

Our Well-Being Newsletter

Newsletter for pupils, parents & staff
Issue 32 – December 2023

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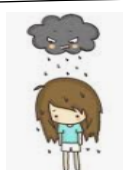
Welcome to our December Well-Being Newsletter!

There is not long to go now before many get to spread some good tidings and joy celebrating Christmas. It is about time with community, family, food-sharing, gift-giving and overall merry festivities.

Christmas and New Year are often associated with excitement and joy but it can also be a difficult time, straining people mentally, emotionally, physically and financially. There are many reasons why this time of year can be challenging (please see page 2, covering loss and grief). It is ok if you are not feeling full of joy during the festive season.

This time of year can also become a time to think about giving a helping hand to individuals who are less fortunate than us. A simple action can make a difference to someone's life.

If you are struggling, whether financially and/or emotionally, there are organisations which offer emotional and financial support (please refer to page 5 and 6 of this newsletter).



It is ok not to be ok

Mental health means different things to different people. However, it is something we should all be aware of. Mental health is our emotional, psychological and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to life and make choices.

How to spot the signs that someone is struggling with their mental health:

- Feeling particularly anxious, worried or unhappy and the feelings won't go away.
- Emotional outbursts.
- Difficulty sleeping.
- Significant changes to appetite or weight.
- Feeling guilty or worthless.
- Being quieter or more withdrawn than usual.

How to look after your mental health and well-being:

- **Manage your thoughts:** with as many as 100,000 thoughts going throughout our head every day, it is easy to feel anxious, angry or depressed. When this happens, we need to stop, ask ourselves why we feel this way and try and think of something different.
- **Relax your body:** you can try some special breathing exercises to help you relax (see our 'Breathe Yourself Better box on page 3).
- **Exercise:** good for both our physical and mental well-being, e.g. going out for a gentle walk or a run.
- **Eat healthily:** with rising prices, eating healthily is not always easy. So why not try frozen or tinned fruit and vegetables, which are often cheaper and also last longer?

Remember that it is always ok to ask for help for your emotional health just as it is for your physical health. You are not wasting anyone's time, whether you are having ongoing treatment or seeking support for the first time.

More Information on: <https://mentalhealth-uk.org/christmas-and-your-mental-health/>



Dealing with loss

Christmas can be one of the worst times of the year if you are grieving the loss of someone. There are ways to help you cope with the pain, come to terms with your grief, and eventually, find a way to pick up the pieces and move on with your life:

1. Acknowledge your pain.
2. Accept that grief can trigger many different and unexpected emotions.
3. Understand that your grieving process will be unique to you.
4. Seek out face-to-face support from people who care about you and/or professionals.
5. Support yourself emotionally by taking care of yourself physically.
6. Recognize the difference between grief and depression.



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



Bereavement support
for children

Chaplain's Corner



Prayer for the Bereaved

God of love and mercy,
embrace all those
whose hearts today
overflow with grief,
unanswered questions
and such a sense of loss.
Grant them space
to express their tears.
Hold them close
through the coming days.

Managing children and young people's grief at Christmas

It can be much easier for children and young people if the significant adults in their lives talk to them about Christmas and acknowledge that this might be a difficult time of year for them. Christmas can trigger some really powerful feelings for everyone – anger and jealousy towards those who haven't lost someone or sadness and loss because that special person has died. Children may want to talk about this or they might show you through their behaviour – maybe becoming more withdrawn or short tempered. By listening to your child, you are telling them that their feelings are natural and that they are not alone:

- . talk together as a family about how you feel and what you want to do.
- . make plans for Christmas that take into account everyone's wishes where practical.
- . take time to remember your loved one.
- . let your children know that it is still ok to laugh and have fun this Christmas.

<https://www.childbereavementuk.org/managing-christmas>



Breathe yourself better



- 1 – **Breathe in** through your nose to the count of four.
- 2 – **Hold** the air in your lungs for the count of four.
- 3 – **Breathe out** through your mouth to the count of four.
- 4 – **Hold** your lungs in an empty state for the count of four.
- 5 – **Repeat** steps one to four for at least five minutes.



Things to do in London during the Christmas break:



17 top Christmas lights in London:

<https://www.visitlondon.com/things-to-do/whatson/christmas/best-christmas-lights-in-london>

Christmas at Kew Gardens:

<https://www.timeout.com/london/things-to-do/christmas-at-kew>

Christmas Carols at St Paul's (free events):

<https://www.timeout.com/london/things-to-do/christmas-carols-at-st-pauls>

Ice-skating:

<https://secretldn.com/ice-rinks-skating-london/>

Peter Pan Cup:

<https://www.timeout.com/london/things-to-do/peter-pan-cup-1>

Winter Light at the Southbank Centre:

<https://www.timeout.com/london/things-to-do/peter-pan-cup-1>

Christmas at Kenwood:

<https://www.timeout.com/london/things-to-do/the-best-christmas-events-in-london>

Walking with the snowman art trail:

<https://www.timeout.com/london/things-to-do/walking-with-the-snowman-art-trail>

Covent Garden Christmas:

<https://www.timeout.com/london/things-to-do/covent-garden-christmas-1>



Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year!



Help and Guidance

**Services available
all year round:**



Bereavement Support
for Children



Free text message support
service for young people



Free online emotional
advice for young people



Free advice and support



Free online counselling support
For over 25s



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



Cost of living crisis - Useful links



<https://www.stepchange.org/debt-info/government-help-with-gas-electric-bills.aspx>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/cost-of-living-payment>

<https://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme>

<https://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment>

<https://www.stepchange.org/debt-info/emergency-funding.aspx>

https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/benefits/emergency_grants_loans_and_money_help

<https://www.trusselltrust.org/get-help/find-a-foodbank/>

BBC Food Family's £1 recipe meal plan:

https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/articles/budget_family_meal_plan_for_four#xtor=CS8-1000-%5BEditorialPromo_Box%5D-%5BNewsEditorial_Promo%5D-%5BNewsEditorial_Promo%5D-%5BPS_FOOD~N~~P_budget_meal_plannerFP%5D

