



Supporting the Mental Health and Well-Being of our School Community

This is the third leaflet that will provide you with an understanding of how we can help each other to support the emotional well-being and mental health of the school community.

At Green Ridge Primary Academy, we are committed to supporting children, staff and parents in their well-being and mental health. We know that well-being, physical and mental health are all essential to positive learning experiences and future successes.

Our aim is to provide help, tips and resources to support both adults and children as we recognise the importance of parents and carers feeling supported and well in themselves.

Children's Mental Health Week 2021

Place2Be is a children's mental health charity providing mental health support in schools. From 1-7 February 2021, we're taking part in Place2Be's Children's Mental Health Week. This year's theme is 'Express Yourself'.



Expressing yourself is about finding ways to share feelings, thoughts, or ideas, through creativity. This could be through art, music, writing and poetry, dance and drama, photography and film, and doing activities that make you feel good.

What's it all about?

When children are able to find creative ways to share their feelings, thoughts or ideas this can result in helping them feel good about themselves and who they are.

It's really important to remember that being able to express yourself is not about being the best at something or putting on a performance for others. It is about finding a way to show who you are, and how you see the world, that can help you feel good about yourself.

Given that this past year will have left many of us feeling out of control and helpless, supporting children to express themselves is arguably more important than ever.

What can you do?

Here are a few simple ways to encourage your child to express themselves:

- Could you build on existing interests or passions? Think about what has helped them get through the past year. A love for dancing? Baking? Drawing? Encourage your child by noticing their unique interests and praising their efforts.

- Trying new things can be a great way to find a new creative outlet. Try something new together! You could ask someone you know to share their creative hobbies and give it a go.

- Some children may not think of themselves as being creative. Try to focus on the importance of the process and the way it can make them feel, rather than the end result. Try not to judge and remember to give encouragement for trying rather than for doing something well.

- Listening carefully can help children feel more confident when expressing themselves. Try to minimise distractions and give your child your full attention when you're spending time together, being aware of your own body language and eye contact.

- Children are expressing themselves all the time but not necessarily with words. 'Listen' to everything they are trying to tell you with their behaviour, or with their play and creativity, or with their silence. It's all self-expression.

- Please remember—you don't need expensive equipment to get creative at home. Recyclable materials or older items you no longer have a use for can provide amazing inspiration, and of course there's no limit to your imagination!

(Place2Be, 2021)



Ideas to Support Mental Health and Well-Being

Zones of Regulation Check-In

Encourage your child to 'check-in' with their emotions throughout the day. The Zones can help with this. There are 4 'Zones' to describe how your brain and body feel.

More information about the Zones and how we use them can be found in Issue 2 of this newsletter [here](#). The Zones poster can be found [here](#).



If your child is not in the 'Green Zone' for home learning, encourage them to think about which 'tools' they could use to support them to move into the green zone, if appropriate.

Tools include:

- go for a walk
- get a drink of water
- relaxation or breathing techniques
- listen to music
- take a break
- talk about concern/worry
- sensory techniques—squeeze a ball

Plan Your Day

We are all adjusting again to a rather strange way of life which can be a risk to our mental well-being. As tempting as it may be to stay in pyjamas all day, regular routines are essential for our identity, self-confidence and purpose.

Stay Active

Being active reduces stress, increases energy levels and can make us more alert and support us to sleep better.

Go for a daily walk and have a go at the [PE Challenges from Green Ridge](#). [Jump Start Johnny](#) and Joe Wicks PE are also great ways to stay active!

Try Relaxation Techniques

Relaxing and focusing on the present moment can help to improve your child's mental health and lighten negative feelings. Have a go at trying some yoga with your child during the day. [Cosmic Kids](#) is fantastic and links yoga to stories. Why not try:

[Harry Potter Yoga](#)

[The Very Hungry Caterpillar Yoga](#)



For guided relaxation you can try [Peace Out](#).



Reflection Time

Make time each day for your child and the rest of your family to reflect on what went well. Recognising successes and the things you are grateful for, no matter how small, can boost well-being. Have a go at starting a diary where your child can write two or three things they have been proud about or are grateful for that day.

Connect with Others

Find creative ways of keeping in touch with family and friends. E.g. playing a virtual game together, another member of the family /friends reads a story via Zoom, or another virtual platform, or simply phoning or sending a supportive text.

Places to go for Support and Advice

Healthy Minds Bucks

Self-refer by calling 01865 901600 or submit an online referral [here](#).

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS Oxford Health)

01865901951 or [click here](#) for a referral form and more information.

NHS Every Mind Matters (<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>)

Child Bereavement Support

Helpline: 0800 02 888 40 or visit:

<https://www.childbereavementuk.org/>

Communicate your concerns with school

If you have any concerns about your child's emotional behaviour or well-being, please let school know.