PRESS RELEASE

PICS

For Immediate Release

Dunoon Grammar Leading in Tackling Mental Health Stigma

DUNOON Grammar School is looking to bring the community together to speak about mental health.

Over the last year the school has become one the most active schools in Scotland in improving attitudes around mental health. They are one of six pilot schools for the brand new 'What's On Your Mind?' pack from national anti-stigma programme See Me.

The school has been working with See Me over the last year to pilot and test the pack which supports teachers, and pupils to develop skills to tackle stigma and discrimination.

As part of their work they are holding a Walk a Mile event around Dunoon on June 9th. Pupils from all over Scotland will be coming to take part in the walk, as well as Scottish Commonwealth Games cyclist Rab Wardell.

The walk will be taking place through the centre of town and people from Dunoon are encouraged to come out and get involved. A market place on mental health will be held between 11.30am and 2pm at Argyll Gardens.

The idea of Walk a Mile is to bring together anyone who cares about tackling mental health discrimination, to break down barriers as they walk a mile in each other's shoes.

So far thousands of people have taken part in Walks across Scotland, getting a chance to see each other as they really are, not the labels they may have been given.

Head teacher at Dunoon Grammar School, David Mitchell, said: "I am extremely proud and honoured that Dunoon Grammar is one of only a small number of schools chosen as a pilot for See Me.

"Mental health is an extremely important subject, but one which people sometimes feel too ashamed to talk about. It shouldn't be this way.

"We need people to realise that it's okay to feel sad or anxious, and we need them to know that it's okay to open up and talk about their emotions.

"We want to show that mental health can be a topic of everyday conversations, and we are all responsible for creating a positive attitude about it.

"We have decided to hold a Walk a Mile, in association with See Me, which will be attended by a wide variety of people. It would be great if the local community could join in and support the cause too."

Last year a group of pupils from the school attended a SAMH event in Edinburgh and met with SAMH ambassador Sir Chris Hoy, where they spoke about the work they have done in mental health.

Laura Sharpe, See Me's young person's officer, said: "Dunoon Grammar is a brilliant example of how much it benefits young people when mental health is openly talked about.

"We can't wait for the Walk a Mile event and would love to see a great turn out from the town, showing that it is okay not to be okay."

The walk will be coming through the town from 12pm, stopping by the Argyll Gardens where there will be a marketplace full of information on mental health. It will then loop around the town.

ENDS...

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: NICK JEDRZEJEWSKI [Media and Communications Officer]

0141 530 1049/07710 387 517

Nick.jedrzejewski@seemescotland.org

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. See Me is Scotland's National programme to end mental health stigma and discrimination, enabling people who experience mental health problems to live fulfilled lives.

We do this by:

- Mobilising people to work together and lead a movement to end mental health stigma and discrimination
- Working with people to change negative behaviour towards those with mental health problems
- Ensuring that the human rights of people with mental health problems are respected and upheld

2. Follow See Me on Twitter @seemescotland or find us on Facebook: Facebook/seemescotland, http://seemescotland.tumblr.com/, https://medium.com/@seemescotland, or at www.seemescotland.org

3. See Me is managed by SAMH and the Mental Health Foundation and funded by Scottish Government and Comic Relief

4. We work in partnerships with VOX, the Scottish Mental Health Cooperative and the Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival to bring about a meaningful change in behaviours.