



Dear Parents,

## **Health, wellbeing and emotional support on the return to Dollar Academy**

The wellbeing of our pupils has been the central focus when preparing for the reopening of Dollar Academy. But, because of the unique situation of the coronavirus pandemic and subsequent lockdown, it is hard to gauge the full impact that the situation has had on our pupils' mental health and wellbeing.

Returning to school is an exciting and happy time for most of our pupils but some might be anxious for a number of reasons: they might be worried about safety, seeing their peers again, the pressure of school work increasing, an increased structure and pace of life or even just managing a different sleep routine. Dollar Academy staff are used to supporting your children through challenges that they face in life – the current situation is no different.

Don't worry if your son or daughter is anxious about coming back to school. This is natural. But, if your child feels anxious for extended periods, and they are finding it difficult to cope, please contact your child's Head of Year in the Senior School ([guidance@dollaracademy.org.uk](mailto:guidance@dollaracademy.org.uk)), Mrs McDonald in the Prep School ([prep@dollaracademy.org.uk](mailto:prep@dollaracademy.org.uk)) or Miss Renton in the Junior School ([junior@dollaracademy.org.uk](mailto:junior@dollaracademy.org.uk)). Alternatively, you can email me, Elizabeth Langley, at ([langley-e@dollaracademy.org.uk](mailto:langley-e@dollaracademy.org.uk)) with any concerns that you may have. As the Assistant Rector with overall responsibility for pupil health and wellbeing, I will be only too happy to talk to pupils, or indeed parents, who are feeling anxious.

It is important that pupils are able to talk openly about their experiences of Lockdown and they are encouraged to share any anxieties and worries with a trusted member of staff. We also have the added benefits of our pupil counsellor, Mrs Francis Mackie; over 60 members of the teaching, boarding and support staff who are trained in Mental Health First Aid; and, next week, our new cohort of Form VI Mental Health Ambassadors will be available as a peer support network. All pupils, in the senior school, will be given a 'Dollar Academy Healthy Minds' card with all this information from their form tutor. There will also be dedicated PSE lessons focusing on how pupils can remain positive and resilient as they adjust to the school routine.

For more information on supporting you and your child's health and wellbeing, and helping them with the transition back to school, the pack <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/MHF-Scotland-Parents-Pack.pdf> has some nice ideas and strategies for younger children and <https://www.familylinks.org.uk/resources-for-parents> and <https://youngminds.org.uk/> are ideal for older children.

And finally, whilst it is incredibly important to acknowledge the challenges and losses that we have all experienced due to the virus, it is also vital we focus on building strong relationships and look to the future with confidence. With the knowledge that a strong network of support is available, some of the worry that pupils may be experiencing, hopefully, will be alleviated.

Kind regards

**Elizabeth Langley**  
**Assistant Rector**