

Secondary entry #17: St Mary's High School Gateshead



The Messenger



St Mary's student, James Walker enjoys music opportunities.

Picture: Rachael Copas

Being in tune with society

By RACHAEL COPAS

AS modern society is developing and constantly changing, one point that remains the same is the importance of music in everyday life. Through the generations, music has been vital. From entertainment at dances, to songs of praise and mercy, to providing an escape, one can express how they are feeling and describe their individuality through a melody.

Science confirms that music opens up certain parts of the brain that can improve one's learning, creativity and independent thinking. Through the research, it is clear that the most important feature is that of the release of feeling and emotion that occurs through music. This release is linked to helping mental health, which is why music therapy is a popular trend in today's society. "Endorphins triggered by listening to and making music provide a kind of natural pain relief, where dopamine leads to feelings of buoyancy, optimism, energy and power," Dr Katrina McFerran, a music therapist from the University of Melbourne, said.

Youth in today's society use music as an escape. "It helps me get away from everything," James Walker, a rap musician at St Mary's, Gateshead, said. He said music is "a way of expressing yourself."

Music in general is one of the most powerful ways of communicating, triggering emotional, cognitive and physiological responses, and connects people, without generalisations or expectation.

By LILY MASON

GLOBALLY, the mental health of youth has become a rising and problematic concern. Studies show that the main issue among children and young people is coping with stress relating to school and social situations.

Psychological disorders including depression and anxiety are being found more commonly among young people between the ages of 12-25. Mental health is fundamental for one's wellbeing and quality of life, and the presence of one of these disorders can significantly impede a child's social development, their education and their relationships.

Sometimes it is difficult for parents and friends to notice a change from normal moodiness to an underlying mental health issue. At school, most people with a mental illness don't want to fail but can't find the confidence and motivation to do well. "Youth mental health has increased through greater understanding of symptoms and characteristics... Factors that contribute to youth mental health issues are peer pressure, parental expectations, society's ideals and personal expectations," said Mrs Meagher, a teacher at St Mary's High School, Gateshead.

In today's society there is a lack of trust and many students find that



Social exclusion at school can have serious effects on students.


Picture: Lily Mason

social situations are very tense. Two students from year 8, said that fake friends and gossip can make life at school very difficult and hard to find people to confide in. They know that people are very judgemental when it comes to appearance and your family's socioeconomic status and this can also hinder friendships.

Sarah Adams, a former worker at Headspace and current Compeer

Hunter co-ordinator at St Vincent de Paul says, "It is possible that the increase [of mental health issues in youth] is due to the overwhelming societal pressures that young people feel to 'live up' to the perceived expectations set out by media outlets and the wider community. This being said, there have also been a number of positive steps and organisations, such as Headspace, put in place to assist young

people in feeling less isolated and stigmatised." She said that by doing something you enjoy – creating a 'to-do' list for school, talking to someone and contacting organisations – you will be actively dealing with school stresses and you won't feel as overwhelmed.

 If you need to talk contact Headspace at headspace.org.au or on 4929 4201



It's time we stopped bullying together. No matter how big or small you feel.

Picture: Deadra Rego

A solution to an inevitable problem

By ANGELICA DABU and DEADRA REGO

HIGH school is generally viewed as a turning point in your life, where you prepare for adulthood and make decisions about which direction your life might take.

It is where lifelong friendships are formed and teenage love flourishes. However, bullying can also be a part of school. It can be

physically, emotionally, and socially detrimental. Bullying is not something students ask for but they don't know how to stop it.

Bullying is the use of force, threat or coercion to abuse, intimidate, or aggressively dominate others. It comes in many forms including physical, mental, and emotional. Bullying can have many effects including depression, anxiety, self-harm, in some

cases even suicide. Psychologists report when a person is bullied it can change their perspective of themselves and life in general.

Bullying isn't easy to stop and many people will experience it. Instead of trying to stop bullying through organisations and programs, the focus should be on teaching students and victims how to deal with it. People need to fight it.

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