



Dear Parent,

Welcome to the JFS family, we are really looking forward to your child joining us in September!

We are acutely aware that the move from Primary to Secondary School is a time of great change and of many questions for both you and your children. As they leave the safety of their smaller primary school behind and continue to grow into independent young people, we want to ensure that they feel settled and secure here as quickly as they can and that we are doing all we can to support them in that.

At JFS much work has already been done to help with this process. As the Mental Health Lead, my role is to ensure that we are providing students with all that we can to support their mental health and to continue to develop a culture of positive wellbeing in school life. We have a wide range of practitioners who come in across a week, including counsellors, mental health practitioners and a life coach who are all well equipped to support the students on a variety of issues.

Each year group has a dedicated Safeguarding Officer, who oversees the safeguarding and mental health of their students. Through them, a range of support is offered on key issues including friendships, anxiety, organisation, social skills and self-esteem. The Year 7 team work very closely with us in the Wellbeing Team and make all relevant referrals to us if a student needs 1:1 counselling support.

Furthermore, every Year 7 form will have three Year 10 Peer Buddies, who will attend their form once a week to run sessions and to support the tutor in whatever activity they are doing. We are very proud of our Peer Mentor programme here at JFS too, which sees Year 12 students who are trained in mental health first aid, paired up with the younger students to support them one to one on a wide variety of issues.

It is natural for children to feel a mixture of nervousness and excitement about the move up. Studies show that children who recognise change as stressful, and who seek support and problem-solve, cope better with change than those who deny or avoid the emotional impact of a transition.

I would encourage you to discuss the transition with your children and even to look back on your own experience of starting secondary school and to share these experiences with your child. Do not be afraid to ask them what they will miss most about their primary school, or what they are most nervous about. The more they can communicate their worries the better and once they get here, we will of course endeavour to make sure that we allay any of their big fears.

I really look forward to working with you and your children at JFS,

Warm Regards,

Nicki Cohen

Mental Health Lead