

# St Mary's Wellbeing Newsletter

Welcome to our first wellbeing newsletter! At St Mary's we recognise the importance of promoting health and wellbeing across our school community and we are committed to supporting all our children and families. The aim of this newsletter is to give you some simple ideas to support wellbeing at home as well as letting you know how we may be able to support you at school. As we begin to prepare for a return to school, it is likely that we will all experience a mixture of emotions and we hope that the ideas given here will be helpful.



## In Safe Hands



This is a brand new publication which has been developed in collaboration with a local primary school. It is about staying in touch and letting children and young people know that they are not alone. Written by young people, for young people, it includes useful tips and suggests places to get help if needed. This very first issue reflects on

- Your feelings
- Your friends
- Your home
- Your health

We hope that sharing experiences will help other children and young people who may be feeling worried or alone during school closure. Please click [here](#) to read the magazine online.

## Action for Happiness

Action for happiness helps us all to take action for a happier, kinder world. They have lots of resources on their website, and we suggest using the free downloadable calendar. Each month has a different theme and gives simple, daily suggestions to increase our own and other people's happiness. You can download the calendar [here](#).



## ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant)

Children's health and wellbeing is supported by every member of staff at St Mary's. We know that children and young people learn better and are happier in school if their emotional needs are also met. However, sometimes children may need some additional support and may be offered some sessions with one of our ELSA trained practitioners. The ELSA toolkit is often likened to a first aid kit - sometimes we all need a bit of emotional first aid! You can find out more about the ELSA first aid kit [here](#).



## Mindfulness for Parents & Children

Even very young children can feel stressed and anxious, especially during times of change or upheaval. Luckily, there are lots of simple activities you can do together to help your child learn to calm themselves. Being able to recognise and cope with anxiety is a skill that will benefit children for life - try these simple, calming, mindful activities together and see which ones work for you.

### 1. Use your mind...

Take a small food item (like a raisin or cracker) and ask your child to examine theirs closely (look at it, smell it, see what it feels like in their mouth, taste it and listen carefully to the sound it makes) as though they've never eaten one before.

**How it works** Mindfulness is about being 'in the moment' and focusing completely on what you're currently doing - using all your senses to really experience it. That might sound challenging for little ones, but simple mindfulness exercises can be a great way to help children learn to pause and think before reacting.



### 2. Have a giggle and a laugh

Watching a show your child loves, telling jokes or taking turns to pull funny faces at each other can be a great way to relax and handle nervousness.

**How it works** Laughter or feeling stimulated helps decrease stress hormones, and relaxes muscles.

### 3. Breathe deep...

Encourage your child to breathe in, hold and breathe out. Try using the 5 finger breathing technique - stretch out the fingers of one hand and place the index finger of the other hand at the base of your thumb. As you breathe in, trace your finger up the thumb and move your finger down the thumb as you breathe out. Continue along all 5 of your fingers and find a rate that feels comfortable for your child. Keep going until they feel calmer.

**How it works** Simply taking a series of deep breaths will slow down your little one's heart rate, and help them feel more in control.



### 4. Stretch it out...



Stretch your arms above your heads, stand on tiptoes and make yourselves as tall as possible then flop back down.

**How it works** Encourage your little one to stretch out their muscles to reduce tension. Demonstrate how they could stretch out like a cat, or reach up to the sky.

### 5. Go cloud-spotting...

Stay as still as you can and simply watch the clouds go by together. See if your little one can spot any shapes among the clouds.

**How it works** This common technique encourages your child to relax and take their mind off other things. You could do this alongside deep breathing to really help your child chill out.



### 6. Listen to some calming music



Relax and listen to some calming sounds such as [these](#), or choose some relaxing music of your own.

**How it works** Listening to relaxing music can help children stop and reset. CBeebies Radio have eight calming sounds to choose from which allows you to experiment and find which one works best:

# Places to go for support and advice

## BBC HEADROOM - Your Mental Health Toolkit



Mindful Tips • Mood Mixes • Personal Stories • Motivation  
We know we can't solve all your troubles, but we can give you tools to help.

Whether it is everyday tips, [sounds to relax your mind](#), [strategies to cope with parenting](#) right now or [films to get you talking](#), we are here to help you look after yourself and your loved ones.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/YfRzhXDKSZQxFVn30TIXBj/your-mental-health-toolkit>

We are leading the movement to make sure every young person gets the mental health support they need, when they need it, no matter what. We provide young people with tools to look after their mental health. We empower adults to be the best support they can be to the young people in their lives. And we give young people the space and confidence to get their voices heard and change the world we live in.

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

The logo for NSPCC, with the text 'NSPCC' in white on a green background.

NSPCC

## Coronavirus (COVID-19) advice and support for parents and carers

Whether you're working from home with your kids or supporting children with anxiety due to coronavirus, we've got tips and advice for you.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/coronavirus-advice-support-children-families-parents>

The BBC Newsround site has a comprehensive section on coronavirus with text and video guidance focusing on tips if a child is worried, how to wash your hands, and what self-isolation means:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/51204456>



## 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 we can do to help further and support you.

Best wishes

The Team at St Mary's