude:** Studies suggest practicing gratitude positively benefits mental health by boosting self-esteem and self-value, helping to decrease anxiety and stress and increase motivation, productivity and achievement. You could write down three things you are grateful for every night before you go to bed, name three good things over the dinner table (a good way to hear about each other’s day and notice the good) or even start a family ‘Gratitude Jar’ and read them over the weekend together.

Above all, remember this isn’t forever and if your child is struggling, please reach out to their form tutor or a member of their year team and let us know how best we can support you all during this time.

For more information about the JAMI Mental Health Shabbat and how you can get involved, please go to [www.jamiuk.org/get-involved/mhas/](http://www.jamiuk.org/get-involved/mhas/)

Warmest regards,

Nicki and Nikki

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