



CHILDREN'S MENTAL **HEALTH WEEK**

1st - 7th February 2021

Parent Document

During the first school closure in 2020, the school produced a [PSHE document aimed at the whole family](#) which gave guidance on how to stay healthy in both body and mind. This document is a follow on from that.

Staff at Oasis Academy Coulsdon have so far done a number of parent workshops including one from Ms Kavanagh on Mental Health. To access all of the video workshops, please do so by clicking [here](#).

All students at Oasis Coulsdon have a PSHE session delivered by either Ms Kavanagh (Year 10 and Year 11) or Ms Holt (Year 7, Year 8 and Year 9) about mental health during this week. Please make sure your child is accessing this session on their PSHE day. This will be posted on their whole year group team.

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Tuesday Period 3	Wednesday Period 3	Wednesday Period 2	Tuesday Period 4	Tuesday Period 1

Please use this document to support your child with their mental health. We cannot under estimate the effect school closures and covid-19 may have on the mental health of our young people. Whilst we do not pretend to be experts in mental health, we do hope this document will act as a guide to your family.

There are hyperlinks in this document so that you can access more information. They will be in blue and underlined. In order to open these hyperlinks, you may need to do so via google chrome.

Stay safe and well.

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What Is Mental Health And Why Is It Important?

According to [Mental Health.gov](https://www.mentalhealth.gov), “Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.”

[MentalHealth.Org](https://www.mentalhealth.org) describes “1 in 10 children and young people” as having some kind of mental health problem.

The emotional wellbeing of children is just as important as their physical health. Good mental health allows children and young people to develop the resilience to cope with whatever life throws at them and grow into well-rounded, healthy adults.

Things that can help keep children and young people mentally well include:

- being in good physical health, eating a balanced diet and getting regular exercise
- having time and the freedom to play, indoors and outdoors
- being part of a family that gets along well most of the time
- going to a school that looks after the wellbeing of all its pupils
- taking part in local activities for young people.

Other factors are also important, including:

- feeling loved, trusted, understood, valued and safe
- being interested in life and having opportunities to enjoy themselves
- being hopeful and optimistic
- being able to learn and having opportunities to succeed
- accepting who they are and recognising what they are good at
- having a sense of belonging in their family, school and community
- feeling they have some control over their own life
- having the strength to cope when something is wrong (resilience) and the ability to solve problems.

How Can We Boost Our Mental Health?



LET'S GET PHYSICAL!

Being physically active = sitting down less and moving our bodies more!

According to [Mind.org](https://www.mind.org) There are many studies which have shown that doing physical activity can improve mental health. For example, it can help with:

- ✓ **better sleep** – by making you feel more tired at the end of the day
- ✓ **happier moods** – physical activity releases feel-good hormones that make you feel better in yourself and give you more energy
- ✓ **managing stress, anxiety or intrusive and racing thoughts** – doing something physical releases cortisol which helps us manage stress. Being physically active also gives your brain something to focus on and can be a positive coping strategy for difficult times
- ✓ **better self-esteem** – being more active can make you feel better about yourself as you improve and meet your goals
- ✓ **reducing the risk of depression** – studies have shown that doing regular physical activity can reduce the likelihood of experiencing a period of depression

[Sport England](https://www.sportengland.org) has lots of ideas and details about how to stay fit and get healthy from your own home. A lot of the things they suggest are free. Remember that [Joe Wicks](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8Xm11111111111111111111) has his Youtube channel and is still helping the nation with his online HITT training aimed for the whole family. You could also check out [Pop Sugar](https://www.pop-sugar.com) for different home workouts too, from HITT to Hip-Hop.

DO NOT UNDER-ESTIMATE THE POWER OF SLEEP

According to [Sleep Foundation.org](https://www.sleepfoundation.org) “Brain activity fluctuates during sleep, increasing and decreasing during different sleep stages that make up the sleep cycle. In NREM (non-rapid eye movement) sleep, overall brain activity slows, but there are quick bursts of energy. In REM sleep, brain activity picks up rapidly, which is why this stage is associated with more intense dreaming. Each stage plays a role in brain health, allowing activity in different parts of the brain to ramp up or down and enabling better thinking, learning, and memory. Research has also uncovered that brain activity during sleep has profound effects on emotional and mental health”

To make sure you child is getting the sleep that they need, the NHS have provided tips with teenagers in mind:

1. Limit screens in the bedroom.
2. Exercise for better **sleep**.
3. Cut out the caffeine.
4. Do not binge before bedtime.
5. **Have a** good routine.
6. Create a **sleep**-friendly bedroom.
7. Talk through any problems.
8. Avoid long weekend lie-ins.

HEALTHY DIET HELPS TOWARDS A HEALTHY MIND



[Food in care](#) states that healthy eating has many other benefits. When we eat well we sleep better, have more energy and better concentration – and this all adds up to healthier, happier lives! Healthy eating should be an enjoyable social experience. When children and young people eat and drink well they get all the essential nutrients they need for proper growth and development, and develop a good relationship with food and other social skills.

Active children and young people whose eating is well-balanced tend to:

- have a healthy body weight
- feel good about themselves
- have plenty of energy to be active
- have stronger muscles and bones
- enjoy better physical and mental health

Children and young people who are hungry or poorly nourished (e.g. consume higher intakes of food and drink high in calories, fat, sugar and/or salt often termed 'junk food' such as chips, sweets and soft drinks) may:

- be irritable, moody or aggressive
- be unable to concentrate and focus on tasks
- have less energy for daily activities
- be uninterested in learning situations and do less well at school
- be at higher risk of developing conditions such as dental health problems, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, some types of cancer, depression, becoming overweight and obese

[The NHS has a whole section about eating well for the whole family](#)

BE MINDFUL OF SCREEN TIME AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Mrs Holt has done a parental workshop on how parents can keep their [children safe online](#) where part of states about communication and keeping an eye on how much your child spends in front of the screen.

With children now learning remotely, we cannot help but be at a screen for at least 4 hours a day, therefore it is important to think about how much screen time they have overall in their day.

Please be mindful about how much extra time your child is spending in front of a screen and how this may affect their overall mood.

Establishing good routines around phones, tablets, consoles, laptops or PCs can mean less arguments and more time for face-to-face contact within the home.

TALK TO YOUR TEENAGERS

The NHS has a whole page about [talking to teenagers](#). Talking to your children allows them to open up and discuss about what might be causing them stress or upset.

Once again, as previously said, we cannot underestimate how this pandemic is affecting young people and it maybe that they have low mood just because they are fed up and can no longer see a future in sight.

It is important that as a school and as parents, we pull together to speak about how important their education is and that their future is still out there.

It is also important that as parents, you allow your children to open up, no matter how trivial or silly we may think it is adults.

Family Conversation Starters

If you could be in any movie, what movie would you choose?	What is your favorite chore? What about your least favorite chore?
What makes you feel loved?	What are you most proud of?
If you could only take 3 things to a deserted island, what would you take?	What is the nicest thing anyone has ever said to you?
Where would you fly if you had wings?	Describe someone else at this table in 3 words.
If you could plan a family trip, where would we go and what would we do?	If you could be any animal, what would you be?
If you had just one wish, what would it be?	What is your least favorite color?
What is your favorite season and why?	If you could only eat one thing for the rest of your life, what would it be?
What is your favorite song right now and why?	What is your favorite family tradition?
What was the first thing you thought of when you woke up this morning?	If you could have any super power, what would it be?
Describe yourself in 3 words.	What makes you happy when you are sad?

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR CHILD IS SUFFERING FROM LOW MENTAL HEALTH?

Your child has a mentor of whom they connect with every morning via teams. Mentors are regularly checking in with their mentees about how they are feeling and are supported by the Family Leaders as well as Wellbeing and Inclusion Team.

At school we have an online worry box where students can email. This is accessed by our safeguarding team: worrybox@oasiscouldon.org

If you are concerned about your child we would advise that you **always** **contact your GP for support and guidance**. There are also some apps, websites and local contacts that may be able to offer help and support.

- ✓ [Young Minds](#) has many different resources for young people as well as a parents helpline
- ✓ [Mind](#) is a charity especially dedicated to mental health
- ✓ The NHS website has a section about mental health with a particular focus on [children and young people's mental health](#)
- ✓ The Anna Freud – National Centre For Children and Families has a document about [talking mental health](#) with secondary school aged children as well as a helpful [video](#)
- ✓ [Childline](#) is a 24/7 service especially for children
- ✓ [Croydon Drop In](#) is a charitable organisation that exists to support young people aged 11 to 25 years old and families who live, work or study in the London Borough of Croydon.
- ✓ [Papyrus](#) is the national charity dedicated to the prevention of young suicide.
- ✓ [Kooth](#) is a free and anonymous online support for young people