

Our Well-Being Newsletter

Newsletter for pupils, parents & staff
Issue 53 – January 2026

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**Welcome to our January
Well-Being Newsletter!**



About the month of January:

- The name for January comes from the Roman God Janus, who is always depicted with two heads. He uses one head to look back on the year before and the other head to look forward to the New Year.
- In Pasadena, California, a Rose Parade has been held every year since 1890. It has since been broadcasted worldwide and is typically viewed in over 100 countries around the globe.
- If you were born in January, your birthstone is a garnet.
- In leap years, January always starts on the same day of the week as April and July.
- The first operational underground railway in London was opened on January 10th, 1863.
- Some historical names for January include “Wulfmonath,” which came from the Anglo-Saxons because it was the month hungry wolves would come scavenging. King Charlemagne would call it “Wintermanoth,” meaning “winter/cold month.”
- Originally, the Roman calendar had only 10 months, and it excluded January and February.
- Julius Caesar added the 31st day to the month and completed it to the full month of January that we practice now.
- Generally, January is the coldest month of the year in the Northern Hemisphere.
- The equivalent month of January in terms of temperature in the Southern Hemisphere is July.

Mental Health and Well-being at St Michael's

Our college strives to provide a safe, calm and supportive learning environment, by implementing an early targeted support for pupils who need help.

We provide an evidence-based, holistic and whole school approach to help achieve this. This support also extends to staff and parents through various initiatives, such as Parent Partnership meetings, staff surveys, College Counsellor and School Nurse (also supporting staff), well-being events for staff, etc. Pupils are also offered a wide range of extra-curricular activities to widen their experiences.

Just as with physical health, one must not be afraid or embarrassed to seek help. Emotionally struggling is not a sign of weakness; it just means that we are humans. Reaching out for support takes courage and it is the first step towards recovery.

The Pastoral, Safeguarding and Inclusion team as well as our KS3 to KS5 Mental Health Ambassadors, all contribute to supporting the well-being of our pupils.

For more information about mental health support at St Michael's please refer to our school website:

<https://sites.google.com/stmichaelscollege.org.uk/mentalhealth/home>



Please also refer to page 5 of this newsletter for a list of external mental health support services.

How to beat the Winter Blues



Light & Activity

- **Get Outside:** Aim for daylight, especially midday, as it boosts mood and resets circadian rhythms.
- **Exercise:** Regular walks, even short ones, improve mood and sleep; being outdoors adds sunlight benefits.

Diet and Sleep

- **Eat Well:** Focus on complex carbs (vegetables, lentils) over refined ones (pizza, sugar) for stable energy.
- **Vitamin D:** Consider supplements (10mcg/400 IU) in winter, as many people are deficient.
- **Sleep Well:** Maintain consistent sleep/wake times and avoid screens before bed.

Mindset & Social Life

- **Stay Connected:** Schedule calls or visits with friends and family.
- **Engage Your Mind:** Start a new hobby, read, or do puzzles to stay active mentally.
- **Plan Fun:** Organize outings or enjoy simple pleasures like movies or ice-skating

If symptoms significantly impact your daily life, talk to your GP about options like counselling.

How to navigate the teenage years – Tips for parents



Parenting during the adolescent years often comes with frustration and angst for both parents and teens. Parents can survive the teenage years and help their teens thrive by understanding what adolescence is and having tips to deal better with its ups and downs:

Be a role model

The teenage years are a fantastic time because kids are developing their own personalities and getting a sense of who they are. But they also have a lot of questions and curiosity. As adults we need to be patient with them as they try to figure themselves out.

For parents, one approach to navigating your child's teenage behaviours and attitudes is to serve as a role model. Children watch everything parents say and do from the time they are infants. It is up to parents to model the behaviour they want to see in their children.

Social media and its impact on the teen years

Social media is a constant in today's teen life. Whether it is Instagram, Snap-Chat or TikTok, teenagers are turning to social media to stay in touch with friends and looking at a wide range of content. Unfortunately, this can become problematic due to the massive amount of inaccurate information promoted on social media platforms.

Adolescents are exposed to much information that is not true, just as they are developing their own personalities and sense of self. Unfortunately, they often believe whatever is online to be the truth. Parents must stress to their teens that not everything on the internet is accurate and true.

Set clear and consistent expectations

Parents can help their child's development through the adolescent years by setting clear expectations and being consistent with enforcing those expectations. Some things can be negotiable and will differ from one family to another. Other aspects should be non-negotiable like drug or alcohol use, or anything that puts your child in harm's way.

Communication is a two-way conversation

When raising a teen, communication is crucial. It is common for teens to feel like they are not being heard, whether it is about something light or a real, deep-seated issue they are having. The most important thing parents can do is just listen.

If parent-child positive communication starts early, by the time your child becomes a teen, they will be much more adept at communicating with you.

Useful links:

<https://www.annafreud.org/schools-and-colleges/resources/7-ways-to-support-children-and-young-people-who-are-worried/>
<https://thesleepcharity.org.uk/information-support/children/relaxation-tips/>
www.youngminds.org.uk

What to do in London this winter



Free winter activities in London include:

Top Free Indoor Activities:

- **Museums & Galleries:** The British Museum, Tate Modern, [Victoria & Albert Museum](#), [Science Museum](#), and Natural History Museum.
- **Art & Culture:** The National Gallery, [Tate Britain](#), Saatchi Gallery, and the Wellcome Collection.
- **Unique Indoor Spots:** Explore the [Barbican Conservatory](#) (check booking), British Library exhibitions, and the [Bank of England Museum](#).
- **Immersive Art:** Visit the [Outernet London](#) near Tottenham Court Road for free, immersive, high-screen shows.

Free Outdoor Winter Activities

- **Winter Lights:** The Canary Wharf Winter Lights trail (until January 31st) features stunning installations, active 5 pm–10 pm daily.
- **Views & Walks:** Sky Garden (free, but must book in advance), [The Garden at 120](#) (no booking required), Primrose Hill, and walking across Tower Bridge.
- A stroll through the **Royal Parks**.

More winter ideas on:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/d/united-kingdom--london/free-events/winter-activities/>



Chaplain's Corner

God of new beginnings, we bless you in the month of January, it is the time of new beginnings, the time of promises, the time of hope. We place our hopes and dreams in the care of our loving God that we may become better people when our hopes and dreams come true.



Mental Health Support for everyone



Free 24/7 mental health text support



Free online Emotional support for young people



Free parenting helpline: 0808 802 5544



A free online counselling support for over 25s



Samaritans
Hours: Available 24 hours.

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