

Our Well-Being Newsletter

Newsletter for pupils, parents & staff
Issue 43 - December 2024

St Michael's Catholic College, Llewellyn Street, London, SE16 4UN
02072376432 | contact@stmichaelscollege.org.uk
www.stmichaelscollege.org.uk



Welcome to our December Well-Being Newsletter!

Many of us will get to spread some good tidings and joy celebrating Christmas. Christmas is about time with our families, embracing the joy of food-sharing and gift-giving. However, Christmas can be an emotionally challenging time of the year for anyone, young and old. You might be struggling this year for the first time or you may have found Christmas difficult in the past, and you are dreading it again this year. You may be grieving, feeling lonely, struggling financially or feeling left out. Not everyone feels happy at Christmas and it is ok. The important thing is to reach out for help if one is struggling. Please refer to page 4 of this newsletter for a list of organisations opened all year round, including during the Christmas break.



Cost of living crisis - Useful links

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

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/idt-ade5a65c-753a-43c8-b58d-de98196801ff>

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

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

<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_advice/benefits/emergency_grants_loans_and_money_help





Struggling with one's mental health at Christmas





Christmas can be a time of year that puts extra pressure on us. Many people experience a range of emotions, such as stress, anxiety or loneliness. It can be tough to admit, especially when it is supposed to be the most wonderful time of the year. It is okay not to be okay during this season. There are simple things you can do to take care of your mental health when you are feeling low:


 **Try something new and create memories:**
The cold weather can limit things to do outside the home. Some indoor activities such as a jigsaw puzzle or a board game, watching Christmas films or doing a Christmas crafting activity can keep us engaged and motivated.

 **Control your spending:**
We sometimes feel pressure to participate in expensive social activities or spend a lot on presents. Buying presents is not the only way to show that we care. Overspending can impact our mental health and budgeting in the long term. Please refer to page 1 and 4 for our list of support organisations.

 **Not comparing yourself to others:**
While it is nice to see everyone celebrating, it can also create feelings of comparison when we only see happy images. You might compare your family dynamics, romantic relationships, or the number of presents other people have under their Christmas tree. Everyone's life looks different, and when we compare, it can create a negative spiral that impacts our mental health. If we recognise it happening, we need to stop the train of thought and try to think about things we do have.

 **Setting boundaries and realistic expectations:**
It is important to set boundaries. Don't feel pressure to spend your Christmas with people who negatively impact your mental health. Focus on creating meaningful moments rather than striving for perfection.

 **Giving back to others:**
There are many ways we can give back at Christmas, whether helping out someone we care about or volunteering with a charity. If you are looking to volunteer, you could contact your local food bank or visit Crisis and The Salvation Army which offer roles at Christmas.

 **Stay active:**
Physical activity is linked to improved mental health. Whether it is a winter walk or a home workout, moving our body helps lift our mood.

https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/explore-mental-health/blogs/coping-loneliness-during-festive-season?utm_medium=email&utm_source=email_mc_december&utm_campaign=email_mc_december&utm_content=loneliness-blog

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/christmas-and-mental-health/christmas-and-mental-health/>

A charitable Christmas

The festive season is a great time to help others and give something back. It can also be a great teaching moment to involve our children when one decides to reach out to others in need.

More people in the community are likely to rely on charitable support - including food banks, mental health and disability support and organisations offering financial guidance. However, in tough financial times, even small gifts can collectively make a big difference to the lives of others. There are still plenty of ways we can give to the causes close to our heart, whatever our budget.

Giving out some of our time to volunteer at a food bank, visiting a person who feels lonely or volunteering for a helpline are all ways we can offer a charitable hand this Christmas, and possibly beyond!

For more information on charities recruiting volunteers:

<https://www.crisis.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer/>

<https://www.culturecalling.com/london/food-and-drink/features/how-to-volunteer-in-london-this-christmas>

<https://www.timeout.com/london/things-to-do/where-to-volunteer-in-london-this-christmas>

“

THE WAY YOU
SPEND CHRISTMAS
IS FAR MORE
IMPORTANT THAN
HOW MUCH

HENRY DAVID THOREAU

Managing children and young people's grief at Christmas

It can be much easier for children and young people if the significant adults in their lives talk to them about Christmas and acknowledge that this might be a difficult time of year for them. Christmas can trigger some really powerful feelings for everyone – anger and jealousy towards those who haven't lost someone or sadness and loss because that special person has died. Children may want to talk about this or they might show you through their behaviour – maybe becoming more withdrawn or short-tempered. By listening to your child, you are telling them that their feelings are natural and that they are not alone:

- . talk together as a family about how you feel and what you want to do.
- . make plans for Christmas that take into account everyone's wishes where practical.
- . take time to remember your loved one.
- . let your children know that it is still ok to laugh and have fun this Christmas.

Bereavement support for Children:

<https://rainbowsgb.org/>

<https://www.childbereavementuk.org/managing-christmas>



Chaplain's Corner



Dear Lord,

Thank you for this Advent journey.

The anticipation has filled my life and made me long for a closer relationship with you.

My life gets so busy that I forget to focus. Thank you for guidance. Thank you for the quiet moments when I have felt your love. Nothing will be impossible with God.

Amen

St Michael's Chaplaincy teams

Giving ourselves for the work of Christ and for the service of others:



Year 7s



Year 8s



Year 9s



Year 10s



6th Form



Help and Guidance

**Services available
all year round, including Christmas Day**

shout
85258 here for
you 24/7

Confidential 24/7 text service offering support if you are in crisis and need immediate help.

SAMARITANS
Call free day or night on
116 123

Emotional support to anyone in emotional distress, struggling to cope or at risk of suicide

ChildLine
0800 1111 

NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HELPLINE
0808 2000 247
24/7 CONFIDENTIAL FREEPHONE

Qwell
COUNSELLING.COM 

Free online counselling support For over 25s



Bereavement support for children
<https://rainbowsqb.org/>

The Silver Line
helpline for older people
0800 4 70 80 90

Free support, information, friendship and advice for anyone over 55 who may feel lonely or isolated

kooth
Kooth is a free online service offering emotional and mental health support for children and young people
www.kooth.com

Free online emotional support service



Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year!