



### In this first issue, we focus on what the Guardian recently described as “the intolerable mental health crisis among teenagers.”

Sleep problems, self-harming, eating disorders, and cyberbullying are terms that grace the headlines on a weekly basis. It has never been easy to be an adolescent, but it does seem that our age of over-information and social media has compounded the pressures. With traditional boundaries eroding, some young people seem ready to be swayed by the next breeze, flapping and desperate for an anchor.

As parents and as educators we face a growing challenge, but we have the opportunity to work together to ensure that from early on our children are able to think for themselves, give their best in what they do, and know their worth as individuals.

#### At Emanuel

The Life Education programme, delivered weekly by the form tutor, provides our students with the skills above, supporting, in the process, the aims of Emanuel School.

Life Education is very much a whole-school effort. We work closely with the Parent Association and with the school's academic departments, on the one hand to support parents in this partnership, and on the other to ensure that Life Education is delivered not only in the one lesson per week, but throughout the curriculum, underpinning each form tutor's work.

#### At home

It may be tempting, as parents, to feel helpless in the face of this crisis. However, while we cannot protect them from some of the difficulties of the outside world, we can make a significant difference in the way they experience life, with all of its ups and downs. Using neurological research on the “plasticity” of the teenage brain, the recently published Teenagers Translated: a Parents' Survival Guide, describes the positive impact that parenting can have at all stages of the teenage journey.

Janey Downshire and her co-author, Naella Grew, are qualified counsellors who specialise in Teenage Development and Emotional Literacy. In a recent article in the Guardian, Janey advises that we start a dispassionate conversation with our child, aiming initially to find out where they stand on certain issues.

*(...) open up a general conversation on that topic (as opposed to announcing that you are anxious about it, which will close the topic down).*

*“Do many people your age...”, “What are your thoughts/views on...”, “What do friends say about...”, “What would you do if...”*

A further opportunity to open up a conversation is to ask your child what they discussed in their weekly Life Education lesson. We list the topics we are discussing this autumn term for your reference.



#### Topics pupils have discussed this autumn term include:

<b>Year 6</b>	Best practice in online communications, friendships, staying safe, dealing with peer pressure, charity
<b>Year 7</b>	Time management for better study skills, bullying, democracy and personal values, relationships and emotions, puberty and relationships
<b>Year 8</b>	Body image, living online, expressing ourselves, the benefits and limitations of social media, staying safe on and offline, budgeting
<b>Year 9</b>	Study skills, resilience and the power of failure, consumer ethics, respect and equality, sex and relationships
<b>Year 10</b>	Citizenship, the fashion value chain, study skills, the meaning of happiness and success, drugs, diversity, sex and relationships
<b>Year 11</b>	Study skills, mental wellbeing (dealing with anxiety), respect and self-worth, careers, volunteering
<b>Lower sixth</b>	Induction into sixth form study - 'surviving your workload' - finding 17 hours of study, top tips from upper sixth formers, the value of volunteering, a presentation on the trip to India and how to apply
<b>Upper sixth</b>	Completing UCAS applications

#### In addition to tutor-led Life Education sessions, we have hosted the following speakers:

<b>Year 6</b>	NSPCC on Staying Safe
<b>Years 7, 9, 10, 11 and lower sixth</b>	Elevate Education on study skills

### Where to turn for more help

A number of websites provide support to parents who have a concern about their child. All have a specific section for parents.

#### Online safety:

- [www.getsafeonline.org.uk](http://www.getsafeonline.org.uk) includes short advice videos for parents on issues around using the internet safely
- Similarly, [www.thinkuknow.org.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.org.uk) has detailed sections on specific concerns, from cyberbullying, to sexting, to online grooming

#### Mental health:

- If you are worried about your child's mental health, [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk) has a section dedicated to concerned parents. You are also welcome to contact the school counsellor or your daughter's/son's form tutor.
- The website Teenagers Translated, managed by Janey Downshire and Naella Grew, has a section listing for what every parent needs to know on a number of mental health issues, as well as a link to their blog.
- The charity [www.stem4.org.uk](http://www.stem4.org.uk), run by clinical psychologist Nihara Krause, has practical suggestions for parents and young people on eating disorders, self-harming, anxiety and depression, and addiction.

#### Specialist speakers in the pipeline this year

<b>Autumn term</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationship and sex education (all academic years)</li> <li>• Drugs: The Daniel Spargo-Mabbs Foundation: "Supporting young people to make safe choices about drugs"</li> </ul>
<b>Spring term</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationship and sex education (all academic years)</li> <li>• Equality, self-respect and belief: 2-3 degrees will address year 11, holding a separate workshop for boys and one for girls, to encourage students to speak openly</li> <li>• Resilience: Jack Galworthy, who with fellow student Freddie Wright broke the record for the youngest pair to row across an ocean, will speak to years 7 and 10 about stepping out of our comfort zone and taking on new challenges</li> </ul>
<b>Summer term</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disability: Robyn Steward will speak to the lower school pupils on living with a number of disabilities</li> </ul>

#### Parent talks organised this autumn term

<b>25th September</b>	Study skills
<b>9th October</b>	The Party Scene (Julia Johnson)
<b>27th November</b>	Mental health (Nihara Krause)

### Key contacts

#### Head of Life Education

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#### School counsellor

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#### Designated safeguarding lead

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#### Acting head of sixth form

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