

Our Well-Being Newsletter

Newsletter for pupils, parents & staff
Issue 8 - September 2021

St Michael's Catholic College, Llewellyn Street, London, SE16 4UN
02072376432 | contact@stmichaelscollege.org.uk
www.stmichaelscollege.org.uk



Welcome back to our Well-Being Newsletter!

September signals the end of summer, the beginning of autumn, and the start of a new school year.

The much welcomed 6 week break has come and gone but has hopefully enabled most of us to take a break from the school/work routine and relax our bodies and minds. Looking after our mental health is as important as our physical health so we hope that you had the opportunity to enjoy the summer break fully and that you gave yourself less pressure. If, however, things did not go according to plan and you struggled emotionally, remember that it is not a sign of weakness, the important thing being to be able to reach out for help. We are all humans but our experiences are all unique. It is a sign of strength to seek help, whether with a family member, a friend, an adult we trust or a professional. Whether positive or negative emotions, we must express them in a healthy way.



The power of Active Listening

We cannot always find solutions to our friend's, family member's, colleague's problems, but active listening goes a long way to help whoever comes to you with their emotional difficulties. Active Listening is where you make a conscious effort to hear not only the words that another person is saying but, more importantly, the complete message being communicated:

1. **Pay attention:** give the speaker your undivided attention, and acknowledge the message.
2. **Show that you're listening:** use your own body language and gestures to show that you are engaged.
3. **Provide feedback:** reflect on what has been said by paraphrasing. "What I'm hearing is...," and "Sounds like you are saying...," are great ways to reflect back.
4. **Defer judgment:** allow the speaker to finish each point before asking questions and do not interrupt with counter arguments.

"Am I weak for seeking professional help?"

Feeling low or suffering from a mental illness are not a choice. No one should have to feel ashamed of feeling that way any more than any other medical condition:

1. By seeking help you will understand yourself better. Through counselling or therapy, you will be able to better understand who you are as a person.
2. It takes courage to reach out: reaching out in the first place will take a lot of strength and will-power on your part.
3. Change is never easy: if you keep turning up and trying to make positive changes in your life, the change will come. It takes strength and persistence to push yourself through.

- Continuing on page 3 -

Parents' Corner

Be Secondary School ready: top tips for Parents/Guardians:



- Ensure that your child becomes responsible for their own timetable and packing their own bag, etc; knowing what lessons they have on what day, etc.
- Print out a pocket-sized timetable and laminate it so that they don't have to get their journal out just for the timetable.
- If they are using public transport for the first time, take them on the same bus journey prior, getting off at the correct stop and walking to the school or point of connecting bus, if need be, highlighting safe places to cross, etc.
- Get a cheap mobile phone for contacting them out of school hours.
- Phones can be an issue from that age onwards. Try and get some rules in place about their usage, e.g. no phone after a certain time in the evening. Your child will get a lot of information at school about staying safe online, but you will lose a lot of control over their social media habits and your child is likely to know a lot more about it than you. It is really important to be aware of what they are doing and set limits on screen time.
- Keep talking. Accept that you will lose them a little bit at this age. More about how to best communicate with your teenage child in our next issue!

Staff Corner

You may already feel tired after only 3 weeks back at work. The pressure of the new year and the necessity to get back into a routine can take its toll. Please find below some helpful tips for a healthy new school year:

- Try to do one thing each week that reminds you why you are in the role you are now, in the first place. If you are a Teacher, you can use a teaching strategy that you and your pupils all enjoy to remind yourself of the difference you're making in their lives.
- An act of appreciation or kindness produces positive emotions, stronger social connections and improved wellbeing. Also, each night, try and recall three good things that have happened during the day.
- Set a reasonable time for leaving school each day. Find ways to switch off, so that you can relax when you get home. In addition, try to limit the amount of school work you bring home.
- Good-quality sleep is one of the most important aspects of maintaining your physical and psychological health.
- Think of proactive ways to manage the stress in your life. Meet regularly with friends and family, spend time on hobbies you enjoy, read or watch things that make you laugh, and build into your daily routine proven stress-busting activities such as yoga, meditation or exercises that involve deep breathing.
- Setting goals is a great way to give yourself direction, focus and motivation. Try to ensure that all your goals are achievable, measurable and have an end point. It can be helpful to break a larger goal into more manageable sub-goal.

Download The Anna Freud practical guidance about school staff wellbeing:

<https://www.annafreud.org/media/11451/3rdanna-freud-booklet-staff-wellbeing-new-address-april-2020.pdf>

+

<https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/>



A summary of organisations which offer support in time of crisis (mild or severe):

 03444 775 774 www.anxietyuk.org.uk	 116 123 www.samaritans.org.uk	 0800 068 41 41 papyrus-uk.org
 www.bipolaruk.org.uk	 here for you 24/7 Text SHOUT to 85258 (24/7) giveushout.org	 0808 200 0247 (24 hours) refuge.org.uk
 0300 123 3393 www.mind.org.uk	 fighting for young people's mental health 0808 802 5544 youngminds.org.uk	 0333 212 7890 www.ocduk.org
 CAMPAIGN AGAINST LIVING MISERABLY CALM 0800 58 58 58 www.thecalzone.net	 Beat eating disorders 0800 58 58 58 www.b-eat.co.uk	

You are not alone.
Thousands of parents contact us every year and get the help they need.

T: 0808 802 5544
E: parents@youngminds.org.uk
W: youngminds.org.uk/parents

Free parenting helpline:
0808 802 5544

Kooth is a free online service offering emotional and mental health support for children and young people
www.kooth.com

Free online Emotional support for young people

Qwell: a free online counselling support for over 25s

Cruse Bereavement Care
Somebody to turn to when someone dies

“Am I weak for seeking professional help?”

(Continuing from page 1)

4. Mental health problem should be treated equally to physical health problems. In fact, many mental health problems will have a physical effect on you too.

“The ultimate act of bravery is to admit that you are struggling with something that is bigger than you can deal with alone.”



† Chaplain’s Corner †

Loving, ever-living and compassionate God,

**You understand the pain of loss, the heartache of bereavement,
May we hold in our hearts all those whose families or friends have died.**

**You are a light that shines in the darkest times,
Guide us and heal us in our sickness and sorrow.**

**You comfort us in times of fear,
May we comfort each other, even as we keep apart.**

**You console and lead us in times of doubt and confusion,
May we follow the light of your love and spread hope.**

**You move our hearts to acts of generosity,
May we be led to share what we have with those in need.**

God of life,

**We thank you for the signs of your light in the midst of our darkness,
May we be signs of your compassion in the heart of your world. Amen.**