

## Supporting the Mental Health and Well-Being of our 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.

Did you know we now have a section on our Green Ridge website linked to Mental Health and Wellbeing? Please click [here](#) to find more information about Mental Health and Wellbeing, including our Wellbeing Newsletters, Zones of Regulation information and links to places to go for help and support.

### Mental Health Awareness Week 2021

Mental Health Awareness Week is the UK's national week to raise awareness of mental health. The week, which is hosted by the Mental Health Foundation ran from 10-16 May. This year, the theme for the week was 'Nature'. Across the country, people celebrated the mental health benefits of being around nature in their local community in a range of creative ways.



What did we do at school?

#### Nursery

The children discussed feelings and focused on the Zones of Regulation. Outside, the children sorted different pictures into the emotions and discussed why they may be feeling that way.



#### Reception

In Reception we thought a lot about all of the different emotions we might feel and how to handle them. We looked at feeling happy, anxious, jealous, angry and sad and talked about all of the things in our lives that make us feel happy.

#### Year 1

Took part in the cross country event and then reflected on how exercise can help with Mental Health - we linked this to our PE lessons and we held a small year group circle time assembly to discuss our thoughts and feelings. This was ahead of us sending out the transition letter for mixing classes.

#### Year 2

Discussed emotions and took their learning outside, reading different stories linked to their feelings.

#### Year 3

Took part in a circle time to discuss the zones of regulation and explain our feelings. We reinforced the message that it is okay to be in any zone but we can have a toolkit of strategies to help us in each zone.

#### Year 4

Linked their mental health sessions to the cross-country event, reflecting on the effect exercise has on their mental health. They also completed some mindfulness meditating/reflection time.

#### Year 5

Explored how exercise can improve our mental health and wellbeing, discussing the links between physical activity and the release of endorphins.

[Here](#) are some top tips on connecting with nature to improve your mental health.

#### Changes in Routine

As the children approach the Summer holidays, there may be a lot of change in your child's routine. Additionally, all children will be changing year groups/classrooms next year and some may have a new teacher.

Going through change can be scary or challenging for children. These [10 Top Tips](#) aimed at parents can provide a starting point for helping children struggling with a change in their life.

# Ideas to Support Mental Health and Well-Being

## Controlled Breathing

We teach controlled breathing which allows the body to start to regulate. When we are dysregulated/anxious/upset/angry etc, our breathing changes. It might be that we take frequent short breaths or big sobs. This is a sign that our bodies are dysregulated.

*Controlled breathing is a steady pattern of breathing where the out breath is longer than the in breath.*

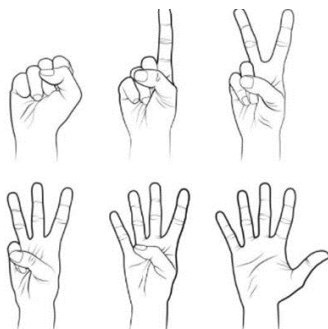
*In for 4 seconds and out for 7 (4:7) is a good starter controlled breathing technique.*

## Breathing Techniques

One of the **simplest**, most **effective** techniques for children (teens and adults too!) is mindful breathing. Teaching children to take **slow, deep breaths** helps to **calm** them physically and mentally. Here are some ways to make 'Take a Deep Breath' more fun:

### Blow out the Candles

Hold up your hand. Inhale through the nose and hold for 3 counts. Exhale out the mouth to "blow out" (fold down) a finger!



## More Breathing Techniques

### Finger Breathing

**Step 1:** Sit comfortably, resting one hand in front of you with fingers outstretched like a star. Have the pointer finger of your other hand ready to trace your hand.

**Step 2:** Starting at the base of your thumb on the outside of your hand, breathe in slowly through your nose as you slide your pointer finger up to the top of your thumb.

**Step 3:** Breathe out slowly and slide your pointer finger down the inside of your thumb. Breathe in as you slide your finger up the next finger and out as slide down.

**Step 4:** Continue breathing in and out as you trace your whole hand.



### Fog up the Glass

Hold your hand in front of your face, palm inwards. Inhale through the nose, close your eyes and make a 'haaa' sound out your mouth, feeling the air against your palm.

## Worry Time

### Collecting your Worries

Your child may be worrying about hypothetical future scenarios (what if worries) e.g.. "What if the car crashes on the way to school?". In this case worry time is a more suitable strategy.

Worry time involves your child/young person 'catching' their worries throughout the day and writing them down to deal with later. They then have a specific time set aside for worrying. For example, between 6pm and 6:20pm they will get out their daily worries and worry about them for 20 minutes. Stick to any planned worry time and remind your child when it starts and ends. They may want some support during their worry time to discuss their worries.

Outside of worry time, remind your child to save their worries for later. You/they could write it down and put it in their 'worry lope'. It is key that you support your child to engage in a dis-



tracting activity outside of and after their worry time.

One example of a distraction activity:

### Letter Game



Go through the alphabet and name countries, animals, and food!