



Long Meadow School Wellbeing Newsletter

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

SPRING 2024

This term's newsletter focuses on the importance of sleep, how to help an anxious child and friendships. 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.

Importance of sleep

A good night's sleep is essential to feeling good, being able to learn and staying healthy. A lack of sleep can make you feel poorly, unable to learn and not want to go out with your friends and family. If you, or your child, is struggling to get a good night's sleep, follow these top tips:

1. Think about your bedtime routine - What time do you go to bed? If you are going to bed too late, you will not get enough sleep. Try bringing your bedtime forward by 20 to 30 minutes at a time.

2. Make sure you are tired before going to bed - the less time you have to spend awake in bed, the better.
3. Have at least 15 minutes of quiet time before going to sleep so that your body and brain can relax and prepare for sleep.
4. Don't use your phone or computer before bed – this can stimulate your brain and make it more awake.
5. Try having a lukewarm bath as this can help your body to relax.
6. Try to go to bed at the same time every day once you have a settled routine.
7. Choose a relaxing activity before bed, such as reading or listening to calm music.
8. Create a cosy environment. Is the room dark enough? Is the room at the correct temperature... not too hot and not too cold?

Do you know how much sleep your child needs?

The amount of sleep that your child is recommended to have is based upon their age. The NHS recommends the following:

Age	Amount of sleep
5 years old	11 hours
6 years old	10 hours 45 minutes
7 years old	10 hours 30 minutes
8 years old	10 hours 15 minutes
9 years old	10 hours
10 years old	9 hours 45 minutes
11 years old	9 hours 30 minutes

Your child's bedroom

Your child's bedroom should ideally be dark, quiet and tidy. It should be well ventilated and kept a temperature of about 18 to 24 degrees. If you can, fit some thick curtains to block out any daylight, especially now as the days are getting longer.

If you have tried these tips, but your child is regularly having problems sleeping, you may feel that you need further support. You can speak with your GP or health visitor who may be able to provide additional information. Of course, you are also very welcome to speak to a member of staff at school.





Ten ideas proven to help anxious children

Quiet Hugs: Help your child feel safe by reassuring them that you are there and willing to help. Words can sometimes exacerbate anxiety so sitting quietly with lots of cuddles and empathising can often work better.



See your calm space: Remember a time when you are happy, calm and peaceful.

See it in your mind with as much detail as possible. Always use the same calm place to enhance the effect.

5 x 5 Grounding: See 5 things, hear 4 things, touch 3 things, smell 2 things and taste 1 thing.



Draw your anxiety: Draw a picture of what you are worried about.

Blow bubbles: Research has shown that taking 10 deep breaths resets the automatic nervous system and helps to calm the amygdala in the brain. Blowing bubbles is a great way to get a child to blow deep breaths. Party blowers or a straw and balled up paper offer other ways to do the same.



Pet a furry friend: Research has shown that petting an animal reduces the heart rate and calms the body. Sitting for 10 - 15 minutes petting a furry friend is a wonderful way to relieve anxiety and bring some smiles to a child.



Jumping Jacks: Anxiety often causes shallow breathing. Asking your child to do an exercise forces them to take deep breaths that can reset the anxious feelings.



Remember past success: Encourage your child to think about the last time they overcame their anxiety. Remind them that they can do this, even though it may be hard.

Problem solve the fear: Help your child talk through what solutions could be used if their fear were to come to fruition. Knowing they can handle the worst, can help calm the fear.



Destroy the worry: Have your child write their anxiety on a piece of paper, then tear it up and throw it away.





Some advice about supporting children with friendships from www.Place2be



Work together to grow their friendship skills

Talk to your child about what makes a good friend and practice friendship skills such as listening, sharing, compromising and negotiating.

Sit together and explore examples in everyday life and from TV and books.

This will help your child think about what makes a good friend and feel less worried about friendship issues.

You can also encourage friendships beyond school, like joining clubs or arranging play dates.

Help them to gain confidence

If your child is shy, this can make it feel more difficult to make and keep friends. Give your child lots of opportunities to connect and communicate with you in whatever ways you feel is comfortable for them. Practising with you will give them more confidence to connect with others.

Have one-to-one play-dates to give your child a chance to practise social skills and deepen friendships without being in a crowd. If you base play-dates around activities your child enjoys, this can help your child overcome the initial struggle to engage.

Friendships

Model positive and healthy relationships

Happy relationships between parents and significant adults lead to better mental and physical health for all involved. Children thrive emotionally when they see and are involved in warm and caring relationships where they are respected and valued.

By modelling positive relationships of your own, you can help your child to see what positive, healthy and meaningful relationships should look like - and to recognise when friendships aren't positive.

Reassure them that it's natural for friends to fall out sometimes

Children's friendships often change and can look different depending on your child's age and stage of development. While having friends at school is important, it is perfectly ordinary for your child to have difficulties with their friendships.

Let your child know that being friends doesn't always mean agreeing or getting along with others all the time.

Talk the talk

Sometimes children can find it difficult to know what they can say when talking with their peers. You can help your child by practicing what they can say to introduce themselves to someone new or to

make a new friend. Sometimes this involves them learning to ask a question or invite another child to play with them. Help children to think of questions they can use to make connections with friends, such as:

- Would you like to play football or something else during break?
- Can I sit next to you in class?
- Do you want to play catch?

Check out these videos from 'Place 2 be' about supporting children with different friendship issues:

1. Encouraging your child to solve problems:
<https://parentingsmart.place2be.org.uk/article/my-child-has-friendship-issues>
2. My child is struggling with peer pressure:
<https://parentingsmart.place2be.org.uk/article/my-child-is-struggling-with-peer-pressure>
3. Supporting my child with shyness:
<https://parentingsmart.place2be.org.uk/article/understanding-shyness-in-children>
4. Helping children to be resilient:
<https://parentingsmart.place2be.org.uk/article/raising-a-resilient-child>





What is a good friend?

Good friends make you feel positive about yourself...

Good friends say and do things that make you feel good. They give compliments, congratulate you and are happy for you.

Good friends support each other...

If you're feeling down, a good friend will support you. If you need help, a good friend will try to help you out.

Good friends don't always have everything in common...

You don't have to be into the exact same things! A good friend encourages you to like your own things rather than making you feel bad for liking different things.

Good friends listen...

A good friend allows you to talk and doesn't interrupt you. They're interested in what you have to say.

Good friends are trustworthy...

If you tell a good friend something private, they won't share it. You can trust a good friend not to be judgmental.

Good friends respect boundaries...

Sometimes you might fall out with your friend. A good friend will tell you what has hurt them. If you tell a good friend they've hurt you, they'll be sorry and won't do it again.

Good friendships work both ways...

It's not a good friendship if one of you is doing all the talking and the other is doing all the listening, all the time.

Good friends make each other feel good about themselves and share the talking and listening.

Having a group of friends...

Don't limit yourself by having just one "best friend". Your friendship is something special which you can share with everyone who needs a friend! Sometimes friends drift apart or fall out.

That's a part of life. Having more than one friend means it's more likely there will be someone who can help you when you need it.

Friends not followers...

In the digital world you can feel under pressure to have a lot of friends and followers. Remember that you only need small circle of friends to be happy and it's a good idea to keep your most precious (and private) thoughts and moments for those that really care about you.





5 Ways to Wellbeing

Step 1: Connect. Connecting with others can help us feel close to people and valued for who we are.

Step 2: Get active. Many people find that physical activity helps them maintain positive mental health.

Step 3: Take notice. Reminding yourself to take notice can help you to be aware of how you're feeling. It can help you understand what triggers your feelings of stress or anxiety.

Step 4: Keep learning. We're always learning new things - often without realising it. Feeling like you're learning and developing can boost your self-esteem.

Step 5: Give. There's been lots of research about the effects of participating in social and community life. Studies have shown that people who help others are more likely to rate themselves as happy.



Our Pupil Wellbeing Champions loved their recent visit to Shenley Wood Retirement Village

