



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

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

Mental Health Awareness Week

The Mental Health Foundation drive change towards a mentally healthy society for all, and support communities, families and individuals to live mentally healthy lives. The Mental Health Foundation is the home of Mental Health Awareness Week taking place this year from 18th–24th May.

This year's theme is 'kindness'. One thing we have seen all over the world is that kindness is prevailing in these uncertain times. We have learnt that amid the fear, there is also community, support and hope. The added benefit of helping others is that it is good for our own mental health and well-being; it can help reduce stress and improve your emotional well-being (Mental Health Foundation).



Supporting your child if they're feeling worried

It's normal for children to feel worried or anxious at the moment. We've all experienced sudden changes in our lives and routines – and we're living with lots of uncertainty. For some children, the coronavirus pandemic may worsen or trigger anxieties they were already struggling with.

5 things you can do to support your child:

1. Talk to them about what's going on. Find out how they're feeling and let them know it's okay to feel scared or unsure. Try to answer their questions and reassure them in an age appropriate manner. Remember, you do not need to know all the answers, but talking things through can help them feel calmer.
2. Help them to reflect on how they're feeling and encourage them to think about the things they can do to make them feel safer and less worried.
3. Reassure them that this will pass, you're there for them, and you will get through this together.
4. Spend time doing a positive activity with your child (such as reading, playing or cooking) to help reassure them and reduce their anxiety. This is also a great way of providing a space for them to talk through their concerns.
5. Keep as many regular routines as possible, so that your child feels safe and that things are stable. (YoungMinds)

What is mental health?

Mental health refers to how people think, feel and behave.

The Mental Health Foundation explain that if you're in good mental health, you can:

- make the most of your potential
- cope with life
- play a full part in your family, workplace, community and among friends

Some people call mental health 'emotional health' or 'well-being'. It is **just as important** as good physical health. Our mental well-being is **dynamic**. It can change from moment to moment, day to day, month to month and year to year.

Useful Websites

- Mental Health Foundation (<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/>)
- Young Minds (www.youngminds.org.uk)
- Mind (www.mind.org.uk)
- NHS Every Mind Matters (<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>)
- Anxiety UK (<https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/>)
- Place2Be—Children's Mental Health Charity (<https://www.place2be.org.uk/>)
- Anna Freud Mental Health Charity (<https://www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind/self-care/>)

Ideas to Support Children's Mental Health and Well-Being

Art Room

Place2Be, a charity for improving children's mental health, have created an Art Room resource which is a series of projects for primary aged children to make at home together with parents, carers and other family members. [Click here to access the Art Room](#). At Place2Be, they highlight the importance of art as a creative tool to develop resilience and connect with others. Their team are specialists in using art to enhance children and young people's wellbeing.

Daily Check In

Once a day, check in with each member of the family. This needs to be done when everyone is sitting together, perhaps during a meal time. Ask everyone to score how they are feeling and why. Emphasise that everyone can have good and bad days, this gives children a chance to realise that it's okay not to feel happy all the time. It also teaches them that it is good to talk about our feelings with others and this can help improve how we are feeling.

Finish these check-ins on a positive with a 'but luckily' sentence, e.g.

... but luckily we are getting to spend more time as a family.

... but luckily we are able to call/facetime our family and still speak to them.

... but luckily when this is over we can go there again.

Mindfulness Ideas

Practising mindfulness can help children (and adults) to focus, manage stress, regulate emotions and promote a positive outlook.

- **Squeeze Muscles:** Starting at your toes, pick one muscle and squeeze it tight. Count to five. Release, and notice how your body changes. Repeat exercise moving up your body.
- **Belly Breathing:** Put one hand on your stomach and one hand on your chest. Slowly breathe in from your stomach (expand like a balloon) and slowly breathe out (deflate).
- **Mindful Meal:** Pay attention to the smell, taste and look of your food.
- **Meditation:** Sit in a relaxed, comfortable position. Pick something to focus on, like your breath. When your mind wanders, bring your attention back to your breath.
- **Blowing Bubbles:** Notice their shapes, textures and colours.
- **Colouring:** Colour something. Focus on the colours and designs.
- **Listening to Music:** Focus on the whole song, or listen specifically to the voice or an instrument.

Mindfulness videos to support breathing—
<https://family.gonoodle.com/channels/flow>

Mindful Monsters free activity pack: <https://mindfulmonsters.co.uk/download-pack>

Keep Active

Exercising together is a great way to expend energy and stay fit, healthy and reduce stress.

Active Ideas:

[Joe Wicks PE Workouts](#)

[Home PE with Primary PE Planning](#)

[Jump Start Jonny](#)

[Cosmic Yoga](#)

[Green Ridge PE Challenges](#)

Wish List

To help children look forward to the end of social distancing, keep a wish list of all the people, places and activities your children are missing and look forward to having fun ticking them off when the restrictions are lifted. You can even create/decorate a special jar to put all of these wishes in!

Useful Books/PowerPoints/Links

[Coronavirus—A book for children](#)

[Julia Donaldson—Time to Talk](#)

[A children's guide to Coronavirus](#) (KS2)

[Let's Talk About Feelings](#) (KS2)

[Questions to Ask in Self-Isolation](#)