



What is mental health?

Mental health is about how we think, how we feel and how we behave. Having good mental health means that you are able to make the most of your life, reach your potential and cope with the ups and downs of life.



Communicate any concerns with school

If you have any worries or concerns about your child's emotional behaviour or wellbeing, then please let school know. There will be things that we can do to help and support you.

We would love to know if this newsletter is useful to you or if there are other support ideas you might need.

Please let us know by speaking to a member of SLT or by emailing the school at office@johnperry.bardaglea.org.uk



Breathing exercises to help children with anxiety

Deep breathing is one of the best ways to lower stress in the body. This is because when you breathe deeply, it sends a message to your brain to calm down and relax. The brain then sends this message to your body. Breathing exercises are a good way to relax, reduce tension, and relieve stress.

Bumble Bee Breathing

Breathe in through the nose. Exhale slowly and in a controlled manner while making a deep, steady humming sound like that of the bumble bee.



The humming sound should be smooth, even and continuous for the duration of the breath out.

Playing with bubbles

Playing with 'bubbles' is a great way to help regulate deep breathing. It is also something that can be done together with the rest of the family. Take a big, tummy pushing out breath before gently and slowly blowing to make the bubbles - making sure the tummy is contracting.



Understanding anxiety in children

Anxiety disorders are amongst the most common mental health issues seen in children and a child can often feel anxious at different times as they grow up. There is some really useful information on the Priory website that may help you to discuss with your child why we become anxious and how it makes our bodies feel. The website can be found here: <https://www.priorygroup.com/blog/a-guide-to-understanding-anxiety-in-children>

5 Steps to Mental Wellbeing

Evidence suggests that there are 5 steps you can take to improve your mental health and wellbeing. Trying these things could help you feel more positive and able to get the most out of life.

1. Connect with other people

Good relationships are important for your mental wellbeing. They can:

- help you to build a sense of belonging and self-worth
- give you an opportunity to share positive experiences
- provide emotional support and allow you to support other

2. Be physically active

Being active is not only great for your physical health and fitness.

Evidence also shows it can also improve your mental wellbeing by:

- raising your self-esteem
- helping you to set goals or challenges and achieve them
- causing chemical changes in your brain which can help to positively change your mood.

3. Learn new skills

Research shows that learning new skills can also improve your mental wellbeing by:

- boosting self-confidence and raising self-esteem
- helping you to build a sense of purpose
- helping you to connect with others

Even if you feel like you do not have enough time, or you may not need to learn new things, there are lots of different ways to bring learning into your life.

4. Give to others

Research suggests that acts of giving and kindness can help improve your mental wellbeing by:

- creating positive feelings and a sense of reward
- giving you a feeling of purpose and self-worth
- helping you connect with other people

It could be small acts of kindness towards other people, or larger ones like volunteering in your local community.

5. Pay attention to the present moment (mindfulness)

Paying more attention to the present moment can improve your mental wellbeing. This includes your thoughts and feelings, your body and the world around you.

Some people call this awareness "mindfulness". Mindfulness can help you enjoy life more and understand yourself better. It can positively change the way you feel about life and how you approach challenges.

For more information and practical advice, please visit <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/guides-tools-and-activities/five-steps-to-mental-wellbeing/>

Every week, as part of our Celebration Assembly, we remind our pupils about the 5 Steps to Wellbeing and select one to practise over the weekend. Please spend some time with your child and share ideas to connect, give, be active, take notice and keep learning!