

# Our Well-Being Newsletter

Newsletter for pupils, parents & staff  
Issue 29 – September 2023

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## Welcome back to our Well-Being Newsletter!

September, the start of a new academic year after hopefully, a relaxing summer break.

A lot of us stress about this new year looming, pupils and staff alike.

You might have just started Year 7 and the transition might be difficult for you: you miss your primary school, you have to get used to a new environment with so many new faces. This is all normal. Your Head of Year, your Tutor and all your teachers are there to make this transition as smooth as possible. As parents/guardians, make sure that you communicate any concerns about your child with the relevant members of staff at St Michael's.

If you are struggling emotionally, remember that you are not alone. Reaching out for help is the first step towards recovery, whatever age or gender you are. There is no shame and it is not a weakness to seek help when we feel sad, stressed, anxious, angry, etc. (please refer to page 4 for sign-posting to support organisations).

Our Well-Being Newsletters aim to cover all aspects of mental health and well-being and we hope you will enjoy them again this academic year.

## A little bit of history...

Do you know why the academic year starts in September?



The Education Act of 1899 made school compulsory for all children. This caused an uproar, especially for working class families who needed their children to work on the farm. A long holiday in the summer months meant that children could work on the fields and return back to school in September.

## Be Secondary School ready: top tips for Parents/Guardians of Year 7s:

- Be reassuring and talk with your child about any existing stress caused by the new academic year.
- Ensure that your child becomes responsible for their own timetable and packing their own bag; 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.
- 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.

# Healthy friendships with your peers

## Top tips for young people



- **Be kind and respectful to everyone:** remember to respect each other's differences with your words and actions. Take a moment to think about how you can show kindness to your peers.
- **Communicate clearly and honestly:** it can feel difficult to know how to start a conversation. Find a way that feels safe to you, whether this is face to face, over the phone, or in writing.
- **Be a good listener:** being a good listener is focusing your attention on the other person, switching off from distractions such as phones, TVs or other people. Practising being in the moment is one way to improve our active listening skills. Find somewhere comfortable to take a moment to pause and listen.
- **Be someone others can trust:** trust is an important basis for all healthy friendships. Trust can be shown through your actions and words. Be the person others can turn to, feeling safe and knowing you will be there.



# Staff Corner

## How can school staff look after their mental health?

- **Share your feelings:** it is important not to bottle emotions up. Think about who you can be honest and open with about your feelings, such as partners, friends or close colleagues. If you have concerns, try having a conversation with your line manager or senior team.
- **Keep things in perspective:** try and keep the basics going as much as you can, i.e. eating well, getting enough sleep and watching your caffeine and alcohol intake.
- **Appreciate the little things:** try to keep in touch with how you feel and what, if anything, is a particular issue for you. A distraction technique such as a podcast, meditation or time outside can be helpful in difficult times.
- **Keep a note of things you are grateful for,** and remember you do this job for a reason.
- **Plan ahead:** think about what helps lift your mood and gets you through stress, and make time for that. It is important not to sacrifice those things.

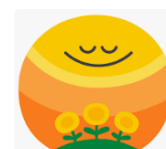
## Mental Health and Well-Being resources for school staff:

**Download The Anna Freud practical  
guidance about school staff wellbeing:**  
<https://www.annafreud.org/media/11451/3rdannafreud-booklet-staff-wellbeing-new-address-april-2020.pdf>

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

<https://www.headspace.com/educators>

<https://www.calm.com/>



# Why is sleep so important?

Sleep helps us process, heal and recover from the day. Our minds and bodies are intrinsically linked, so getting good sleep can help us maintain good physical health. It can also help boost our immune system, manage our hunger, improve our concentration, and prevent some health conditions. Sleep is integral to all aspects of our lives. Maintaining good sleep health can be particularly challenging for young people.

**Sleep and mental health:** sleep problems can be both a symptom of, and a contributor to, mental health problems.

Good sleep can help us to:

- manage feelings, emotions and behaviour,
- be alert and remember things properly,
- be attentive and learn better.

However, lack of sleep or poor quality sleep can:

- make us feel low, anxious, irritable or confused,
- make it harder to manage our emotions and the challenges in life.

Why can good sleep health be difficult to achieve?

Experiencing a sleep problem is very common with as many as 1 in 3 people having difficulties sleeping. One factor that can affect sleep health is developmental changes in our bodies. As our bodies change with puberty, the sleep/wake pattern tends to shift, resulting in a greater desire to go to bed later and wake up later. The lives and routines of teenagers don't always allow for waking up later, so many teenagers experience a chronic lack of sleep.

Tips for good sleep health:

- 1 Have drinks before bed that encourage a calming effect on the body and aid sleep, like chamomile tea.
- 2 Make time for exercise during the day to release tension and energy and bring your body into a restful state.
3. Create a wind-down routine an hour before bed – limit screen time and instead find ways to calm your mind, like reading or listening to relaxing music.

Our lifestyle and the environment around us can often impact our sleep health. It is vital that we find ways to reduce factors that negatively affect our sleep, and focus on what helps us achieve good sleep health.



For more information:

<https://www.sleepfoundation.org/how-sleep-works/why-do-we-need-sleep>

<https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/mental-health-issues/sleep/>



## Chaplain's Corner



Lord Jesus, I ask for Your help as I begin this new school year. Allow me to experience Your presence in the many blessings You put before me. Open my eyes to the new challenges and exciting opportunities that this new school year brings. Open my heart and mind to new friends and new teachers. Guide me to walk as you would want for me and I call upon St Michael our defender to grace me with the ability to overcome evil with goodness.

St Michael, pray for us.

# Help and Guidance

Services available  
all year round:



**Shout 85258** is the UK's free, confidential, 24/7 text support



Free text message support service for young people



Free emotional service for young people



Free advice and support



Free online counselling support for over 25s



Bereavement Support for children  
<https://rainbowsrgb.org>

