

# Raedwald Academy Trust



## **Next Steps Medical Pathway**

### **Health and Wellbeing Curriculum**

#### **Rationale**

The intention of the Health and Wellbeing curriculum is to teach, support with and encourage use of proven strategies that promote both physical health and mental wellbeing. Content is designed to accommodate the diverse needs and interests of medical needs students and to be inclusive.

The curriculum units are designed around the 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' researched by the Charlie Waller Trust and address the 'Prevention' strand of Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) England framework. These cover: being active, keep learning, connecting, giving to others and taking notice.

#### **1. Be Mindful**

Many studies suggest that practices of mindfulness – such as paying attention to your body, your emotions, your thoughts and your actions – may help people manage stress, reduce anxiety and mild depression.<sup>1</sup>

Alongside science of the adolescent brain, this unit teaches several strategies to connect mind and body for positive mental wellbeing, for instance: setting short and long term goals; understanding good sleep habits and the harmful impacts of blue light; understanding the teenage brain and chemicals released in flight, fight, freeze responses; connecting emotions with physical sensations; understanding the benefits of showing kindness and gratitude to ourselves and others; learning practical life skills to write to others.

#### **2. Be Practical (7 lessons)**

Studies show that life skills intervention can positively impact mental disorders (stress, anxiety and depression) in adolescents due to life skills development being a fundamental protection strategy for children<sup>2</sup>. Not only that, but life skills can also develop confidence, self-esteem, problem solving, critical thinking and ultimately, support young people to cope with managing their lives in healthy and productive ways.

This unit covers practical, finance and decision-making skills through lessons related to: growing seeds and plants; basic bike maintenance such as fixing punctures and chains; safely changing fuses and plugs on basic household electrical items; basic fire precautions in the household, for example, safely cooking with fire like disposable BBQs and oil fires in the kitchen; basic first aid for minor

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<sup>1</sup> <https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2012/01/mindfulness-matters#:~:text=Studies%20suggest%20that%20mindfulness%20practices,life%20and%20improved%20self%2Desteem.>

<sup>2</sup> <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10325125/#sec14>

injuries; budgeting and meal planning; reading bus timetables and getting to the local hospital on public transport.

### **3. Be Creative (6 lessons)**

Various studies have shown that being creative and engaged in the arts can have powerful effects on mental well-being, as well as protecting against mental health conditions and promoting recovery<sup>3</sup>. This unit aims to give students the opportunity to discover their creative side through a range of artistic avenues such as: showing emotions creatively through expression masks, creating with clay, creating with natural materials and learning about local arts opportunities through an extra-curricular trip.

### **4. Be Active (6 lessons)**

Science has proven that regular physical activity can make us healthier and happier when our bodies release feel good hormones that help to boost confidence, reduce stress and improve sleep<sup>4</sup>. Physical activity can take many forms and does not need a lot of equipment to get started. This unit focuses on activities that can be done at home or school, such as: gardening, yoga, Pilates, active stretching, basketball, boxing and walking. The importance of hydration and how to start exercising at home using NHS resources are also covered.

### **5. Be You (5 lessons)**

Current research shows anxiety disorders can have detrimental impact on future thinking and anxious adults delay making decisions about the future due to negatively biased interpretations of uncertain future events<sup>5</sup>. This unit focuses students to think about their future selves through drawing and giving a presentation about an aspect of their life, learning how to cope with change, the importance of positive routines in adulthood and developing healthy self-esteem.

### **6. Be Independent (7 lessons)**

“Independence is a quality that many of us strive to achieve in our lives. It's about making decisions for ourselves, managing our own lives, and feeling confident in our abilities without overly depending on others. Being independent can mean having life skills to take care of our physical needs, like cooking or paying bills, but also about being able to think for ourselves, make choices that reflect our true desires, and confidently pursue our dreams.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/explore-mental-health/blogs/how-arts-can-help-improve-your-mental-health>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/mental-wellbeing-tips/be-active-for-your-mental-health/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10740287/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.calm.com/blog/being-independent>

This unit gives planned opportunities for students to develop life skills such as: planning balanced meals whilst learning about the importance of proteins, fats and carbohydrates; learning advanced first aid skills such as the signs and symptoms of a heart attack and how to deliver CPR; understanding debit and credit cards; visiting a local library to use services on offer and volunteering to give back to the community.

### Strands of the **Physical Health and Mental Wellbeing Education Curriculum**

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education/physical-health-and-mental-wellbeing-primary-and-secondary>)

that have been prioritised for coverage within the time frame of the pathway include:

	What pupils should know from primary:	What we will cover in our curriculum:
Mental Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>that mental wellbeing is a normal part of daily life, in the same way as physical health</li> <li>that there is a normal range of emotions (e.g. happiness, sadness, anger, fear, surprise, nervousness) and scale of emotions that all humans experience in relation to different experiences and situations</li> <li>how to recognise and talk about their emotions, including having a varied vocabulary of words to use when talking about their own and others' feelings</li> <li>the benefits of physical exercise, time outdoors, community participation, voluntary and service-based activity on mental wellbeing and happiness</li> <li>simple self-care techniques, including the importance of rest, time spent with friends and family and the benefits of hobbies and interests</li> <li>isolation and loneliness can affect children and that it is very important for children to discuss their feelings with an adult and seek support</li> <li>where and how to seek support (including recognising the triggers for seeking support), including whom in school they should speak to if they are worried about their own or someone else's mental wellbeing or ability to control their emotions (including issues arising online)</li> <li>it is common for people to experience mental ill health. For many people who do, the problems can be resolved if the right support is made available, especially if accessed early enough</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>how to talk about their emotions accurately and sensitively, using appropriate vocabulary (BE MINDFUL/BE YOU)</li> <li>that happiness is linked to being connected to others (BE MINDFUL/BE CREATIVE/BE YOU)</li> <li>how to recognise the early signs of mental wellbeing concerns (BE MINDFUL/BE YOU)</li> <li>how to critically evaluate when something they do or are involved in has a positive or negative effect on their own or others' mental health (BE MINDFUL/BE CREATIVE/BE YOU)</li> <li>the benefits and importance of physical exercise, time outdoors, community participation and voluntary and service-based activities on mental wellbeing and happiness (BE ACTIVE/BE INDEPENDENT)</li> </ul>

Physical Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the characteristics and mental and physical benefits of an active lifestyle</li> <li>the importance of building regular exercise into daily and weekly routines and how to achieve this; for example walking or cycling to school, a daily active mile or other forms of regular, vigorous exercise</li> <li>the risks associated with an inactive lifestyle (including obesity)</li> <li>how and when to seek support including which adults to speak to in school if they are worried about their health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the positive associations between physical activity and promotion of mental wellbeing, including as an approach to combat stress (BE ACTIVE)</li> <li>the characteristics and evidence of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, maintaining a healthy weight, including the links between an inactive lifestyle and ill health, including cancer and cardio-vascular ill-health (BE ACTIVE/BE INDEPENDENT)</li> </ul>
Healthy Eating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>what constitutes a healthy diet (including understanding calories and other nutritional content)</li> <li>the principles of planning and preparing a range of healthy meals</li> <li>the characteristics of a poor diet and risks associated with unhealthy eating (including, for example, obesity and tooth decay) and other behaviours (e.g. the impact of alcohol on diet or health)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>how to maintain healthy eating and the links between a poor diet and health risks, including tooth decay and cancer (BE INDEPENDENT/BE PRACTICAL)</li> </ul>
Health and Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the importance of sufficient good quality sleep for good health and that a lack of sleep can affect weight, mood and ability to learn</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the importance of sufficient good quality sleep for good health and how a lack of sleep can affect weight, mood and ability to learn (BE MINDFUL)</li> </ul>
Basic First Aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>how to make a clear and efficient call to emergency services if necessary</li> <li>concepts of basic first-aid, for example dealing with common injuries, including head injuries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>basic treatment for common injuries (BE PRACTICAL)</li> <li>life-saving skills, including how to administer CPR (BE INDEPENDENT)</li> <li>the purpose of defibrillators and when one might be needed (BE INDEPENDENT)</li> </ul>