**High School: New Person in Charge**

Miss Reilly is the new Director of Student Welfare (DOSW) of the High School, replacing Mr. Jared Hatch who left last year

Miss Reilly grew up in Glasgow, Scotland. She studied at Durham University in England where she received her Master's in chemistry. She is now working on her Master's in Education from the University of Cambridge. She is working on her thesis for it which focuses on improving the motivation of students in the classroom. She went on to her first teaching job where she found her love for teaching. This led her to join BISB in where she has been teaching chemistry at both the middle and high school level and will continue to do so alongside her new role as DOSW.

Miss Reilly had been interested in the pastoral aspects of education in her first job where she was the mentor to a class of Year 7’s. Many of the students in this class, she said, were having mental health trouble, which she never expected.

“Seeing 11-year-olds have these kinds of issues with their mental health was quite shocking,” she said. “They would be in my classroom every single day for lunch, in an attempt to be in a safe environment. That was my first introduction into the world of mental health and got me involved in the pastoral side of education.”

Her interest in pursuing the role developed through discussions she had with Mr. Wilkinson, a former teacher at BISB who used to be the DOSW for the high school. When Mr. Hatch left in the spring of last year, she felt it was the right time for her to apply for the role.

As DOSW, she is collaborating significantly with the DOSW of middle school, Ms. Stephanie Minto, and the DOSW of the primary school, Mr. Mark Tugwell to understand the role. She is continuing to work with them constantly to create consistency between actions for student welfare taken at all three levels of the school, something that she feels has been missing at the school recently.

She does acknowledge, however, the differences between student welfare in the three levels of the school.

“The key thing for us is trying to find some kind of middle ground between what our priorities are at the moment. We can find activities for everyone to participate in. When it comes to behavioral policies, those are different. When you're in Year 13 and you shout out an answer, you don't go on the cloud, as a younger student might.”

For Miss Reilly, the mental health of students is a top priority. With the continuation of the Pandemic, and the emergence of the Delta Variant. its effects on mental health are only getting worse. Miss Reilly is taking many new initiatives which she feels will help improve the mental health of students, by fostering community. These initiatives include bolstering the current house system and reforms to the mentor sessions.

Currently, there are four houses at BISB: Adams, Franklin, Jefferson, and Harvard. Students throughout the school are assigned to one of the houses. As a result, each house spans from students Year 1 through Year 13. Miss Reilly thinks developing BISB’s current house system is an important step to unify the school, across the primary, middle, and high school levels.

“I want the house system to be where individual students feel part of a family, across different year groups, because it is a nice way for older students to still know and look out for the younger students.”

One major change she is making to the current system is adding student leadership to each House, with a house captain and vice-captain. This is part of her broader plan to foster student leadership throughout the school, something she has emphasized ever since she applied for the role.

“It is important that they start thinking about ways that they can show leadership because, as a student, every single university and job you apply to will ask how you have done so at some point in your life,” she said. And having those small roles, such as house captain, are terrific starting points. They also allow students to start developing their skills.”

Another area of focus for Miss Reilly is reforming the mentor sessions. In the past couple of years, mentors have not been very engaged with their classes, reducing the effectiveness of the sessions. Miss Reilly is changing the mentor sessions by bringing more of a structure to them with daily activities. These activities include discussion of current affairs, learning new study skills, riddles, and quizzes like Kahoots. She is also making sure students are on time to school for the mentor sessions through g new policies where students make have to begin making up the time they are late through detentions.

Miss Reilly also wants mentor sessions to be a safe space for students.

“If you come to school and you've argued with a friend or a parent, the mentor groups should be somewhere where you feel safe from all that external stress and chaos.”

Miss Reilly believes it would be beneficial for mentors to get some say in which grades they want to be a mentor for.

“Listening to the mentors' opinions is worthwhile because, at the end of the day, they have an opinion for a reason. And if they've got a good relationship with the year sevens in one year, then it would be a good idea for them to be a year eight mentor in the next year.”

In another initiative to tackle mental health, Miss Reilly is keen to put together a wellbeing council. This council would be led by the students where they advocate for measures that can improve the well-being of students.

“It could be as simple as each subject having its day for deadlines,” she said. This way, students know that science is due on a Monday or math is due on a Tuesday. That would be a really small thing that the student council could do, which would be very effective. Alternatively, they could collectively put forward that the students are not happy wearing shirts and ties every day, which would be much more difficult to change.’

Miss Reilly has several ambitions to improve BISB as the new DOSW of the high school. The major changes that she plans to make and the initiatives that she plans to take have the potential to fundamentally shape the BISB of the future.