

# LMS Matters

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Dear Parents and Carers

I would love to say a warm welcome to the first newsletter of 2025, but nothing could be further from the truth. Freezing temperatures have made this week difficult in so many ways, but as ever we all got through it and the LMS sunshine warms everything! I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a happy new year and hope you enjoyed your time over the festive period. A huge thank you for all the kind words, cards and gifts that people gave to the staff and myself. We never expect these but it is always greatly received and appreciated, they truly mean the world to us and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts. It would never change the effort we put in for you and your children, but it makes it all even more worthwhile.

As illness over Christmas continues I wanted to remind you about **NHS PHARMACY FIRST SERVICE**. Did you know that the NHS Pharmacy First Service enables children and adults to get convenient access to healthcare advice, and treatment where appropriate, for seven common conditions without the potential delay of having to wait for a GP appointment? Accessing the service may help children feel better and back to school as quickly as possible, as well as supporting parents/carers to also get better if they are unwell with one of the conditions covered under the service. There is no need to make an appointment; parents or carers can pop into their local Boots pharmacy with their child and ask for help under the service. Support for the following conditions can be accessed under the service, free of charge (unless NHS prescription charges apply). The service supports with the following conditions for people in the age groups specified below: Earache (aged 1 to 17 years), impetigo (aged 1 year and over), infected insect bites and stings (aged 1 year and over), sore throats (aged 5 years and over), sinusitis (aged 12 years and over), uncomplicated urinary tract infections (UTIs) in women (aged 16 to 64 years), and shingles (aged 18 years and over).

The **EARLY YEARS ALLIANCE** are providing free training to our families on a wide range of topics such as supporting children's speech, language and communication; bilingualism - making it count; supporting and understanding behaviour; screen time, and much, much more. Please see full details and booking links further on in the newsletter.

Don't forget that **APPLICATIONS FOR CHILDREN STARTING SCHOOL FOR THE FIRST TIME IN SEPTEMBER** must be made by midnight on **15TH JANUARY**. You can apply at: <https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/schools-and-lifelong-learning/school-admissions>.

Unfortunately we have had a number of parents **COLLECTING THEIR CHILDREN LATE** at the end of the day. Whilst we understand that things happen in life, late collection can distress your child greatly, as well as impacting the work of adults in the school. Please ensure that there are processes in place to ensure your children are picked up at 3.15pm. Consistently picking up your child 5-10 minutes late is upsetting for them and is unacceptable. Thank you in advance.

**ART AND WELL-BEING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE** at Milton Keynes Arts Centre! These 10-week, artist led workshop series are aimed at young people, ages 11-13 years old and 14-17 years old, in the Milton Keynes area, who are experiencing mild to moderate mental health challenges such as anxiety, depression or social isolation. Each week participants will learn a new art technique. The activities will encourage an awareness and appreciation of art making to support wellbeing and offer a chance to meet like-minded people under the guidance of a professional artist. This workshop is pay what you can - starting from free - attendance by booking / referral. For 11-13 year olds - dates: Thursdays 16, 23, 30 January and 06, 13 February 2025 - Time: 6:00pm-8:00pm - Sign up here: <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/milton-keynes-arts-centre/art-and-wellbeing-for-young-people-11-13-year-olds/e-kobmda>. For 14-17 year olds - dates: Thursdays 27 February and 06, 13, 20, 27 March 2025 - Time: 6:00pm-8:00pm - Sign up here: <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/milton-keynes-arts-centre/art-and-wellbeing-for-young-people-14-17-year-olds/e-yelmgz>.

I am pleased to announce that, from Monday, we will be continuing our **OPAL** journey by introducing **MIX-UP MONDAYS** alongside our **FREEDOM FRIDAYS**, giving the children a great experience twice a week! Please also drop all unwanted items now they have been replaced over Xmas to our **OPAL DONATION STATION** in the foyer.

Finally this week, we have a huge amount of **LOST PROPERTY** in the school foyer. These items have not been collected from the class lost property boxes and thus end up here. We will be removing all of the items in there on **FRIDAY 17th JANUARY** to be recycled, so if you are missing any items at all, please check this box as soon as possible.

Mr Gray



**EYFS/KS1**

To be announced next week

**KS2**

To be announced next week



**TTROCK Stars**

Weekly class champions!

**KS1**

**Frogs**

**KS2**

**Bracken**



**Movies & Munchies**

22nd Jan 2025  
3:15-5PM



Book your child's place by Friday 17th January at:

<https://www.pta-events.co.uk/palmspta/index.cfm>

Places must be booked in advance, no entry on the door.

**PALMS**

# DATES

FOR YOUR DIARY

## School Term and Bank Holiday Dates 2024 / 2025

Term	Open morning of:	Close at the end of afternoon session of:
Autumn Term 2024	Thursday 5 September 2024	Friday 25 October 2024
	Monday 4 November 2024	Friday 20 December 2024
Spring Term 2025	Tuesday 7 January 2025	Friday 14 February 2025
	Monday 24 February 2025	Thursday 3 April 2025
Summer Term 2025	Tuesday 22 April 2025	Friday 23 May 2025
	Monday 2 June 2025	Tuesday 22 July 2025

Training days agreed to date: (on these days children do not come to school but staff do)

Tuesday 3 September 2024 / Wednesday 4 September 2024 / Monday 6 January 2025 / Friday 4 April 2025 / Wednesday 23 July 2025

**Good Friday:** Friday 18 April 2025

**Easter Monday:** Monday 21 April 2025

**May Day:** Monday 5 May 2025

### Spring Term 2025

Tuesday 7 January	PALMs Smarties Challenge launch (deadline 23/01)
Friday 10 January	Year 4 Anglian Water visitor
Friday 17 January	Whole School Fancy Dress Day - School Council Fundraiser
w/c Monday 20 January	Year 6 Mock SATs
Tuesday 21 January	Newts MK Trip
Wednesday 22 January	Newts MK Trip
Wednesday 22 January	PALMs Movies & Munchies
Friday 24 January	Year 5 Space Centre Trip
Tuesday 28 January	Frogs MK Trip
Wednesday 29 January	Frogs MK Trip
Wednesday 29 January	Biscuits & Books 2.45pm
Friday 31 January	Young Voices - Birmingham Arena
w/c Monday 3 February	Children's Mental Health Week
Thursday 6 February	PALMs Disco
w/c Monday 10 February	Parent Consultations
Tuesday 11 February	Safer Internet Day
17 - 21 February	HALF TERM

Stay & Play	
Wednesday 15 January	Farm
Wednesday 29 January	Vehicles
Wednesday 5 March	Fairytales
Wednesday 26 March	Spring

## **LMS Safeguarding**

### **How to Stay Protected Against AI Scams - TechRadar**

The next spam call you receive may not be a real person. Scammers are increasingly using voice-enabled AI models to automate their fraudulent schemes. The human ear was not designed to tell the difference. The tricking of individuals by imitating real human callers has become a new and highly effective methodology enabled by AI advances. Tech Radar magazine has recently published an article on how to tackle this new front in the war against scams. If interested, please follow the link below:

<https://www.techradar.com/computing/artificial-intelligence/ai-voice-clone-scams>

## **LMS Well-being**

### **Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs)**

The Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) is an early intervention service within the NHS that works in partnership with local schools to offer a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing. Our school is in the latest cohort of schools eligible for support from this team. The team can support children and young people, aged 5 to 18, and their families, with mild to moderate mental health difficulties including anxiety and/or depression, low mood and behavioural difficulties. They will work with children and young people, parents/carers, school staff, and external specialist services providing support through training and workshops for both schools and parents, group programmes & 1:1 interventions.

We have just started working with the MHST and we believe it will bring some valuable additional support to some of our pupils and families. We are currently considering children we think may benefit from support. The MHSTs are producing regular newsletters which we will upload to the school website [here](#). The newsletters contain lots of information about how you can support your children's mental health at home as well as links to workshops and parent groups which may be useful. Please see the most recent MHST newsletter attached to this newsletter too for ease.



# Congratulations to our Top Doodlers...

These will be announced next week

**#PROUD**



**doodle**



Long Meadow Legends &  
Sports Person of the Week will  
resume next week

## **Free family connect sessions**

### **Supporting children's speech, language and communication**

**Thursday 16 January, 1pm - 2pm**

Join us for this family connect session where we will be taking a closer look at why speech language and communication is so important and how you may see this developing in your own child/ren. We will be sharing practical tips and ideas about how you can further support your child's developing communication and language skills.

[Book now](#)

### **Bilingualism - making it count**

**Wednesday 22 January, 6pm - 7pm**

Together we will look at top tips and ideas to help your child learn more than one language, and think about the sort of strategies that an early years educator will use to help your child with their learning.

[Book now](#)

### **Supporting and understanding behaviour**

**Thursday 30 January, 6pm - 7pm**

In this session we try to define behaviour and look to delve into some of the influences and functions of children's behaviour with tips, advice and information about how you can support this, and finally rounding things up with a discussion around how you can support your child's behaviour.

[Book now](#)

## **Screen time**

**Wednesday 26 February, 6pm - 7pm**

Join us for this session with Dr Gemma Goldenburgh, a psychologist and education expert with two decades of experience working in nursery and school settings. In this session, Dr Goldenburgh will review the evidence for how technology and early screen use affect young children. We'll also talk about how to tell between good and bad quality content, and offer some practical tips for how to manage early screen use.

[Book now](#)

## **Supporting children's emotional wellbeing**

**Tuesday 4 March, 1pm - 2pm**

In this session we try to define behaviour and look to delve into some of the influences and functions of children's behaviour with tips, advice and information about how you can support this, and finally rounding things up with a discussion around how you can support your child's behaviour.

[Book now](#)

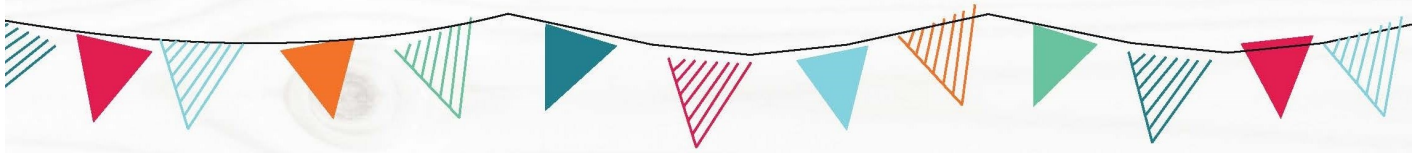
## **Building babies brains**

**Thursday 20 March, 10am - 11am**

Did you know that in the first years of a child's life their brains develop rapidly? In this Family Connect session we'll discuss children's early brain development and explore ideas to actively engage your child through everyday activities like playing, reading and being there when they feel stress. We'll share information and ideas to support you to help your baby develop a healthy brain.

[Book now](#)





WESTCROFT

# COMMUNITY FRIDGE

A simple solution to wasting less through the sharing of good-quality food.

**Tuesdays 2pm – 4pm**  
**Westcroft Pavilion**  
**Cranbourne Avenue**  
**Westcroft**  
**MK4 4GB**

**For more details, call Karen on**  
**07891 818 259 / 01908 521538 or email**  
**[karen.wheeler@shenleybrookend-pc.gov.uk](mailto:karen.wheeler@shenleybrookend-pc.gov.uk)**





LONG MEADOW SCHOOL PRESENTS

# Stay and Play Sessions



Run by the school's Deputy and Assistant Heads

Different theme each session

- MESSY PLAY
- CREATIVE TABLES
- IMAGINATIVE PLAY
- SENSORY ACTIVITIES
- READING AREA
- REFRESHMENTS INCLUDED

Only  
£1 pp

- 15th January - Farm
- 29th January - Vehicles
- 5th March - Fairytale
- 26th March - Spring
- 30th April - Dinosaurs
- 21st May - Food
- 4th June - Weather
- 18th June - Summer
- 2nd July - Sports

CONTACT US FOR  
MORE INFO

01908 508678

[office@longmeadow.milton-keynes.sch.uk](mailto:office@longmeadow.milton-keynes.sch.uk)



**FOR UNDER 5S**

**9am - 10:30am**





# STAGE MASTERS

ACT DANCE SING

## MINI STAGE MASTERS FOR 4 AND 5 YEAR OLDS

WHEN: SATURDAYS 12:15PM-1:15PM  
WHERE: PRIORY RISE SCHOOL MK4 3GE  
1 HOUR- COMBINING ACTING  
DANCING AND SINGING  
£10 PER SESSION

SIGN UP FOR A FREE TRIAL NOW!  
CONTACT US VIA FACEBOOK/INSTAGRAM  
OR EMAIL: STAGEMASTERSUK@GMAIL.COM





# STAGE MASTERS

ACT DANCE SING

1 hour acting, 1 hour dancing,  
1 hour singing

**FOR: 6-18 YEAR OLDS IN GROUPS**

**WHEN: SATURDAY MORNINGS 9AM-12PM**

**WHERE: PRIORY RISE SCHOOL MK4 3GE**

**£22.50 FOR 3 HOURS OF  
HIGH QUALITY TRAINING**

**BOOK YOUR FREE TRIAL NOW!**

**FOLLOW US  
ON FACEBOOK  
AND INSTAGRAM**

**Email:  
Stagemastersuk@gmail.com**

Fabricated loose parts e.g.

Astro turf off-cuts

Boards, old cabinet doors, panels

Bread, milk, bottle and grocery crates

Briefcases

Buggies, pushchairs

Cable drums

Carpet samples/squares

Fabrics – all shapes and sizes

Foam pipe covers and noodles

Guttering

Hoses

Keyboards

Metal pots, pans, trays etc, especially catering sizes

Nets: fishing, cargo, football

Office removal crates Tea Crates

Old clothes, jackets, overalls, hats, bags

Old household appliances, hoovers, fax machines, microwaves etc

One-ton dumpy bags

Pallets

Phones

Piping, gas, water and drainage

Planks – decking

Plastic road barriers

Small wheely bins

Steering wheels

Suitcases

Tarps

Traffic Cones

Tubes of all kinds

Wooden block and off-cuts Carpenters, builders





And Natural loose parts such as:

Branches and sticks

Fruit trees

Grass Plants

Leaves

Logs

Mud

Pea gravel

Peat

Pinecones

Play bark/woodchip

Sand (washed dredged not 'sharp')

Sea pebbles

Shells

Varied aggregates, slate, flint, clay

Wood off-cuts

If you have or can help with any of these, please put them in the **OPAL DONATION STATION** in the main foyer, or speak to the school office.



# **VI-KARE AFTER SCHOOL SEN CLUB**

**3-6PM**

**EVERY FRIDAY**

**CHURCH END RD, SHENLEY  
BROOK END, MILTON  
KEYNES MK5 7AA  
£15**

**OTHER CARERS AND THEIR  
CLIENTS ARE ALSO  
WELCOME FREE OF CHARGE**



**Contact Vicki**

**Call 07555036759**

**What's app 07725626697**

**Email**

**vi.kare2023@gmail.com**

# ZONE INN

8 - 11YRS  
WITH A  
SUPPORTING  
ADULT

CHILL - CHAT - SUPPORT

11+ - 18YRS

SUPPORTING  
ADULT WELCOME

GREENLEYS  
CHILDREN CENTRE  
SATURDAY  
10AM - 12NOON

SAFE  
CONFIDENTIAL  
SPACE

EXERCISE &  
WELLBEING  
ACTIVITIES

POSITIVE  
KIND  
SUPPORTIVE

USE THE  
10 KEYS TO HAPPIER  
LIVING

MINDFULNESS

AS TOOLS TO HELP  
IMPROVE WELL-BEING

CONFIDENCE &  
RESILIENCE  
BUILDING

ACTION FOR  
HAPPINESS



A WELL-BEING SERVICE PROVIDED BY RELATEMK

FOR MORE DETAILS CONTACT ☎ 01908 310010 ✉ [APPOINTMENT@RELATEMK.ORG](mailto:APPOINTMENT@RELATEMK.ORG)

🌐 [WWW.RELATEMK.ORG](http://WWW.RELATEMK.ORG) OR DROP IN AND MEET US



# PARENT/CARER NEWSLETTER

E: [cnwl.mhst@nhs.net](mailto:cnwl.mhst@nhs.net) T: 01908 725691

No: 3  
Nov 2024

Welcome to the Third Edition of the Parent and Carer Newsletter!

The goal of this newsletter is to share updates about the Mental Health Support Team (MHST) and to provide helpful tips for looking after mental health and well-being. The MHST is here to support children and young people in schools, offering resources, guidance, and structured programs for mental health care.

## NEW SCHOOLS IN OUR PROVISION

**NEW**

We're excited to announce that our services have expanded to include schools in the South West and South East areas of the city! This means more children and young people can access mental health support through their schools. Our team members visit schools regularly to deliver workshops, assemblies, and talks, aiming to make mental health support a part of everyday school life.

## WHAT THE MHST OFFERS

If your child or young person is experiencing mild to moderate mental health challenges, such as low mood or anxiety, the MHST may be able to help. In cases where a child needs support, school staff might speak with you about completing a referral to our team. You also have the option to self-refer if you feel that your child could benefit from our services.

Our support is based on Low Intensity Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) principles, which can be highly effective for managing mild to moderate issues. Depending on age and specific needs, support may be provided in group settings or one-on-one with children, young people, or parents. Sessions are conducted at school during school hours, making it easier for children to access support without disrupting their routine.

As an NHS service, the MHST is dedicated to using evidence-based approaches tailored specifically to children and young people. Our staff members are fully trained to address the mental health needs of young individuals, providing a safe and supportive space for children to develop tools for managing their mental well-being.



## WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT OUR NEWSLETTER?

We would love to hear your thoughts on our newsletter, we have completed three of these now and want to make sure they are hitting the mark! Scan the QR code to the right and fill out our short feedback form!

Mental Health Support Team  
(MHST) Newsletter Feedback  
Survey



## LOOKING FORWARD....

We look forward to connecting with as many of our new schools as possible in the coming months. Through these visits, we aim to build strong partnerships with schools, families, and communities to support the mental well-being of children and young people.

Thank you for being part of this journey with us. If you have any questions about the support we offer, or if you would like to explore how MHST services might benefit your child, please don't hesitate to reach out!

## TEN WAYS TO LOOK AFTER MENTAL HEALTH IN WINTER

### KEEP A ROUTINE

Maintaining a steady routine, especially with sleep, is essential for mental well-being. Waking up and going to bed at the same time every day can improve sleep quality, which is directly linked to mental health. Having a structured day can bring a sense of stability during a season that often feels unpredictable.



### GET OUTSIDE



The saying "there is no bad weather, only bad clothing" is especially relevant in winter. Getting outside, even for a short time, can improve mood, boost energy, and release endorphins. In areas like Milton Keynes, there are many natural spaces to explore, from lakes to woodlands. Activities like Geocaching or orienteering can make these outings engaging for older children, while the Parks Trust often has family-friendly events that make it easier to embrace the outdoors together.

### STAY CONNECTED

Winter often limits opportunities for socializing, especially for young people who may see less of their friends due to weather conditions. Finding creative ways to stay connected, like hosting a game night or meeting friends for an outdoor activity, can make a big difference in mood. Social connections can elevate self-esteem, provide a sense of belonging, and help people feel supported and valued.



### START A HOBBY



Hobbies are a great way to break up the monotony of winter and boost mental health. They don't have to be costly or complicated. Visit your local library, explore the MK Music Centre, or sign up for an art class at the MK Art Centre or MK Gallery. For hands-on fun at home, consider joining a Play Association for access to inexpensive craft supplies or a scrap store.

## EMBRACE HYGGE

Hygge (pronounced "hoo-gah") is the Danish concept of finding comfort and cosiness. Winter provides a perfect opportunity to embrace this idea. Try creating a warm, inviting space with blankets, soft lighting, and a few cosy activities like reading or board games. This sense of cosiness can make the extra time spent indoors feel like a treat rather than a chore.



## PRACTICE MINDFULNESS



Being inside together more often can sometimes lead to tension. Mindfulness helps you respond thoughtfully rather than reacting immediately, which can ease interactions at home. Practicing mindfulness as a family can help everyone feel more grounded and try simple breathing exercises, guided meditations, practices, especially during moments o

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/asset/document/youngminds-uk-2020-21-annual-report-2021-22-23-24-25-26-27-28-29-30-31-32-33-34-35-36-37-38-39-40-41-42-43-44-45-46-47-48-49-50-51-52-53-54-55-56-57-58-59-60-61-62-63-64-65-66-67-68-69-70-71-72-73-74-75-76-77-78-79-80-81-82-83-84-85-86-87-88-89-90-91-92-93-94-95-96-97-98-99-100-101-102-103-104-105-106-107-108-109-110-111-112-113-114-115-116-117-118-119-120-121-122-123-124-125-126-127-128-129-130-131-132-133-134-135-136-137-138-139-140-141-142-143-144-145-146-147-148-149-150-151-152-153-154-155-156-157-158-159-160-161-162-163-164-165-166-167-168-169-170-171-172-173-174-175-176-177-178-179-180-181-182-183-184-185-186-187-188-189-190-191-192-193-194-195-196-197-198-199-200-201-202-203-204-205-206-207-208-209-210-211-212-213-214-215-216-217-218-219-220-221-222-223-224-225-226-227-228-229-230-231-232-233-234-235-236-237-238-239-240-241-242-243-244-245-246-247-248-249-250-251-252-253-254-255-256-257-258-259-260-261-262-263-264-265-266-267-268-269-270-271-272-273-274-275-276-277-278-279-280-281-282-283-284-285-286-287-288-289-290-291-292-293-294-295-296-297-298-299-300-301-302-303-304-305-306-307-308-309-310-311-312-313-314-315-316-317-318-319-320-321-322-323-324-325-326-327-328-329-330-331-332-333-334-335-336-337-338-339-340-341-342-343-344-345-346-347-348-349-350-351-352-353-354-355-356-357-358-359-360-361-362-363-364-365-366-367-368-369-370-371-372-373-374-375-376-377-378-379-380-381-382-383-384-385-386-387-388-389-390-391-392-393-394-395-396-397-398-399-400-401-402-403-404-405-406-407-408-409-410-411-412-413-414-415-416-417-418-419-420-421-422-423-424-425-426-427-428-429-430-431-432-433-434-435-436-437-438-439-440-441-442-443-444-445-446-447-448-449-450-451-452-453-454-455-456-457-458-459-460-461-462-463-464-465-466-467-468-469-470-471-472-473-474-475-476-477-478-479-480-481-482-483-484-485-486-487-488-489-490-491-492-493-494-495-496-497-498-499-500-501-502-503-504-505-506-507-508-509-510-511-512-513-514-515-516-517-518-519-520-521-522-523-524-525-526-527-528-529-530-531-532-533-534-535-536-537-538-539-540-541-542-543-544-545-546-547-548-549-550-551-552-553-554-555-556-557-558-559-560-561-562-563-564-565-566-567-568-569-570-571-572-573-574-575-576-577-578-579-580-581-582-583-584-585-586-587-588-589-590-591-592-593-594-595-596-597-598-599-600-601-602-603-604-605-606-607-608-609-610-611-612-613-614-615-616-617-618-619-620-621-622-623-624-625-626-627-628-629-630-631-632-633-634-635-636-637-638-639-640-641-642-643-644-645-646-647-648-649-650-651-652-653-654-655-656-657-658-659-660-661-662-663-664-665-666-667-668-669-670-671-672-673-674-675-676-677-678-679-680-681-682-683-684-685-686-687-688-689-690-691-692-693-694-695-696-697-698-699-700-701-702-703-704-705-706-707-708-709-710-711-712-713-714-715-716-717-718-719-720-721-722-723-724-725-726-727-728-729-730-731-732-733-734-735-736-737-738-739-740-741-742-743-744-745-746-747-748-749-750-751-752-753-754-755-756-757-758-759-760-761-762-763-764-765-766-767-768-769-770-771-772-773-774-775-776-777-778-779-780-781-782-783-784-785-786-787-788-789-790-791-792-793-794-795-796-797-798-799-800-801-802-803-804-805-806-807-808-809-810-811-812-813-814-815-816-817-818-819-820-821-822-823-824-825-826-827-828-829-830-831-832-833-834-835-836-837-838-839-840-841-842-843-844-845-846-847-848-849-850-851-852-853-854-855-856-857-858-859-860-861-862-863-864-865-866-867-868-869-870-871-872-873-874-875-876-877-878-879-880-881-882-883-884-885-886-887-888-889-890-891-892-893-894-895-896-897-898-899-900-901-902-903-904-905-906-907-908-909-910-911-912-913-914-915-916-917-918-919-920-921-922-923-924-925-926-927-928-929-930-931-932-933-934-935-936-937-938-939-940-941-942-943-944-945-946-947-948-949-950-951-952-953-954-955-956-957-958-959-960-961-962-963-964-965-966-967-968-969-970-971-972-973-974-975-976-977-978-979-980-981-982-983-984-985-986-987-988-989-990-991-992-993-994-995-996-997-998-999-1000>

## FIND WAYS TO BE ACTIVE

Physical activity is crucial for mental health, even in winter. Indoor options like yoga videos, dance sessions in the living room, or active video games can make exercise fun and accessible. Engaging in movement releases endorphins, improves mood, and can reduce stress, helping to maintain mental wellness.



## COOK HEALTHY MEALS



It's easy to reach for comfort foods during the winter months, but a balanced diet can have a profound impact on mental health. Cooking hearty stews or soups filled with nutrient-rich vegetables is one way to provide comforting and nourishing meals. Try blending or chopping up veggies to add more nutrients that everyone can enjoy.

## LOOK AFTER PHYSICAL HEALTH

Physical health and mental well-being are closely connected. Encourage habits like hand washing and dressing warmly to prevent common winter illnesses. Taking care of your body means you're better prepared to enjoy seasonal activities without interruption, helping you maintain mental resilience.





## ASK FOR HELP



If you or your child is struggling, remember that it's okay to ask for help. Talking with a friend, taking a break, or reaching out to someone in your support network can ease mental strain. For more persistent struggles, seeking advice from a GP or mental health professional can provide guidance and resources to help.

Making these practices a part of your winter routine can transform the season into a time of warmth, connection, and self-care. Whether it's embracing the outdoors, finding new indoor activities, or reaching out for support, each small step helps in creating a winter filled with mental wellness and resilience.

## HOW TO START PRACTICING MINDFULNESS AS A FAMILY: A GUIDE TO CONNECTING, GROWING, AND BEING PRESENT TOGETHER

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## WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

Mindfulness is the practice of paying attention to the present moment without judgment. It involves focusing on the "here and now" instead of worrying about the past or future. This focus can be applied to thoughts, emotions, physical sensations, and surroundings. Practicing mindfulness as a family helps everyone feel more connected, relaxed, and aware of each other's feelings.

Begin with small, simple steps to ease everyone into the practice:

- **One-Minute Breathing Exercise:** Set a timer for one minute and have everyone close their eyes, focus on their breathing, and try to stay present with each inhale and exhale. A short exercise like this makes mindfulness accessible and easy to understand.
- **Mindful Listening:** Sit quietly as a family and listen to the sounds around you. Take turns sharing what you heard, from birds chirping to cars passing by. This teaches kids to pay attention to their environment and boosts their listening skills.



## CREATE A FAMILY MINDFULNESS ROUTINE

Setting aside specific times for mindfulness practice helps create a habit. Start with a few minutes a day, perhaps during a transitional time like after school or before bedtime. For example:

- **Mindful Mornings:** Start the day with a few deep breaths and set an intention, like being kind, patient, or grateful.
- **Evening Reflection:** At dinner or before bed, take a moment for everyone to share something they're grateful for or one thing they noticed about their day.

By establishing a routine, you make mindfulness a regular, dependable part of family life.



## PRACTICE MINDFUL BREATHING TOGETHER



Mindful breathing is one of the simplest yet most powerful mindfulness practices. Breathing exercises help reduce anxiety, improve focus, and provide a calming effect for everyone in the family. Try these easy breathing exercises together:

- **Balloon Breathing:** Ask each family member to imagine they're filling a balloon with each breath in, expanding their belly as much as they can. Then, as they exhale, they "release" the air. This is a fun way for kids to understand deep breathing.
- **Hot Chocolate Breathing** - see our fun worksheet later on in the newsletter!

## TRY A FAMILY BODY SCAN

A body scan is a mindfulness technique where you bring attention to different parts of the body, noticing any sensations without judgment. Practicing a body scan helps everyone become more in tune with their physical sensations and promotes relaxation.

- **Guided Body Scan for Kids:** Start from the toes and move up to the head, asking your kids to notice how each body part feels. For example, "Notice how your feet feel against the floor" or "Are your shoulders relaxed or tense?"
- **Parents as Guides:** You can narrate the body scan for younger kids, or use an app to help guide the practice for everyone



## PRACTICE MINDFUL EATING TOGETHER



Mindful eating is a fun way for families to practice mindfulness without it feeling like a "task." It involves eating slowly, savouring each bite, and paying attention to the textures, flavours, and aromas of the food.

- **The Raisin Exercise:** Give everyone a small item of food, like a raisin, and ask them to look at it, smell it, feel it, and finally taste it as if they've never eaten a raisin before. This is a classic exercise in mindfulness that encourages everyone to slow down and appreciate their food.
- **Savouring Family Meals:** Occasionally, have a "mindful meal" where you all focus on eating without distractions. Encourage everyone to notice the taste, textures, and sensations.



## USE GUIDED MEDITATIONS AND APPS

For families who are just beginning their mindfulness journey, guided meditations can be incredibly helpful. There are plenty of mindfulness apps available with exercises designed specifically for families and kids. Some popular options include:

- Headspace (offers family and kids' meditations)
- Calm (offers short meditations suitable for all ages)
- Insight Timer (includes a wide selection of meditations for different age groups and needs)

Apps are convenient, and they can add variety to your mindfulness practices by guiding you through various exercises. Click on the logos to link through to their websites!



## USE GUIDED MEDITATIONS AND APPS

Mindfulness and gratitude often go hand-in-hand. Practicing gratitude as a family helps everyone focus on positive aspects of their day and fosters a more optimistic mindset.

- **Gratitude Jar:** Place a jar in a central area of paper beside it. Encourage everyone to write what they're grateful for each day and place it in or month, read them together as a family.
- **Daily Gratitude Practice:** Take a few minutes each day to write down one thing each person is grateful for that day to end the day on a positive note.



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## SPEND TIME



Being in nature naturally fosters mindfulness. Taking walks, hiking, or simply playing outside together offers an opportunity to connect with the environment and each other without distractions.

Try these mindful nature activities:

- **Nature Walks:** Encourage everyone to notice what they see, hear, and feel as they walk. Take turns pointing out things you observe, like a beautiful flower, a bird, or the feeling of the sun on your face.
- **Mindful Play:** Let kids explore freely, and encourage them to notice their surroundings, from leaves and rocks to the sensation of grass under their feet

## MODEL MINDFULNESS AS PARENTS

Children learn a lot by observing their parents. If you demonstrate a calm, mindful approach to life, they're more likely to follow suit. Be present with them during these mindfulness activities, and even outside of practice time, try to stay mindful in your day-to-day life.

- **Responding vs. Reacting:** When stress or conflict arises, show your kids how to pause, take a breath, and respond calmly.
- **Expressing Emotions Mindfully:** Share when you're feeling stressed or happy, and describe how mindfulness helps you cope. This teaches them that mindfulness is a tool to manage their emotions.



### Starting Your Mindfulness Journey Together

Practicing mindfulness as a family is a gradual process. Start with small, consistent activities, and make it enjoyable rather than a chore. Mindfulness can bring a sense of peace, gratitude, and joy into your household. Most importantly, it can help your family grow closer, more compassionate, and better equipped to handle life's ups and downs—together.

## HOT CHOCOLATE BREATHING EXERCISE

A graphic with a light beige background and autumn-themed illustrations of leaves and a mug of hot chocolate. The title 'Hot Chocolate Breathing' is written in a mix of cursive and serif fonts. Below the title are several paragraphs of text describing the exercise steps.

*Hot Chocolate*  
**Breathing**

Imagine you are picking up a big mug of hot chocolate

Imagine the warmth of the drink in your hands,  
Now take a big smell of your hot chocolate.  
Breathe out slowly enjoying the smell of your hot chocolate.

Take several big deep smells of your drink and slowly breathe out as though you are cooling your drink.

When you are ready imagine you are taking a sip! Think about the flavour, the texture and the feeling of swallowing the drink and feeling it warming you

A stylized illustration of a pink and white striped mug filled with brown hot chocolate, topped with a swirl of white cream. The mug is surrounded by autumn leaves in shades of orange, yellow, and pink.



## UPCOMING GROUPS

### MK MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TEAM INCREDIBLE YEARS PARENTING GROUP

The Incredible Years approach is an evidence-based intervention, providing brief parent guided self-help for mild to moderate behavioural difficulties, for primary aged children. The program is designed to strengthen child well-being, promote social-emotional learning and academic competence, and prevent, reduce, and treat behavioural and emotional problems in young children through parenting.

It is recommended that the therapeutic skills are implemented through the parent(s) or guardian as they are often in a better position than therapists to put strategies in place and to create opportunities for new learning in their child's day-to-day life.

#### New Group starting

Wednesday 8th January 2025

13:00-14:30

Online Zoom

for 8 weeks

### WHO IS THE GROUP FOR?

- Primary age parents who want to improve their parent-child interactions and want to learn a range of different skills linked with play, implementing boundaries, delivering praise, teaching children to problem solve, establishing routines and rules.
- They might observe:
  - their child displaying challenging behaviours which parents struggle to manage.
  - regular arguments with their child
  - 'meltdowns' which they struggle to manage

If you feel the group would be suitable for you, please speak to your child's teacher or school mental health lead who will complete a referral to the MHST

The MHST is an NHS service and a referral will result in a mental health episode of care being opened on your child's shared electronic records. Explicit parental consent will be sought by your school prior to this referral being made.

# MK MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TEAM HELPING YOUR CHILD WITH FEARS AND WORRIES PARENT GROUP

This is a parent-led, guided self-help intervention which aims to provide parents with an increased understanding of anxiety and how it is maintained. It will encourage you to identify triggers, explore the role of anxious thoughts and how you can respond to them and support you with step-by-step practical strategies to help your child overcome specific fears or general worry.

## WHY ARE WE NOT WORKING DIRECTLY WITH YOUR CHILD?

When you're the parent of an anxious child, of course you want to support and protect a child who is distressed and, as much as possible, avert their suffering. But in fact, when it comes to a child who is experiencing distressing anxiety, trying to shield them from things that trigger their fears can be counterproductive for the child.

Parents have a key role in supporting their child to challenge and overcome their anxiety. You will be able to provide consistent support and guidance to your child that direct therapy could not do. This is particularly important in primary age children.

## Next Group starts:

Tuesday 7th January 2025

09:30-11:00

6 consecutive weeks

Virtual group via Zoom

## WHO IS THE GROUP FOR?

- Parents of children (reception to Year 6) whose child is experiencing increased anxiety in one or more settings that is impacting daily life.
- You may experience your child.....
  - avoiding situations that make them feel worried?
  - having trouble getting to sleep because of fears or worries?
  - having difficulties in separating from a parent when they come into school?
  - experiencing physical symptoms of worry such as a tummy ache or feeling sick in certain situations?

If you feel the group would be suitable for you, please speak to your child's teacher or school mental health lead who will complete a referral to the MHST.

The MHST is an NHS service and a referral will result in a mental health episode of care being opened on your child's shared electronic records. Explicit parental consent will be sought by your school prior to this referral being made.

The Mental Health Support Team (MHST) is an NHS service. A referral to the team will result in a mental health episode of care being opened in your/ the child's shared NHS electronic records and may include an assessment of need and subsequent clinical documentation being saved there.



# MK MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT TEAM

## REFRAME: BEHAVIOUR AS COMMUNICATION

This group introduces parents to a parenting approach that aims to promote family relationships and reduces parent-child conflicts. We use ideas of 'mentalising' which is the ability of the parent to understand the thoughts and feelings behind the behaviour of both themselves and their child.

Parents can expect to develop a better understanding of their child's emotions and behaviours, helping the child to feel both understood and of value. The approach also helps to de-escalate difficult situations and reduces behavioural and emotional outbursts.

The group will focus on the parent role in supporting child's emotional development and how they can support their child to increase their emotional literacy and learn co-regulating and self regulation strategies.

### WHO IS THE GROUP FOR?

- Primary age parents who want to improve their parent-child interactions
- They might observe:
  - their child regularly experiencing emotional distress
  - regular arguments with their child
  - 'meltdowns' which they struggle to manage
  - behaviour that challenges
  - struggle to regulate their responses to their child
  - learn skills and strategies of emotional regulation and mindfulness

### FEEDBACK FROM PARENTS.....

'friendly, informative, thought-provoking'

'For me personally, learning new techniques that I'll be able to use to help my child, some of which I have already put to good use. Also, I have learnt a lot about how our reactions and general behaviour as a parent has a big impact on my child. This is probably the biggest element I have taken from the group and something I didn't think about too much before. I have been adapting my approach when my child has been misbehaving or upset and already seen improvements. I also found it useful to hear the experiences of other parents in the group and how they were very similar to ours.'



Next Group starts:

January 2025:  
7 consecutive weeks  
Virtual group

If you feel the group would be suitable for you, please speak to your child's teacher or school mental health lead who will complete a referral to the MHST.

The MHST is an NHS service and a referral will result in a mental health episode of care being opened on your child's shared electronic records. Explicit parental consent will be sought by your school prior to this referral being made.