

Our Well-Being Newsletter

Newsletter for pupils, parents & staff
Issue 38 - June 2024

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Welcome to our June Well-Being Newsletter!

Our Newsletter will this month focus on the influence of social media on children and adolescents. Young people today are increasingly under pressure to conform to a certain society ideal of body shape and exterior appearance. The excessive number of hours young people spend on social media are not helping. Social media has both positive and negative impacts on children and adolescents. The influence of social media on youth's mental health is shaped by many complex factors, including, but not limited to, the amount of time young people spend on platforms, the type of content they consume or are otherwise exposed to, the activities and interactions social media affords, and the degree to which it disrupts activities that are essential for health like sleep and physical activity (more on the importance of sleep, on page 3).



Steps for positive body image



Appreciate and celebrate all of the amazing things your body does for you—running, dancing, breathing, laughing, dreaming, etc.

Remind yourself that “true beauty” is not simply skin-deep. When you feel good about yourself and who you are, you carry yourself with a sense of confidence, self-acceptance, and openness that makes you beautiful.

Shut down those voices in your head that tell you your body is not “right” or that you are a “bad” person. You can overpower those negative thoughts with positive ones. The next time you start to tear yourself down, build yourself back up with a few quick affirmations that work for you.

Remember that most images online, on social media and in adverts have been edited. The people in those pictures don't always look like that.

Remember that most people are so busy worrying about themselves that they don't notice you as much as you think they do.

Try and look up to people who inspire you for what they do, not for what they look like.





Parents' Page



How to support our children with social media and reduce its influence

Social media does not affect all young people the same way. Use of social media is linked with healthy and unhealthy effects on mental health. These effects vary from one young person to another. Social media effects on mental health depend on things such as:

- what a teen sees and does online,
- the amount of time spent online,
- Psychological factors, such as maturity level and any pre-existing mental health conditions,
- Personal life circumstances, including cultural, social and economic factors.

The healthy side of social media is that it lets teens create online identities, chat with others and build social networks. These networks can provide teens with support from other people who have hobbies or experiences in common.

The unhealthy side of social media is that it can:

- distract from homework, exercise and family activities,
- disrupt sleep,
- lead to inappropriate information sharing,
- become a means to spread rumours or share too much personal information,
- lead some young people to form views about other people's lives or bodies that aren't realistic,
- expose young people to online predators, who might try to exploit or extort them,
- expose some young people to cyberbullying, which can raise the risk of mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression.

With our young people using social media at an earlier age, they must learn how to use it safely, sooner, rather than later. Teaching young people how to use social media responsibly will help them to recognise risks while still enjoying the benefits that these platforms have to offer.

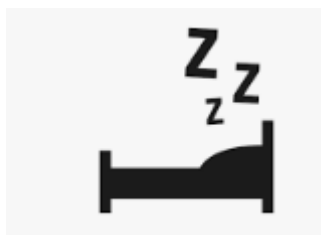
There are some basic guidelines that all young people should know from the start. First and foremost, they must understand the risks involved with regards to giving out too much personal information online:

- **sharing personal data:** talk to your children about using personal details online. They should never be posting this information. For example, instead of using their full name for their social media profiles, you might ask your children to use a screen name that makes it harder for just anyone to locate their profiles. Also, encourage them not to share details that they use in any account passwords such as their birthdate or their pet's name;
- **sharing photos on social media** is so common that many don't think too much of it, let alone realize the potential consequences of doing so. Even when it is a parent choosing to share pictures of their children on their personal social media profiles, questions of consent quickly arise. The same goes for when anyone shares a picture of someone else online, even if they are your friends or family members;
- **try and talk to your children about privacy settings, consent, and what constitutes an appropriate photo to share online.** Facebook, Tik Tok, and other social media outlets offer privacy settings that allow users to make their account private except for the individuals that the user chooses to invite to view their profile. Ensure that your children have these settings activated, and encourage them to only allow people they know personally to view their profile like real-life friends and family. Even if your child's accounts are private, discuss consent in regards to sharing pictures. If there are friends in a picture they want to share, encourage your child to ask their friends before posting the photo. This gives the others in the photo a chance to consent to their image being posted online.

For further information:

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-a-z-mental-health-guide/social-media/>

A good night's sleep



A good night's sleep allows your body to rest and repair itself, ready for the next day. If you are not getting enough sleep, you are at greater risk of developing coronary heart disease, diabetes, stroke and high blood pressure. Your mental health will suffer too, and you are likely to experience a lack of concentration and changes in your mood.

Although it is often said that we need eight hours' sleep a night, everybody is different. You might only need seven hours or you might benefit more from nine. As long as you are getting enough sleep, it does not matter if you are an early bird or a night owl. But if you have less than six hours' sleep more often than not, the cumulative effect will lead to excessive tiredness and will have a huge impact on your quality of life.

To prepare yourself for sleep, make a conscious effort to wind down during the hour before bed. Anything that makes you relax will help; this could be reading a book; having a warm drink, a soak in the bath, listening to some soothing music, meditation, etc. Setting a daily routine will help to promote regular, uninterrupted sleep.

Ideally, you should try going to bed and getting up at the same time every day, including at the weekend. If you can keep to the same sleep hours, your body's internal clock will be maintained and you should find it easier to fall asleep and wake up in the morning.

It is important to avoid stimulants such as alcohol, nicotine and caffeine, which can disturb your sleep, close to your bed time. Try also to have your last meal of the day early in the evening, rather than later.

One cannot stress enough the importance of sleeping on a good mattress. The right mattress for you helps towards a better quality of sleep.

Ask for help:

If you are sticking to a regular sleep routine but you are still experiencing sleep problems, seek help from your community pharmacy or your GP. Such problems can be caused by a number of reasons, for example, physical, psychological, or both, and your local pharmacy or the GP can support in understanding what the cause may be and provide advice on how to overcome it.

Further information on:

<https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/mental-health-issues/sleep/>





Take part in activities that support you, your family and friends, and your community with positive mental well-being.*

More information on:

<https://nhsfreeyourmind.co.uk/be-well-challenge/>



*The NHS Free Your Mind website has a lot of resources to support everyone's mental health, whether you are a child, a young or older adult. It also includes sign-posting to support services:

<https://nhsfreeyourmind.co.uk/>

Cost of living crisis - Useful links

<https://www.stepchange.org/debt-info/government-help-with-gas-electric-bills.aspx>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/cost-of-living-payment>

<https://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme>

<https://www.stepchange.org/debt-info/emergency-funding.aspx>

<https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/communities-and-social-justice/help-cost-living/help-crisis>

https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_a_dvice/benefits/emergency_grants_loans_and_money_help

<https://www.trusselltrust.org/get-help/find-a-foodbank/>



Chaplain's



Corner



Dear Lord,

I give thanks for my friends, for connection and laughter, for comfort and strength, for encouragement and unity, for forgiveness and grace, for celebration and joy.

I pray you guide me and them to make the right choices and to support each other in good times and more importantly, in bad.

May you lead myself and those around me to abundance, and encourage us to share the love and kindness we show to our friends and to everyone we meet, so no-one feels left behind.

Amen.

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.

116 123



The Nest is a free & confidential mental wellbeing service for young people aged 11-25
We are now running a weekly drop-in
Every Thursday 16.30 – 18.30
email thenest@groundwork.org.uk or drop in