John Perry Primary School

Mental Health & Wellbeing Newsletter - Issue 1 (September 2025)

Welcome to the first issue of our Mental Health & Wellbeing Newsletter for the academic year 2025-2026.

As stated in Mentally Healthy Schools, primary schools have a vital role to play in supporting children's mental health. At John Perry, we believe that teaching young people the skills they need to recognise and deal with their emotions, and helping those with difficulties get the support they need, is key to giving them the best start in life.

These newsletters will be sent out half-termly and they aim to provide hints and tips for looking after your child's and your own mental health and wellbeing.

We are always open to constructive feedback and suggestions. Please speak to a member of SLT or email the school office (office@johnperry.bardaglea.org.uk) if you would like us to include information about a particular area of mental health and wellbeing or if you have any ideas or suggestions to improve the mental health and wellbeing of our staff, pupils and John Perry community.

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.



Mindful Moment: Breathing Buddies

Try this calming bedtime activity with your child:

1. Lie down with a small soft toy on your child's tummy.
2. Encourage them to breathe in slowly and watch the toy rise.
3. Breathe out gently and watch the toy fall.
4. Repeat for 2–3 minutes.

This helps slow breathing and settle minds before sleep.



The Thrive Approach

At John Perry Primary School, we're proud to use the Thrive Approach to support our children's emotional and social wellbeing.

The Thrive Approach helps us understand children's behaviour and emotional development so that we can give them the right support at the right time. It's based on neuroscience, attachment theory, and child development—and it helps children feel safe, confident, and ready to learn.

How Thrive Support Helps Your Child

Sometimes, children need a little extra help to:

- Understand and manage their feelings
- Build friendships and social skills
- Feel more confident and secure
- Regulate their emotions and calm down when upset

Our trained Thrive Practitioners work with children 1:1 or in small groups, using fun, play-based activities like storytelling, drawing, movement, and role-play to help them explore and express their feelings. We also offer a Thrive Club at lunchtimes for children that may need extra support.

Settling In and New Beginnings

Starting a new school year can bring a mixture of emotions: excitement, nervousness, hope, or even anxiety. Whether your child is new to the school or simply moving up a year group, it's important to acknowledge and talk about these feelings.

At John Perry Primary School, we believe that wellbeing starts at home – and small, simple actions can make a big difference. As parents and carers, you play a vital role in helping your child feel safe, calm, and confident. Here are a few practical ways you can support their wellbeing every day:

1. Talk – and Listen

Set aside a few minutes each day to ask how your child is feeling. Try open-ended questions like:

"What was the best part of your day?"
"Was there anything that made you feel upset or worried?"

Let them know it's good to talk about big feelings – even the tricky ones.

2. Keep Routines Steady

Children feel more secure when they know what to expect. Try to stick to regular mealtimes, bedtimes, and screen-free times, especially on school days. A predictable routine helps reduce anxiety and improves sleep.

3. Model Calm and Kindness

Children learn how to manage emotions by watching the adults around them. Show them how you take deep breaths when you feel stressed, talk kindly about yourself, and handle mistakes with a positive attitude.

4. Create a Calm Space

A small "calm corner" at home can give your child a place to unwind. Add cushions, soft toys, colouring books, or calming music. This space isn't for punishment—it's a safe spot for peace and quiet.

5. Encourage Movement and Outdoor Play

Being active helps children regulate their emotions and boost their mood. A quick walk, a dance in the kitchen, or time in the park can work wonders—especially if you're doing it together.

6. Celebrate Effort, Not Just Results

Praise your child for trying hard, being kind, or sticking with something—even if it didn't go perfectly. This helps build self-esteem and resilience.

7. Talk to us

If you notice changes in your child's behaviour or mood, please speak to their class teacher or our safeguarding team. Early conversations help us support your child effectively.



Looking After Yourself as a Parent or Carer

Being a parent or carer is one of the most rewarding — and challenging — roles in life. At John Perry Primary, we want to remind all our parents and carers that your wellbeing matters too.

When you look after yourself, you're better able to support your child emotionally, mentally, and physically.

Here are a few simple ideas to try:

- **Take 10 minutes just for you** – a quiet cup of tea, a walk, or listening to music can help you reset.
- **Talk to someone** – whether it's a friend, a relative, or another parent or carer at school, sharing how you're feeling can really help.
- **Don't aim for perfect** – good enough is good enough! Be kind to yourself on the tough days.
- **Reach out if you need help** – no one is meant to do this alone.

If you'd like to connect with other parents and carers or need support, our school community is here for you. Please speak to a member of staff or our wellbeing team — we're always happy to help or signpost you to local services in Barking and Dagenham.

"You can't pour from an empty cup – taking care of yourself is part of taking care of your family."



Quote of the month

"Children are not a distraction from more important work. They are the most important work."
— *C.S. Lewis*



Local Support Services in Barking & Dagenham

Barking & Dagenham CAMHS (mental health support for children)
0300 555 1036 | www.nelft.nhs.uk/services-bd-camhs

Early Help & Parenting Support Team (practical and emotional support for families)
020 8227 5395 | LBBD Family Support

Young Minds Parent Helpline – advice for families
0808 802 5544 | www.youngminds.org.uk

Kooth (Ages 11+) – Free online counselling and wellbeing support
www.kooth.com

Five ways to wellbeing

At John Perry, we actively promote the *Five Ways to Wellbeing*—Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Learn, and Give—to help support the mental and emotional wellbeing of all our pupils.

Each Friday during Celebration Assembly, we take a moment to remind children of these five simple but powerful actions they can take to feel good and stay well. We encourage them to think about how they can carry these into their weekend—such as going for a walk or a bike ride to be active, spending time with family or visiting grandparents to connect, or helping around the house to give.

Taking notice of nature while outside or trying something new can also contribute to their wellbeing. By building these habits early, we help children understand how small daily actions can make a big difference in how they feel.

