

## 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.

A reminder that we have a section on our Green Ridge website linked to Mental Health and Well-being. Please click [here](#) to find more information about well-being and the Zones we use to support children with their mental health at school.

### 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

### Looking for free practical advice to help you support your child?



**Parenting Smart**, Place2Be's site for parents and carers, is full of expert advice and tips on supporting the emotional well-being and growth of primary-age children.

[parentingsmart.place2be.org.uk](https://parentingsmart.place2be.org.uk)

### Buckinghamshire Mind

#### Money Worries and Mental Health

[Buckinghamshire Mind](#) understands many of us are worried about money and our finances right now.

There is often a link between struggling with money and our mental health. Bucks Mind reminds our community that they are there to support where they can.

Visit **Mind's** money and mental health page [here](#).

[Mental Health and Money Advice Toolkit](#)

**Citizens Advice Bucks** have a range of helplines that people can contact. There are currently long wait times, so first try to find answers and information [here](#).

Benefits Claims—Help to Claim 0800 144 8 444

Debt Helpline—0800 240 4420

Consumer Helpline (energy, utilities)—0808 223 1133

Dedicated Food Poverty Helpline—01494785660



### Places to go for Support and Advice

#### Young Minds—Parents Helpline

For advice, emotional support and signposting about a child. 0808 802 5544 from 9:30am-4pm, Monday-Friday or [click here](#) for more information.

#### Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS Oxford Health)

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

#### Healthy Minds Bucks

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

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

#### Shout (24 hours)

Shout is a free, confidential, 24/7 text support service for anyone in the UK who is struggling to cope. Text the word 'SHOUT' to 85258.

#### Samaritans (24 hours)

You can contact the Samaritans for free, any time of day or night, on 116 123.

#### Communicate your concerns with school

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

# Ideas to Support Mental Health and Well-Being

## After School Restraint Collapse

Are you noticing angry meltdowns after school?

This isn't a tantrum! This is an emotional and physical collapse. Your child is likely to be so overwhelmed, they cannot help it.

This is as a result of the bottled up sensory stimulation of the day (bottling up their emotions and impulses in order to focus and learn), and they cannot help it.

Children who are more sensitive, have learning or social skills needs, or neurodivergent are more likely to be affected by this. However, it can happen to any child at any time depending on the day they have had at school and their individual needs on that day (e.g. beginning to get unwell or returning from sickness).

You can prepare for it:

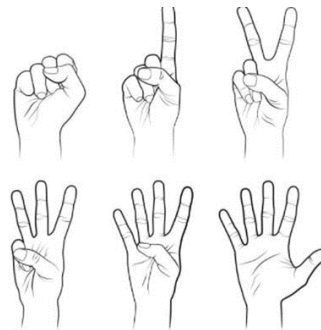
- Setting a routine so your child can decompress after school can help with sensory overstimulation
- Riding a bike or running around for a few minutes to release energy can help
- For those that need quiet time this may look like walking home holding hands without talking or listening to favourite music in the car with limited talking
- Offering a small healthy snack on the way and a drink can also help

## Breathing Technique Reminders

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!



### Breathing Buddies

This is a great tool to help your child connect with their breath and wind down after a long day. Place a favourite stuffed animal on their belly. Encourage them to take a deep breath in and watch their buddy rise up and down as they breathe.



### Shoulder Roll Breath

This has the added benefit of releasing tight muscles and tension. Ask your child to sit comfortably. As they take a deep breath in, encourage them to roll their shoulders up toward their ears. Ask them to drop their shoulders back down on the exhale.

## 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.



**Finger Breathing**

**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.

## 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.*