

Our Well-Being Newsletter

Newsletter for pupils, parents & staff
Issue 9 – October 2021

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Welcome to our October Well-Being Newsletter!

Summer is behind us, daylight becomes noticeably shorter and the temperature cools considerably. It is not all gloom however: nature is beautiful at this time of the year: most trees shed their leaves displaying beautiful colours, changing from green to red, orange, yellow or brown before falling. The season of autumn is also called the aurora season because clear evening skies make for good star gazing. In this issue we will be looking at Mindfulness and how it can help us when faced with situations which, at first glance, may appear as a challenge and lead to stress and/or anxiety. Mindfulness can help us slow down, appreciate the simple things and reduce those overwhelming feelings.

If homework, sibling fights, issues with boundaries, mood swings, mobile phone at the dinner table and arguments sound familiar, you may be the parent of a teenager. On page 2, you will find tips on how to better communicate with your growing child.



Mindfulness



What Is Mindfulness and how It can help with anxiety, stress or low mood?

Mindfulness is the basic human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we are doing. Stress is a natural response to a challenge. Paying attention to our thoughts and emotions with kindness helps transform our anxiety into actions we can take to meet the challenge.

The goal of mindfulness is to wake up to the inner workings of our mental, emotional, and physical processes.

Research has shown that mindfulness helps reduce anxiety and depression. By taking the time to be in the moment rather than rushing around or do several things at the same time for example, mindfulness teaches us to slow down, to enjoy a pleasant moment fully and slowly, thus reducing our stress levels.

Why not try your next walk in the park with mindfulness, taking the time to observe what is around you and appreciate the beauty of what you see? Why not try to wake up a bit earlier in the morning to fully enjoy a mindful breakfast, thus a less stressful start to your day?

Why I love BMX (Bicycle Motocross)

By Erick Ciruelo Plaza (9RU)



I love riding my bike the most because I get to go anywhere I want. I feel like I am free when I ride and that I can do anything. I believe people would love to ride a bike, especially a BMX racing one. Although it is challenging and you might not be good at it at first, you should give it a go. Some people have never tried BMX racing but once they have, they have become great at it. You always have to give something a chance.



Parents' Corner

Communicating with my teenage child



When communicating with your teenager, you need to accept that you are no longer number one in their life. Talking with your teenager involves quite a lot of your time until the right moment presents itself for a few minutes of real communication to take place:

- Direct adult questioning often leads teens to conclude that you are trying to find something out (their secret thoughts or what they have done wrong) which will bring the shutters straight down. If you have something difficult to talk about, try going for a drive together or choose a quiet time when you are cooking together for example.
- Teenagers will often engage better in conversations about other people – in a way that really helps you stay in touch with their thought processes, their values and opinions.
- Listen and model the style of communication you would like your teenager to adopt. Listen to what they are saying and summarise it back to them (“so you are angry because....”). If you use sarcasm, or shout, or belittle your child, then you must expect that to come straight back at you.
- Control your emotions: when faced with an emotional teenager, the priority is to stay calm and to remember that you are the grown up. Don't stay and engage.
- Show trust: you need to accept that your baby is growing up and that they need some independence adapted to their age. Give them a chance to show you that you can trust them and praise them when they did show you.
- Teenagers are still children. Although they often want to 'break free' from their parents'/carers' control, they still find reassurance and grounding by being given clear guidance and limits.

Young Mind, Parenting Helpline: free on 0808 802 5544 from 9:30am - 4pm, Monday - Friday.

Staff Corner

5 Tips To Manage Holiday Stress



Useful Mental Health and Support Resources:

The Headspace App offers free full premium access to teachers & school staff:

<https://www.headspace.com/educators-covid-19>

How to access Mental Health Services:

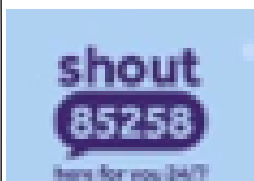
<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/nhs-voluntary-charity-services/nhs-services/how-to-access-mental-health-services/>

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



As a young person, who can I talk to if I am emotionally struggling?

There are a lot of people you can talk to. Talking reminds us that help is available and that we are not struggling alone with our difficult feelings, whatever they are. It can be hard to talk but remember that keeping emotions bottled up can prevent us from processing them and make them harder to bear. You can talk to an adult you trust such as a family member or a friend. You can also choose to talk to a member of staff at St Michael's such as the Wellbeing Advisor, the School Nurse, your Tutor or your Head of Year. Below are a range of organisations which specialise in supporting young people's emotional health:



Free, Confidential 24/7 Mental Health Text Support



Free online emotional Support for young people



The voice for young people's Mental Health and Well-being



0808 801 0677



Chaplain's Corner



Dear Lord,

Through you and your spirit all things are made anew,

We praise and thank you for the gift of life and the blessing of each new day and this new college term.

Grant us the strength and courage to walk in your light,
the grace to experience each day with you and the hope of all things being made new in Christ.

We ask this through Christ our Lord,

Amen

Ideas on what to do during October Half-Term in London



- **London Museums (most of them are free):**
 - The British Museum;
 - The Museum of London;
 - The London Dockland Museum;
 - The Natural History Museum;
 - The Science Museum;
 - The National Maritime Museum;
 - The V&A Museum of Childhood.
- **Southwark and Tower Hamlet Libraries** are opened throughout October half-term.
- **London parks:** every London park offers a place of tranquility and beauty. October half-term is the best time to admire the beautiful colours of autumn.
- **Surrey Dock Farm:** a working city farm and charity, ideal for young children: Rotherhithe St, South Wharf, London SE16 5ET.
- **Mudchute Park & Farm:** Pier Street, Isle of Dogs, London E14 3HP. Set in 32 acres of countryside in the heart of East London, the Mudchute is a community charity, with a working farm, stables, and a wide range of educational activities. It is open every day, free of charge.