



SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER

Supporting your child's Mental Health

One in four people experience a mental health problem every year. Everyone needs help from time to time to deal with the stresses of modern life and the coronavirus pandemic has added an extra source of anxiety to children's lives. It is now more important than ever that we support young people's mental health and help them to develop the resilience and resources to keep themselves mentally healthy.

At Sir Graham Balfour School we support students to have good mental health through our curriculum and support services. We believe it is important that they are aware of trusted resources and contacts if they need help. Families also play a vital role in supporting young peoples' mental health and we know that the best support happens when school, students and families communicate.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Everyone has mental health, like physical health, and we all have the ability to manage our mental health. Managing our own lifestyle to promote positive wellbeing is important. To give our students the best chance of achieving and maintaining good mental health, they should:

- Get regular and quality sleep
- Exercise daily (even for just 20 minutes)
- Eat a healthy diet
- Keep hydrated
- Get some sunshine (trickier in the UK at times)
- Keep technology interaction (particularly social media) to a healthy level
- Stop worrying about the things you can't control and focus on the things you can
- Surround yourself with good people and cut toxic people out of your life (This may well be some family and friends)
- Stop comparing yourself to other people, there will always be someone better at certain things and vice versa
- Being thankful for what you do have, rather than the things you don't (We have won the lottery by being born in this country)
- Practise mindfulness and breathing techniques, as they do work

Enrichment

Having activities to do aside from the regular curriculum is essential for the continued growth and development of our students and can really support emotional wellbeing, especially during these difficult times.

Please encourage your child to keep an eye on the enrichment section of the student bulletin to see what opportunities there are for competitions and enrichment activities. For example; first aid, British Sign Language, Fitness activities and a variety of competitions.

Boosting your physical activity levels to improve your health and wellbeing

Boosting your physical activity levels is important to help you live a healthier, happier life. This is true now, more than ever before.

There are some easy steps that you can take in order to improve how you feel each day and ensure you're staying physically active.

Getting active is important for everyone – whatever your age, ability or fitness level.

Please copy and paste the below link into your browser for advice on boosting health & wellbeing.

[Do it to feel good - #DoingOurBit \(staffordshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/#DoingOurBit)



Sex and Relationship Education

All students have a regular Sex and Education lesson.

Below are this terms topics for each year group:

Year 7 - How to identify healthy and unhealthy behaviours in a relationship.

Year 8 - To understand that no-one has the right to intimidate someone else into giving their 'consent'.

Year 9 - To describe the risks of sharing intimate images.

Year 10 - To be able to recognise when romantic attention is unwanted or unacceptable, including online

Year 11 - To understand what to do if someone feels they are the target of stalking or harassment

Year 12 & 13 – To identify the elements of positive and negative behaviours in a relationship and to learn to confidently seek support for abusive situations, including identifying and evaluating most appropriate sources of support

Signs something is wrong

Around 1 in 8 children and young people experience behavioural or emotional problems growing up. For some, these will resolve with time, while others will need professional support.

It can be difficult to know if there is something upsetting a child or young person, but there are ways to spot when something's wrong.

Look out for:

- significant changes in behaviour
- ongoing difficulty sleeping
- withdrawing from social situations
- not wanting to do things they usually like
- self-harm or neglecting themselves

Remember, everyone feels low, angry or anxious at times. But when these changes last for a long time or are significantly affecting them, it might be time to get professional help.

You know your child better than anyone so, if you're worried, first think if there has been a significant, lasting change in their behaviour.

This could be at home, school or college; with others or on their own; or in relation to specific events or changes in their life.

If you're concerned or unsure, there is lots of support out there, including professional help in the support section of this page.

MindEd for Families also has information explaining some common behavioural problems in different age groups.

Top tips to support children and young people

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

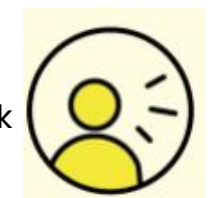
Being active or creative, learning new things and being a part of a team help connect us with others and are important ways we can all help our mental health. Support and encourage them to explore their interests, whatever they are.



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](#)



Bullying and Mental Health

According to the NSPCC, “Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else. It includes name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone. It can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online. It’s usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally.”

Young people who have experienced bullying are more likely to develop an anxiety disorder or suffer from depression. The same applies to those that are isolated and have difficulties with friendships at school.

Fears and worries are a normal part of child development and the content of fears can change according to the individual’s developmental stage. Anxiety disorders occur when the intensity of the fear or worry is so high that it starts to impact on the child’s functioning and well-being. Depression affects just under 3% of children under the age of 13 and over 5% of 13-18-year olds. An estimated 20% will have had one depressive episode before the age of 18.

Bullying is an understandable reason for a child to feel sad or anxious but it need not mean they are suffering from anxiety or depression. However, regardless of the impact on the child, bullying in any form is never acceptable. Whether the bullying takes place at school, at home, online or somewhere else, it should be reported to the relevant authority and those responsible should be held to account.

When to seek help

If you notice any symptoms of depression or anxiety as a result of your child being bullied, and these persist or worsen, then you should refer to a professional. If left untreated, depression and anxiety can continue into adulthood and cause significant problems. Some children may be fearful to talk about being bullied. In some cases the bully might have threatened them with consequences if they speak out about the abuse. So as a parent, teacher or carer, it’s important for us to provide a safe, open and non-judgemental environment for the child to be able to discuss their concerns.

Reporting Concerns about unwanted touching or when something just does not feel right.

If your son/daughter ever says they are unhappy about a situation how another person has touched them when they did not want, asked them to send a nude picture or just when something just does not feel right. Please let them know that they must go and see Mrs Metcalfe or Mrs Hedges as soon as possible.

If your child is experiencing any difficulties and does not know who to speak to regarding issues such as bullying or emotional wellbeing, or they have concerns about a friend; they can contact a member of the pastoral team for urgent help or by using the following email address:

help@sirgrahambalfour.staffs.sch.uk