

# Long Meadow School Wellbeing Newsletter

Supporting the Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health of Our Whole School Community

Autumn 2023

This term's newsletter focuses on how we can talk to children about their wellbeing and mental health. As always, if you have any worries or concerns about your child's emotional behaviour or wellbeing, then please let school know. There will be things we can do to help further and support you.

## How you can speak to your children about Mental Health

In some of our assemblies, pupils have been learning about wellbeing.



It has been explained to them that we all have mental health, and that like our body, we can do things to keep our minds 'healthy'.

If your child asks about their mental health, you can tell them that it is about our feelings, our thinking, emotions and our moods. Explain to them that looking after our mental health is important.

Tell them that we all have small feelings every day; these can sometimes feel strong and overwhelming, whether happy or sad, but they go away before too long.

Sometimes we experience big feelings; these feel strong and can feel overwhelming.

## Tips for talking to your child about their Mental Health

- 1. Make conversations about mental health a normal part of life:** Anywhere is a good place to talk - in the car, walking the dog or cooking together. Model everyday talk about feelings such as by talking about a TV character's feelings.
- 2. Give your full attention (get off your phone):** We all know it's not helpful to be half listened to. Keep eye contact, focus on the child and ignore distractions.
- 3. Check your body language:** Try to keep it open and relaxed and make sure you come down to the child's level.
- 4. Take it seriously:** Don't downplay what the child is saying or tell them they're "just being silly". Resist the urge to 'brush off' their concerns, or to instantly reassure them that everything is fine without discussion.
- 5. Ask open questions:** Such as "How did your day go today?" This will help to extend the conversation.
- 6. Calmly stay with the feelings that arise:** It can be our automatic reaction to steer away from difficult emotions.

- 7. Offer empathy rather than solutions:** Show that you accept what they are telling you but don't try to solve the problem.
- 8. Remember we are all different:** Respect and value the child's feelings, even though they may be different to yours.
- 9. Look for clues about feelings:** Listen to the child's words, tone of voice and body language.
- 10. Some ways to start a conversation about feelings might be:** "How are you feeling at the moment?" "You don't seem your usual self. Do you want to talk about it?" "Do you fancy a chat?" "I'm happy to listen if you need a chat".

Let them know that it's okay to feel however they feel, whether that's



sad, angry, worried

or something else

and that you can

work together to find new ways of managing these feelings.

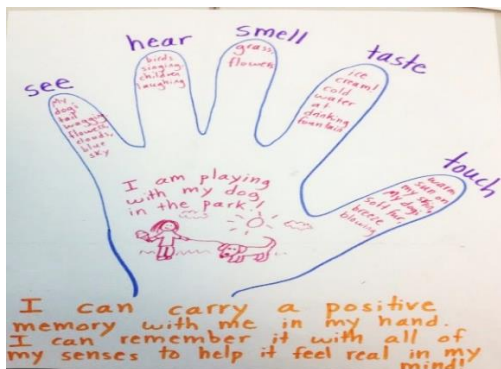
**Books to support talking about mental health with children and young people**



Carrying a positive sense of calm in the palm of your hand.

### An activity to help ease those little worries ...

1. First ask your child to trace their hand on a sheet of paper.
2. The child then thinks of a positive memory that would help them feel safe and calm to remember even in the midst of stressful and triggering situations.
3. Write each of the five senses (seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, smelling) on each of the five fingers.
4. The child (or adult can write it down for the child) will draw and / or write about the memory in the palm of the hand.
5. Encourage your child to identify how the memory is experienced using each of the five senses on each finger and write or draw a picture for each.
6. Last but not least, talk about how thinking of this memory can help your child feel a sense of safety and inner calmness.



We also use Zones of Regulation at LMS. For more information, please see <https://zonesofregulation.com/>

### Places to go for help and support



This website from the NHS offers help in how to look after your child's mental health and wellbeing as well as the rest of the family.

<https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/>

The NSPCC are offering support and advice if you feel your child is struggling with their mental health and anxiety. More information and advice can be found on their website.

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

**NSPCC**

Young Minds

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

**YOUNGMINDS**  
fighting for young people's mental health

### Make a worry jar to help contain your child's worries

Ask your child what they are worrying about and then get them to write down their worries on a piece of paper or on a post-it-note (you can write down the worries for younger children). Other family members can add their worries too ... together fill up the jar with your worries.

When you have finished put the lid on the jar to stop the worries getting out again.

You can leave the jar out with pieces of paper and a pencil so the worries in the jar can be added to if needed. If you notice any new worries going in the jar then you can read them and address them with your child.

A good way of opening a conversation about worries with your child is beginning with "I am wondering if you..."

