



Main Road, Smalley Derbyshire DE7 6EF
01332 880317

Headteacher – Mrs K Mason

1st February 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

We do hope that you and your families are keeping safe and well. This is undoubtedly a difficult time for all and the daily challenge of managing home learning, caring commitments, your own workload and a whole host of other responsibilities can be a nightmare. The national restrictions will no doubt be taking their toll. It is completely understandable that an extended lockdown can have an impact on the emotional wellbeing of yourselves, your families and your children. We therefore wanted to share some important information with you.

Children's Mental Health Week

Week commencing Monday 1 February is Children's Mental Health Week. We will be exploring wellbeing during this week especially - and beyond - in order to support our children's mental health and sense of wellbeing. We will ensure that our home learning activities reflect this and the theme this year is, 'Express Yourself' through which it is hoped that together we can help children to find ways of sharing how they feel and talk about their emotions.

Adults and children alike are experiencing new emotions and sometimes it can be difficult to manage them. We are all seeking new ways of 'getting through' this time and many professional agencies have published guidance which can provide support for us all. The links below may be useful for you and your family to use to support with easing anxiety and promoting emotional wellbeing.

Resource for adults to help young people to manage anxiety

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

<https://www.place2be.org.uk>

<https://www.annafreud.org/media/11465/helping-cyp-manage-anxiety-apr2020-v3.pdf>

A self-help guide for adults to work through anxieties

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/mental-health/mental-health-self-help-guides/anxiety-selfhelp-guide>

Videos to help children and young people deal with anxiety

<https://www.facebook.com/AFNCCF/videos/556309118348880/>

Helping your child with anxiety

<https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/parents-guide-to-support-a-z/parents-guide-to-support-anxiety>

Self-care to look after our own mental health

<https://www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind/self-care>

How to get a good night's sleep

<https://www.sleepscotland.org/support/gateway-to-good-sleep/how-to-get-a-good-nights-sleep>

How to help children during lockdown

- Know how to spot the signs. If your child is struggling, they may be withdrawn or there may have been a change in eating or sleeping habits. They might lack confidence or be easily upset.
- Talk to your child. Maintain communication in any way you can.
- Create structure and routine. You might consider introducing a visual timetable that includes fun things you can do during the week. This can create a feeling of stability which might alleviate some anxieties.
- Expressing feelings doesn't have to be face to face. Children might find it easier to draw a picture of their feelings or write them down.
- Help your child manage stress. Take a break when necessary, encourage physical activity and maintain communication. Exercise always makes you feel better, whether that's a leisurely stroll or PE with Joe Wicks!
- Reduce screen time by doing alternative activities in free time. As most conversations move online (for us all), increased screen time can have an impact on everyone's wellbeing.

In addition to the learning we post on Google Classroom, your child may wish to learn new skills or complete more practical tasks and indeed these are invaluable in improving wellbeing. For example, your child might enjoy cooking with you, gardening, crafting, painting and other activities that would engage them around the home. In fact, you might encourage your child to choose to break from Google Classroom in order to do some of these activities if they need a break or do not seem to be coping emotionally with a given home learning task. This is not to add to your list of 'jobs' as we understand that this is a very challenging situation for parents when time is in desperately short supply and our own emotions may well feel frayed.

Many members of staff in school are also parents and we really do understand how difficult it can be so please do not feel pressure from us and please know that we are here for you should you need anything at all. Please take care of yourselves and do not feel guilty about what you are (or aren't) doing, or even for taking time out for you. We are all trying our very best and we must remember that our best is good enough, and that applies to children and adults alike. Mrs Mason is now offering a weekly live 'Check in' for all parents on a Friday afternoon at 2pm. A link is sent out to you via text message on a Friday morning. Parents who joined it last week found it valuable to connect with each other and share experiences with support from teaching staff.

With all of this in mind, please take care of yourselves and each other, and do please reach out if we can help or if you need further support.

With our thanks for all you do and our very best wishes,

Mrs Macdonald
Wellbeing Co-ordinator.