

Student Wellbeing: Parent Handbook

Our Goals:

At Hampstead School, we do not just teach, we shape young people into happy, stable and successful adults of the future.

Hampstead School is committed to promoting high standards of achievement for all students, which is underpinned by our Growth Mindset approach to teaching, whereby effort and resilience are encouraged and valued in every lesson.

Our continual drive for improvement is our single most important attribute in our determination to be a truly great school for learners.

Wellbeing:

Wellbeing relates to a person's mental state - how they feel and their ability to cope with internal/external pressures. Mental wellbeing is dynamic, and can change moment to moment, day to day- children and young adults, especially under a great deal of pressure, are more vulnerable to sudden changes in their mental wellbeing. At Hampstead School, students balance the navigation of a complex social dynamic all the while achieving academic success. It is our goal to ensure that students grow to:

- Feel confident in themselves and have positive self-esteem
- Be comfortable feeling and expressing a range of emotions
- Build and maintain good relationships with others
- Feel engaged with the world around them
- Live and work productively
- Cope with the stresses of daily school life
- Adapt and manage in times of change and uncertainty

At Home

Student wellbeing does not start at our school gates, and their stress does not leave when they arrive at home. Parents/Guardians play a crucial role in supporting the mental wellbeing of their children. However, as willing as one may be to help, it is often hard to tell what a child needs, which is why the school invests in free positive parenting workshops and seminars, all designed to equip the parent(s) with additional tips and strategies that will help the whole family navigate adolescence. We have outlined just a few of the strategies to help you maintain and improve your child's emotional wellbeing:

If you are concerned about your child:

It can be difficult to get your child to be open about the things that upset them. When this happens, we have to be calm and rational in our approach, maintaining an open dialogue, and giving them the time and space to think. It is also important that we encourage them to be honest about the situation, evaluating it for what it is. Above all, it is crucial that we, as adults, respond as adults, remaining calm and reflective. Here are some from our parenting seminar:

1. **Reassurance is Key:** Tell them you love them and let them know you are there for them. Just a simple act of reassurance can make a world of difference when they are having a bad day.
2. **Model Self-Improvement:** If you feel as though you have wrongly handled a situation with your child, be confident to admit to your mistakes. Children often learn more from our actions than our words, in being honest with them they will learn both that it is okay to make mistakes and that mistakes do not make you a bad person. This will also build trust between you and your child.
3. **Clear Communication:** If there are boundaries that you expect your child to stay within, it is more likely they do so the better they know what those boundaries are. Stay as consistent with your expectations as you can, and if they change it is best to let your child know. Be clear and explicit about both expectations and the consequences for crossing the line. It is important to follow through on what you say; this is how children learn about self-control boundaries.
4. **Parent for the Long Term:** Parenting involves a lot of tough decisions and trade-offs. Make your decisions based on what you think will be best for your child, using the best co-regulation techniques. Giving in to a child throwing a temper tantrum may ease a situation in the short term, but it will also teach them that throwing tantrums is a viable method of gaining what they want. Trust your instincts, and your child will thank you later.



Helping Your Child:

Children manifest their thoughts and emotions in a variety of both direct and indirect ways, some of which can be hard to decipher.

1. **Talk to Your Child:** Children understand feelings from a very young age, especially if you help guide them through their thought process.
 - a. A child that misbehaves out of anger may not realize it. For example, consider your child gets upset with a friend and calls them a bad name. Ask them, “What was making you so mad that you thought it was okay to talk like that?” Phrasing a question like this asserts the premise that 1) Your child acted out of anger 2) It is not okay to call people bad names. This may not alleviate a situation immediately, but it will help your child develop the skills to start dealing with their emotions more independently.
 - b. If your child’s problem seems more internal, ask them what they think might help. There is a good chance that they will have a solution in mind but are uncomfortable speaking up for themselves at such a vulnerable time.
2. **Older Children:** Older children tend to need or prefer more space. If you do plan on reaching out to them, it is important that you let them know you are concerned in advance so they do not feel ambushed and have time to mentally prepare to express themselves.
3. **You Are Not Alone:** All parents experience some difficulties with raising children at some point. If possible, talk to your child’s other parent about your concerns to get their perspective. They may have similar opinions on your child’s behaviour, or they may not have noticed/have a completely different take. Work together so that you are on the same page, show unity in front of the child, even if you don’t agree.
 - a. Parents of other children can also be able to help. They may have experience in dealing with similar behaviour, and can be a great resource to help you to not overthink things.



The Three Pillars of Health:

1. Physical Wellbeing
2. Emotional Wellbeing
3. Social Wellbeing

Physical Wellbeing: Physical wellbeing goes beyond being free from disease and injury. A good state of physical wellbeing stems from a lifestyle of consistent habits that promote health and fitness. Short term benefits of physical wellbeing include improved mood stability and cognitive functioning. Over time, physical wellbeing can also result in lower rates of illness and body longevity. Physical wellbeing has an immense, direct, and immediate impact on a child's overall wellbeing. Some things you can do to support your child's physical wellbeing include:

1. **Sleep** may be one of the most important factors in physical wellbeing, but it is also one of the easiest to regulate. A good sleep schedule can improve memory, mood, illness, and concentration, while sleep deprivation alone can be enough to cause depression or anxiety.
2. **Hydration** is another factor of physical wellbeing that can be improved with little effort. Meeting the daily recommended intake of water can be made easier by drinking a glass at each meal or using refillable water bottles throughout the day, certain foods like grapes and apples also provide a good source of water. Even mild dehydration can cause dizziness, a loss of energy, frequent illness, decreased concentration, and increased blood pressure.
3. **Active** lifestyles help decrease stress, anxiety, and depression, along with boosting self-esteem and confidence. Children who are more active experience lower rates of sickness and boosted levels of cognitive functioning. Organised sports are a good way to stay active in a social setting, but walking and jogging can be just as effective. We recommend you look at the school's website to view all of the extra-curricular activities on offer.

Emotional Wellbeing: A child's emotional wellbeing gauges how adjusted they are in dealing with their emotions during difficult situations. Emotional wellbeing can be improved by physical wellbeing, but has aspects of its own that cannot be developed by simply sleeping, hydrating, or playing sports. It is a balance between expressing and understanding one's emotions, something that can be hard for people of all ages. Modeling emotional wellbeing strategies can be useful for your child:

1. **Express** how you are feeling and **why**. Saying that you are stressed or unhappy *because* of something can show a child a logical structure to deal with personal dilemmas. In addition, expressing possible solutions to your own problems can give them further direction. This strategy also informs your child without prying too much, something that might cause them to shut down.
 - a. E.g. "I have been stressed because of the overwhelming workload at my job. I am going to organise and plan my day tomorrow so I can get things done as fast and efficiently as possible" is a much more complete way to model expressiveness than simply saying "I'm so stressed out!"
2. **Asking** a child what they think can help is another effective strategy. You are helping model questions they will eventually have to learn to ask themselves, and while you may not hear an answer from them, there is a good chance they will have one.

Social Wellbeing: Interpersonal relationships support both emotional and physical wellbeing. A sense of belonging, whether at home, school, or other activities, can enhance a child's enjoyment and increase their level of engagement. Social relationships are vital for children to thrive and aspire to succeed with confidence. Make sure to:

1. **Teach Social Skills:** Model and encourage behaviours such as eye contact, cooperation, communication, listening, and empathy.
2. **Provide Opportunities** for social interaction and the development of relationships. Joining local organisations such as art clubs or sports teams that will enable your child to develop social skills and meet new people.

Hampstead School is centered on wellbeing. We act on our belief that supporting your child's physical, emotional and social health contributes to overall wellbeing which in turn, improves academic outcomes.

Please look out for our advertised Triple P Parenting seminars, the content of which will be most useful in supporting your child to transition through young adulthood as smoothly as possible.

If you have serious concerns about your child's wellbeing, we would always recommend that you to speak to your GP.

When you have time, please have a look at our wellbeing page on our school website, where you will find an abundance of mental health and wellbeing videos, resources as well as links to professional support and guidance.

Head: Matthew Sadler BA (Hons), NPQH
Hampstead School, Westbere Road, London NW2 3RT

T: 020 7794 8133 **E:** enquiries@hampsteadschool.org.uk **www:** www.hampsteadschool.org.uk

