

# Dunoon Grammar School

## The long-term impact of a whole school approach to end mental health stigma and discrimination.



### What is it?

Since 2015, staff, pupils, school partners and members of the local community have been working together to tackle mental health stigma and discrimination, as well as change the organisational culture within the school and local community. This was done using a whole school approach.

### Who is it for?

In line with Argyll and Bute Council's strategy document 'Our Children, Their Future' and the priority of improving wellbeing outcomes for all young people. This was targeted at all children, young people and staff.

### What was done?

Dunoon Grammar was approached in 2015 to trial See Me's 'What's On Your mind' pack within PSE lessons. Activities implemented since then include – monthly 'Walk a Mile' with staff, pupils and members of the local community. The pupils have also been given dedicated House time where they are encouraged to talk about mental health, and senior students have been given the opportunity to peer mentor younger students. The students have also designed posters, developed by See Me, to be displayed throughout the school, showing students different people they can talk to about their mental health.

Staff have also been given more opportunities to speak to each other about how they are feeling, such as weekly coffee mornings where there is an opportunity for staff to chat without any agenda, and daily check-ins for support staff. There is also a focus on activities for staff that help look after their health and wellbeing, such as staff walking groups, yoga, and table tennis.

The school has also focussed on mental health as part of their professional learning activities, as well as all support staff being trained in Scotland's Mental Health First Aid (SMHFA). Additionally, 5th and 6th year students are also trained in SMHFA, allowing them to support younger students. In 2019, 27 staff members were trained, along with 33 pupils.

Dunoon Grammar also took the information they had learnt from their work with See Me and used this to create their own document called the 'Health & Wellbeing Passport'. This document is based around the Wellbeing Indicators and is aimed at S2 pupils and their parents, in order for them to have a better understanding of these indicators. The passport contains eight tasks for the pupils to complete, one for each of the principles, and is devised to increase their understanding of them, and help support their health and wellbeing.

### Why was it done?

Prior to this work being undertaken, a staff wide survey was conducted with the Mental Health Foundation. This found that organisational culture in the school didn't encourage staff to talk about mental health as much as they could, and that staff were unsure of how to access support. Staff also believed that they needed more training, specifically around mental health stigma and discrimination.

Students also reported that resources they had to discuss mental health in school, such as in PSE classes, were not engaging or interesting, so there was a need for better resources.

### What was the impact?

Since 2015, staff have had an increased uptake in check-in, health and wellbeing activities, and professional development. A follow up staff survey found that there had been an improvement in organisational culture and a reduction in mental health stigma and discrimination since the baseline survey conducted by the Mental Health Foundation.

They have found that there has been an increase in conversations about mental health throughout the school, and pupils have reported that they feel they have a better understanding of mental health and that some of the stigmatised beliefs they held about mental health had been addressed.