Yoga Boosts Mental Wellbeing in Leicester School

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A five-week yoga programme at South Wigston High School has made a powerful difference to students' mental wellbeing – helping girls feel calmer, sleep better and manage their emotions more effectively.

The initiative, delivered by the British Wheel of Yoga (BWY) in partnership with the South Leicestershire School Sports Partnership (SLSSP), was launched in response to worrying local mental health data.

According to HealthWatch
Leicestershire, 38% of female teens in the county report experiencing anxiety, with the same proportion saying they have self-harmed. To help tackle this growing crisis, a group of girls in Years 7 to 9 were invited to take part in weekly yoga sessions designed to support emotional wellbeing and build resilience.

Through gentle movement and breathing exercises led by Desford-based BWY teacher, Lucy Pearce, the participants learned practical techniques for managing stress – and the results were striking.

Average stress levels among participants dropped from 3.56 to 2.38 on a five-point scale, while mood scores improved from 3.44 to 2.50. Energy levels saw a notable increase from 3.22 to 3.88 with students also reporting better sleep, improved concentration and feeling more in control of their emotions.

Sara Fletcher, Principal at South Wigston School said: "The impact of this yoga programme has been transformative for students. We've seen increased engagement in lessons, and students telling us they feel calmer and more focused. This complements our wellbeing strategy and provides practical tools our young people can use throughout their lives."

Peter Tydlesley, CEO of the BWY, said: "These results speak for themselves. In just five weeks, we've seen clear improvements in the students' ability to manage stress and improve their overall wellbeing. This reflects the real, practical value of yoga as a tool for emotional resilience – something every school should consider offering."

Following this success, BWY and SLSSP are now exploring opportunities to expand the programme to other Leicestershire schools, potentially offering vital support to hundreds more young people across the county.

Full details of the report can be found here.

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