

WELBEING

The first thing on the Reaside Academy Wellbeing Newsletter for spring term is a big..
WELL DONE!

Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, I think it is safe to say that this has been toughest term to date. With last minute changes that you have adapted too and logging on to online learning, you are all doing a fantastic job. It feels like one big Reaside team effort to try and provide the best possible outcomes for your children so again, well done!

Last week was Children’s Mental Health Week (1st-7th February) so I am going to focus on children and their mental health in this newsletter. Starting with this Mindfulness Calendar. I mentioned ‘mindfulness’ in the last newsletter and I also shared some examples of how it can be used by adults (see Newsletter Dec 2020). Here are some activities that you can complete with your children to promote ‘mindfulness’ and improve health and wellbeing. The link in the box below will take you to an explanation of what you need to do for each activity.

MINDFULNESS CALENDAR

MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI
COUNTING BREATHS 1-2-3	 ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE	 USING THE SENSES	COLOUR BREATHING 	 BIRTHDAY CAKE BREATHING
MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI
FEATHER BREATHING 	 FINGER COUNTING	SLIMY HANDS 	 RISE AND FALL	RELAXING MUSCLES 

These daily 5 minute exercises can focus children’s brains and help them regain control of their thoughts. We all know how it feels when life gets too much. It happens to the little people too.

Follow this link for more information:

<https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/resources/mindfulness-calendar-daily-five-minute-activities/>



What is 'Mental Health'?

Everyone has mental health and we have to work hard at maintaining 'good' mental health.

The Mental Health Foundation (<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk>) describes good mental health as:

- the ability to learn
- the ability to feel, express and manage a range of positive and negative emotions
- the ability to form and maintain good relationships with others
- the ability to cope with and manage change and uncertainty.

Doing things that we enjoy and spending time with people who make us feel happy, usually helps maintain good mental health. However, sometimes people can experience episodes of poor mental health and this can occur more regularly for some. It is in times like these (a pandemic), that our mental health begins to suffer; When we are unable to do things that we love, including seeing friends and family. So, in order to pick ourselves back up, we need to make changes and find new things to make us happy like: dancing, a walk in the sun/snow/rain, a cake delivery or baking, listening to music, watching a movie or doing a Zoom quiz with faraway friends.

Another thing that helps maintain good mental health is resilience. The ability to 'bounce back' following adversity. Teaching and promoting resilience at a young age is essential to mentally surviving something like a pandemic. Guidance, taken from Positive Psychology.com, illustrates ways of developing resilience in children:

- **Build Empathy:** Help your child develop empathy by teaching them how to really consider the struggles faced by others.
- **Listen:** Ensure that your child feels like you are truly tuned-in to what they have to say.
- **Accept Children for Who They Are:** Avoid pushing your child in a direction they don't want to go; but instead, celebrate the person they are.
- **Identify Strengths:** Find out what your child is really good at and offer encouragement and support.
- **Do-Overs:** Make sure your child knows that mistakes along the way are okay; present them as learning experiences and areas where they can try and do better next time.
- **Develop Responsibility:** Give your child opportunities for developing mastery and responsibility, this will encourage self-esteem and self-efficacy.
- **Offer Meaningful Participation:** Offer your child opportunities to engage in activities they really care about.
- **Teach Problem-Solving:** Show your child ways to deal with problems, providing both role modeling and encouragement.

Full article can be found at <https://positivepsychology.com/resilience-in-children/>

Another way to maintain good mental health is regular exercise. Here is a link to **Fitter Future:** <https://www.fitterfuture.com/sign-up/>. It is for free for our families to improve physical and mental wellbeing at home. The Health and Wellbeing tab on school website also has calming exercises that you can do with the children, like Cosmic Yoga or The Zen Den.



How can I talk to my child about mental health?

The Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families have a fabulous booklet titled 'You're never too young to talk mental health' which contains clear guidance about how you can approach mental health with children: <https://www.annafreud.org/media/11452/tmh-parent-leaflet-final-web-updated-by-ed-april-2020.pdf>. I think the key thing to remember is that it is **never too young** to talk about mental health so that children and young people understand that their mindset is within their control and how they can maintain good mental health.

Where can I find support for mental health?

If your child is showing signs of poor mental health or is talking to you about 'big' feelings that are concerning to you, there a variety of things you can do...

- #youvebeenmissed (<https://bwc.nhs.uk/youve-been-missed/>) has a wide range of activities that you can work through with your child. There are a variety of activities for anxiety and stress, low mood and anger.
- Talk to school. We have a wide range of resources on the Reaside School website in the Information tab - Health and Wellbeing.
- Go to the GP for advice and support. They may refer you to the Community Paediatrician or be able to alternative support.
- Forward Thinking Birmingham and Pause offer mental health support across Birmingham:

Pause.

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

- NSPCC have counselling services available to support children with mental health difficulties.
- Young Minds have lots of resources on their website:

<https://youngminds.org.uk/>

YOUNGMINDS

In addition, #youvebeenmissed also have support for parents and carers experiencing difficulties with anxiety and stress, low mood, anger and frustration and self-care. There are activities to do and webinars to watch. Really useful!

<https://bwc.nhs.uk/parents-and-carers>

YOU'VE
BEEN
MISSED

Look after your body and mind and stay safe.