



Welcome to our Safeguarding Newsletter

Keeping children safe and well is our number one priority across our Multi-academy. This newsletter is designed to help school and parents to work together to safeguard children's wellbeing. This half term's topic is **mental health and wellbeing**. According to the Anna Freud Centre for Children and Families, over 50% of mental illnesses start before the age of 14 and 1 in 10 children and young people has a mental health disorder. Read on for information, advice and support.

What is 'mental health and wellbeing'?

- ◆ Mental health is the emotional and spiritual resilience which enables us to enjoy life and survive pain, suffering and disappointment. It is a positive sense of wellbeing and an underlying belief in our and others dignity and worth. It is influenced by our experience and genetic inheritance. (World Health Organisation)
- ◆ It affects how we think, feel, and act.
- ◆ It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices.
- ◆ Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence, through to adulthood.
- ◆ The Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families is a children's mental health charity that can provide extra information if required:
<https://www.annafreud.org/>

Issues which can affect children and young people include:

- ⇒ **Anxiety:** Children and young people may feel anxious in particular situations, such as speaking in class or socialising with peers, and may want to avoid these scenarios. They may find themselves worrying a lot and not being able to stop. They may also experience physical and visible symptoms, such as panic attacks.
- ⇒ **Low mood:** Low mood can mean an absence of feeling, irritability, lack of pleasure, and/or lack of motivation. Doctors define low mood as feeling this way for over two weeks. It is not always easy to spot low mood. Signs include: changes in behaviour and relationships with friends and school staff, becoming more withdrawn and fluctuating attendance. Low mood may be related to challenging home circumstances, bullying or difficult peer relationships.
- ⇒ **Self-harm:** Self-harm usually means cutting or injuring oneself deliberately. It gives a visible sign that something is 'not OK'. A child or young person may self-harm to feel more in control, to help them cope with negative feelings.

Why is it important to have good mental health?

Positive mental health allows people to:

- Realise their full potential.
- Cope with the stresses of life.
- Work productively.
- Make meaningful contributions to their communities.
- Increases self-esteem.
- Improving our mood.

Below you will find just some of the charities that can offer support towards your child's mental health. Please click on the logo for the web link to the charities website.



NSPCC

Barnardos

Young Minds children's charity offer support for you and your child. There is a free helpline and web chat for parents concerned about their child. **You can call them for free on 0808 802 5544 from 9:30am - 4pm, Monday - Friday.**

Top tips to support children and young people

Source



Be there to listen

Regularly ask how they're doing so they get used to talking about their feelings and know there's always someone to listen if they want it. Find out how to create a space where they will open up.

[How to start a conversation with your child](#)



Support them through difficulties

Pay attention to their emotions and behaviour, and try to help them work through difficulties. It's not always easy when faced with challenging behaviour, but try to help them understand what they're feeling and why.

[Help with difficult behaviour and emotions](#)



Stay involved in their life

Show interest in their life and the things important to them. It not only helps them value who they are but also makes it easier for you to spot problems and support them.



Encourage their interests

Being active or creative, learning new things and being a part of a team help connect us with others and are important ways we can all help our mental health. Support and encourage them to explore their interests, whatever they are.



Take what they say seriously

Listening to and valuing what they say, without judging their feelings, in turn makes them feel valued. Consider how to help them process and work through their emotions in a more constructive way.

[The Anna Freud Centre support guide](#)



Build positive routines

We know it still may not be easy, but try to reintroduce structure around regular routines, healthy eating and exercise. A good night's sleep is also really important – try to get them back into routines that fit with school or college.

[Sleep tips for children](#)

Making sure your child gets enough sleep is crucial to their cognitive development and supporting their mental well-being. Here are some tips on how to promote better sleep for your child.

1. Turn off all screens an hour before bedtime, this includes television, laptops, tablets and mobile phones. Screen activities can be mentally stimulating and also may inhibit the production of melatonin, the sleep hormone that helps us to feel drowsy.
2. Set aside time earlier during the day to allow your child to share any worries with you. It can be helpful to share how their day has been and what is planned for the next day.
3. Dim the lights in the hour before bed to create a relaxing environment and aid the production of melatonin.
4. Fine motor skill activities such as craft activities, model making, jigsaws or colouring pictures can aid relaxation.
5. Massage can help some children to unwind.
6. Classical music can be very soothing and can be relaxing to play in the background during the bedtime routine.
7. Mindfulness is being increasingly used and there is evidence to suggest that it can be helpful to promote relaxation and sleep.
8. Encourage your child to concentrate on their breathing. Imagine breathing in a beautiful white light and blowing out any worries or troubles each time they exhale. Breathing exercises are also useful for parents to carry out and are a great exercise to enjoy together.
9. Teach your child to progressively relax the muscles in their body. They can begin by tensing their feet to the count of 5 and then letting them relax. Next tense the calf muscles and relax, moving up to the thighs and so on until they have relaxed each part of their body.
10. End the day on a positive note by sharing 5 great things that have happened during the day.

Source– The Sleep Charity



**Anna Freud
National Centre for
Children and Families**

The Anna Freud support guide can be accessed via the following link. [Guide to supporting children who are worried | Ways to support young people and children with anxiety](#)

Dear Lord,

We think of those who are sad right now. We think of those who are despairing. We think of those who see no hope. In this time of quiet we remember. We think of God who knows pain. We think of God who loves.

We think of God who comforts.

In this time of quiet we remember.

Amen

