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Headteacher/Pennaeth: M. J. Stephens NPQH, P Dip Ed, BA (Hons)

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11th September 2024

Dear parents/carers,

Carnegie Centre of Excellence for Mental Health in Schools - Gold Award

I am very pleased to announce that we have been awarded the Carnegie Mental Health Gold Award in recognition of our excellent 'whole school' approach to mental health and wellbeing provision. This award is titled the Carnegie Centre of Excellence for Mental Health in Schools – **Gold Status**. It validates all the work we have completed for many years around mental health and wellbeing, and over the last 18 months we have implemented a range of different strategies to secure the 'Gold Award'.

The award was established several years ago by the Carnegie Centre of Excellence for Mental Health in Schools – part of Leeds Beckett University – and social enterprise Minds Ahead. The award aims to strengthen pupils' mental health by supporting schools to make a positive change at all levels of the UK's education system, improving pupils' outcomes and life chances.

Mental health and wellbeing are at the heart of our school community, we value emotional wellbeing and caring for one another as much as academic success, and our work towards this award has helped us to shape our whole school improvement priorities, which has directly impacted on what we do for everyone at Porthcawl Comprehensive School. In our assessment, it was noted that we have a strong commitment to making mental health a strategic priority and developing a culture that promotes mental well-being for everyone.

Our work towards this award has been led by Miss Kath Owens, Assistant Headteacher: Director of Planning and Communication, who has developed our leadership strategy whilst also coordinating and planning our structure, culture and support for pupils and staff. I am proud to say we have an outstanding 'whole school approach' involving pupils, staff, governors and several professional partners. We hold this award for three years, and we will continue to develop all that we do to support mental health and wellbeing for everyone within our school community.

By achieving this award, we have demonstrated that we are using evidence-based approaches that align to professional and government guidelines. We have effectively used a developmental framework to evaluate our mental health practices, identify gaps, develop and strengthen these and work towards building an emotionally healthier environment.

To achieve this award, and to demonstrate our whole-school approach to mental health we have been assessed against eight key competencies. Here is an overview of the eight competencies:

1. **Leadership and Strategy:** Senior Leaders develop and implement the strategies and structures needed to improve mental health in the school.

2. **Structure and Culture - Staff:** Leaders regularly consult with employees from across the school to gain informal and formal feedback about wellbeing.
3. **Structure and Culture - Pupils:** Mental health awareness is embedded in the curriculum and is designed to meet the needs of the pupils specific to their social and emotional needs and developmental age.
4. **Support for Staff:** A comprehensive staff health and wellness offering supports staff mental health.
5. **Support for Pupils:** Pupils feel their worries and concerns are heard, respected and taken seriously by staff.
6. **Staff Professional Development and Learning:** Staff development and learning is aligned to expected, clearly defined, competencies which set out the mental health requirements for their role.
7. **Working with Parents and Carers:** The school provides learning, guidance and support for parents/carers to help them understand children and young people's mental health and its impact on their behaviour and learning.
8. **Working with External Services:** The school has developed strong links with CAMHS and other agencies ensuring regular two-way communication, support and guidance.

We are committed to creating an ethos which puts mental health and wellbeing at the forefront of what we do and achieving this award is not just recognition of our excellent whole-school approach to mental health, it is a recognition of our commitment to improving the life chances of our pupils whilst also highlighting the excellent work we are doing to promote mental health for the children and adults in our community.

As already mentioned, credit should be given to Assistant Headteacher, Miss Kath Owens who led on the award coordination and credit should go to our wide range of pupil and staff wellbeing groups who have also done an exceptional job in raising awareness and making a difference to mental health and wellbeing. I also extend thanks to members of our governing body and our professional partners.

All that we do around mental health & wellbeing is centred around bringing conversations between staff and pupils out into the open. We pride ourselves on the culture, climate and ethos at Porthcawl Comprehensive School and this award highlights all the excellent work that we are doing at PCS.

To celebrate our success, we have been invited to be part of a UK wide mental health & wellbeing showcase publication and a press release to celebrate our achievements will be released very soon. I will write again on Friday.

A very proud Headteacher!

Best wishes,

Mike Stephens

M Stephens
Headteacher

