

# Orchard Primary School Well-being Newsletter

## Supporting the Emotional Well-being and Mental Health of Our School Community

Autumn Term 2021

Welcome to our first mental health and well-being newsletter.

At Orchard, we are committed to supporting children, staff and parents in their well-being and mental health. We know that well-being, physical and mental health are vital to successful learning.

Our aim is to provide help, tips and resources to support both parents/carers and children.



### Five Ways to Well-being

1) **Connect** - There is strong evidence that indicates that feeling close to, and valued by, other people is a fundamental human need and one that contributes to functioning well in the world.

It's clear that social relationships are critical for promoting well-being and for acting as a buffer against mental ill health for people of all ages. With this in mind, try to do something different today and make a connection.

Talk to someone instead of sending an email. Speak to someone new. Put five minutes aside to find out how someone really is.

2) **Be active** - Regular physical activity is associated with lower rates of depression and anxiety across all age groups. Exercise is essential for slowing age-related cognitive decline and for promoting well-being.

It doesn't need to be particularly intense for you to feel good; slower-paced activities, such as walking, can have the benefit of encouraging social interactions, as well providing some level of exercise.

3) **Take notice** - Reminding yourself to 'take notice' can strengthen and broaden awareness.

Studies have shown that being aware of what is taking place in the present directly enhances your well-being and savouring 'the moment' can help to reaffirm your life priorities.

Heightened awareness also enhances your self-understanding and allows you to make positive choices based on your own values and motivations.

Take some time to enjoy the moment and the environment around you.

4) **Learn** - Continued learning through life enhances self-esteem and encourages social interaction and a more active life.

The practice of setting goals, which is related to adult learning in particular, has been strongly associated with higher levels of Well-being.

Why not learn something new today?

5) **Give** - Individuals who report a greater interest in helping others are more likely to rate themselves as happy.

Research into actions for promoting happiness has shown that committing an act of kindness once a week over a six-week period is associated with an increase in Well-being.

### What Is Well-being?

Mental well-being describes how you are feeling and how well you cope with day to day life.

Feelings of well-being are fundamental to the overall health of an individual, enabling them to successfully overcome difficulties and achieve what they want out of life.

Past experiences, attitudes and outlook can all impact well-being, as can physical or emotional trauma following specific incidents.

Our mental health can change from moment to moment, day to day and month to month.



## What is self-care?

Self-care is about what you can do to help yourself feel better or to keep feeling good about things.

There are lots of ways children can try self-care – try some of these ideas and see what works for your child.



## Positive Behaviours

We will continue to focus on positive behaviours and 'Character Muscles' during the next academic year, including resilience, growth mindset and kindness.

Class teachers will award Dojo points to children who have shown a positive and caring personality in school. Certificates and rewards will also be given during our class assemblies.

## Mindfulness

**Mindfulness helps bring us back to the present.**

**Here are some ideas if you'd like to try some:**

- **Squeeze Muscles:** Starting at your toes, pick one muscle and squeeze it tight. Count to five. Release, and notice how your body changes. Repeat exercise moving up your body.
- **Belly Breathing:** Put one hand on your stomach and one hand on your chest. Slowly breathe in from your stomach (expand like a balloon) and slowly breathe out (deflate).
- **Mindful Meal:** Pay attention to the smell, taste and look of your food. No multi-tasking.
- **Meditation:** Sit in a relaxed, comfortable position. Pick something to focus on, like your breath. When your mind wanders, bring your attention back to your breath.
- **Blowing Bubbles:** Notice their shapes, textures and colours.
- **Colouring:** Colour something. Focus on the colours and designs.
- **Listening to Music:** Focus on the whole song, or listen specifically to the voice, lyrics or an instrument.

## Did you know that ... ?

- 1 in 10 children and young people aged 5-16 suffer from a diagnosable mental health disorder. That is about 3 children in every class.
- There has been a big increase in the number of young people being admitted to hospital because of self-harm. Over the last ten years, this figure has increased by 68%.
- More than half of all adults with mental health problems were diagnosed in childhood. Less than half were treated appropriately at that time.
- Over 8000 children aged under 10 years old suffer from severe depression.
- 3.3% or about 290,000 children and young people have an anxiety disorder.
- 72% of children in care have behavioural or emotional problems – these are some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

## Laughing is a therapy

Laughing feels good, boosts our immune system and helps us keep things in perspective.

Laughing with others strengthens relationships and, because laughter is contagious, we laugh more with others.

Laughter provides a full-scale workout for your muscles and unleashes a rush of stress-busting endorphins. Since our bodies cannot distinguish between real and fake laughter, anything that makes you giggle will have a positive impact. You do not need to be happy or have a sense of humour to benefit from a good laugh!

- Share jokes at home.
- Watch funny film clips and films.
- Try laughter yoga – there are plenty of examples on YouTube.

The  
most wasted  
of all days  
is one  
without  
laughter.  
*e.e cummings*

## There is always something to be thankful for ...

Research shows that deliberately focusing on the good things in our lives – practising gratitude – can improve our well-being. It's easy to give in to our natural negativity bias as our brains strive to protect us from harm, but we can counter that by deliberately focusing on what's good, even during the most challenging of times.

- At the end of each day, write down three good things about the day, no matter how small.
- Share at least one positive story with the people at home each day.
- Say 'thank you' for all the little things others do for you.



## Health & Well-being Awareness Days

This term we will be acknowledging these national campaigns:

### September

23<sup>rd</sup> (official date is 24<sup>th</sup>) - Macmillan Fundraiser

25<sup>th</sup> - National Fitness Day

28<sup>th</sup> - BNF Healthy Eating Week

### October

Black History Month

5<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> Dyslexia Awareness Week

5<sup>th</sup> - National Braille Week

10<sup>th</sup> - World Mental Health Day



## We're here to help

At Orchard, we have a number of key people to support the co-ordination and development of emotional well-being and mental health provision within the school community.

Mrs Shields - Head Teacher & Well-being Lead

Miss Webster & Miss Farrar - SENDCOs

Mrs Fairbrother – ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant)

Well-being Team: Mrs Shields, Mrs Chapman, Mrs Champlin, Mrs Daft, Mrs McGravie & Mrs Fairbrother

Contact details - If you require any help or advice about emotional well-being and mental health issues, you can contact the above people on the school landline or email the main office.

## Website Links to Mental Health and Well-being Support

Please visit the school website for information, links and resources to help support positive well-being in children and adults.

### Useful Websites

- Young Minds ([www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk))
- Mind ([www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk))
- Minded ([www.minded.org.uk](http://www.minded.org.uk)) - e-learning opportunities
- Self Harm ([www.selfharm.co.uk](http://www.selfharm.co.uk))
- National Self-Harm Network ([www.nshn.co.uk](http://www.nshn.co.uk))
- Depression Alliance ([www.depressionalliance.org/information](http://www.depressionalliance.org/information))
- Anxiety UK ([www.anxietyuk.org.uk](http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk))
- Beat—The eating disorders charity ([www.beat.co.uk/about-eating-disorders](http://www.beat.co.uk/about-eating-disorders))