

Our Well-Being Newsletter

Newsletter for pupils, parents & staff
Issue 59 – September 2026

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Welcome to our September 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. For a list of external support organisations, please go to page 5 of this newsletter.



Be Secondary School ready

Top tips for Parents/Guardians:

- Ensure that your child becomes responsible for their own timetable and packing their own bag, knowing what lessons they have on what day, etc.
- 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.
- Follow the new school phone policy for your child's safety, in and out school.
 - 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 as they grow into teenagers. More about how to support your child's mental health and keep communication open, on page 3.

Taking care of your mental health during autumn and winter



Autumn and winter are just around the corner. Some people are more vulnerable than others during these seasons. 41% of people in the UK find the winter to have a negative impact on their mental health. Looking after our mental health helps us be more resilient to deal with the challenges in these difficult times:

- 1. **Reframe your thoughts:** Sometimes we might develop patterns of thoughts that are unhelpful. This affects the way we feel and can lead to unhelpful actions. It is possible, however, to recognise, challenge and replace our unhelpful thoughts. Learning how to do this can really help to improve our mental health and well-being.
- 2. **Be mindful:** Sometimes we can get caught up in worrying about the future or things we cannot control. Take some time to sit quietly and think about how you feel right now. Realise that you cannot control everything.
- 3. **Sleep:** It is important to get enough sleep. There are lots of things that can help us to develop a healthy sleeping routine. These include; keeping regular sleep hours, creating a calm environment, moving a bit more.
- 4. **Be aware of your limits with constant negative news:** There is a lot going on at moment; a cost of living crisis, war in The Ukraine, in the Middle East and a climate emergency. Think about how much information and news you take in and be aware of how it can affect you. Constantly scrolling through negative news stories can have a significant impact on our mental health. It may be a good idea to mute or turn off news notifications on your smartphone, or limit your news intake.
- 5. **Connect with others:** Spending quality time with friends or family, talking to someone about how we are feeling or finding ways to help other people can all help to improve our mental well-being.
- 6. **Live a healthy life:** Our mental health goes hand in hand with our physical health and there are small changes we can make to take care of both. Being active, enjoying the outdoors and having a healthy, balanced diet can all help to boost mental wellbeing.
- 7. **Do something for yourself:** This might be your favourite hobby, learning something new or simply taking time to relax. Allowing ourselves to figure out what hobbies or activities make us happy can help to boost our mood, lower stress, and build confidence.



Parents'/Guardians' Corner

The Dos and Don'ts of supporting your child's emotional health

The Dos:

- **Do listen more than you speak:** give them your full attention. Avoid immediately offering solutions or trying to “fix” the problem unless they ask for advice;
- **Do validate their feelings:** let them know it is okay to feel anxious, sad, or confused. Phrases like "I hear you, and it makes sense that you feel this way" build immense trust;
- **Do look after your own wellbeing:** managing your own stress and getting support as a parent/guardian, ensures you are in a good mental space to help them;
- **Do encourage healthy habits:** gently promote activities like a balanced diet, regular sleep, physical exercise, and spending time with friends or hobbies to distract from negative thoughts;
- **Do seek professional help early:** if feelings or behavioural changes persist for more than a few weeks or affect their daily life, contact a GP for guidance.

The Don'ts:

- **Don't lecture or criticize:** avoid making them feel judged or belittled for their emotions. Constant criticism creates emotional distance and discourages future communication;
- **Don't dismiss their struggles:** avoid saying things like "it's just a phase" or "you have nothing to be sad about." Even if the problem seems small to you, it is very real to them;
- **Don't force them to talk:** if they aren't ready to open up, be patient. Let them know you are there for them, and consider offering other methods of communication, like texting or writing.

More information on:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/advice-for-families/depression-anxiety-mental-health/>



Chaplain's Corner



Loving God,
Jesus calls all of us his friends. He showed us how to live as friends by laying down his life for us. Help us to live his command to love one another, by putting aside unkind words, by never saying or doing anything that would hurt anyone else; by being an example of friendship and welcome everyone, especially those who feel left out. Let us live in the love of Jesus as friends.

Amen



<https://www.stmichaelscollege.org.uk/?s=chaplaincy>

Staff Corner

Top tips for school staff well-being

1. **Protect your breaks** – Take your full lunch and short breaks where possible. Stepping away from work helps prevent burnout.
2. **Set healthy boundaries** – Avoid routinely taking work home or answering emails outside agreed working hours.
3. **Prioritise workload** – Focus on what is most important and accept that not everything can be completed immediately.
4. **Talk to colleagues** – Sharing concerns with trusted colleagues can reduce stress and help you feel supported.
5. **Ask for help early** – Speak to your line manager or designated well-being lead before stress becomes overwhelming.
6. **Make time for yourself** – Maintain activities outside school such as exercise, hobbies, socialising or simply having quiet time.

For more well-being tips and essential occupational health information, please refer to St Benedict Trust's Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) via Smartclinic. This programme provides a range of confidential support services designed to help staff with personal, professional, and well-being related matters. Please follow the link below for more information:

www.smartclinic.com





Help and Guidance

Services available
all year round:

shout
85258 here for
you 24/7

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



Free online support
young people



Free emotional support for
young people



Mental health support for
children and their families



Free advice and support



Free online counselling support
For over 25s



www.rainbowgb.org
Bereavement Support for children



Support helpline: 0808 808 1677



The Mental Health charity offering
direct advice for everyone, as well as
running local support services
www.mind.org.uk



Helpline: 0345 3 30 30 30



Advocacy and casework support for
LGBTQ people
<https://www.galop.org.uk/support-services>

