



Safeguarding, Health & Safety and Well-being Updates

Autumn Term 2nd Half 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

Please find below several updates regarding activities, events and support available through school and other organizations regarding safeguarding and well-being for your children and your family.

Winter Well-being



The festive season is usually associated with joy, happiness and celebration, but for some it may not always be a positive time.

The shorter days, colder temperatures and the pressures associated with this time of year can negatively impact our wellbeing, and it can be easy to forget to look after ourselves. Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) may be an issue some young people and adults experience, and a break from the structure of school can be difficult for some young people too.

In school we will be supporting learners with their well-being. The following link has also been shared with our staff and takes you to advice and support on how to look after your mental health and well-being, particularly at this time of year. This advice is helpful to everyone, not just school staff hence why this has been shared with our parents/carers:

<https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/resources/for-individuals/guides/the-building-blocks-of-good-mental-wellbeing/>

<https://onenhsfinance.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Winter-Wellbeing-Tips-FFF.pdf>

You will also find a helpful poster attached at the end of this newsletter.

Reception Health e-leaflet

Families Health and Wellbeing 0-19 service

The Families' Health and Wellbeing (0-19) Service is the local Health Visiting and School Nursing service. They offer support to schools and parents of children aged 0 to 19 years around lots of health-related topics to help children.

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people/vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.



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Please follow the link to an e-leaflet, which introduces your local School Nurses and shares some development and health information which Parents/Carers of Reception aged children may find useful.

<https://sway.cloud.microsoft/iJSYOQu1Ur2KvCHA?ref=Link>

The e-leaflet also contains a link to a contact form. This form is confidential, which means the answers you give will be returned to the Families' Health and Wellbeing Service and will not be shared with our school. The Families' Health and Wellbeing Service can also be contacted through the Children and Families Health and Wellbeing Single Point of Access (CaFSPA), often referred to as the Hub, or their ChatHealth (text) services.

CaFSPA Freephone: 0808 178 0611

ChatHealth (cost of standard rate message) text: 07520 615 722

Mental Health & Well-being Update



As a school we continue to benefit from the weekly support of Natalie Ball our 'Education Mental Health Practitioner' (EMHP). As part of this service, with your consent, we can refer children in to access support around a number of 'mental health areas'.

If you feel that you would like to know more about how Natalie Ball can help or the services that are on offer, please contact the office and ask to speak to Mrs Oakes or Mrs Johnson-Allen who is the school's new 'Mental Health Lead'.

This half term Learners in Hydra class have been undertaking a learning programme entitled 'Bouncebackability' led by Natalie and her colleague. This has explored aspects of being 'resilient' and 'bouncing back from any setbacks'.

Increasing levels of Norovirus



Latest updates show that levels of Norovirus are increasing across England. The UK Health Security Agency has provided some updated guidance on Norovirus.

Norovirus is the most common cause of infectious gastroenteritis worldwide and contributes significantly to winter pressures on the NHS and social care each winter. Also known as the 'winter vomiting virus' norovirus is transmitted through ingestion of viral particles and has a very low infectious dose, so is easily passed on by close contact with an infected person or a contaminated object as well as consumption of contaminated food or

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water. Symptoms including vomiting, diarrhoea, fever and muscle aches are usually short-lived, only lasting 2 to 3 days, and resolve without medical treatment. While norovirus infects people of all age groups, people in vulnerable groups such as the very young, elderly and immunocompromised people are at risk of more severe or prolonged illness which can lead to dehydration and may require treatment in hospital.

Outbreaks often occur in closed setting such as prisons, nurseries or schools, but the biggest impacts are seen in hospital and care homes settings where ward/home closures and staff sickness cause great disruption every year and contribute to winter pressures in the NHS.

As a school we continue to implement a range of Infection Control measures and follow the Local Authority Guidance. Please can we remind Parents/Carers that if your child is ill with sickness and or diarrhoea we ask that you keep them off school for at least 48 hours from when the last bout of sickness/diarrhoea has happened. This will help us to prevent the spread of such infectious illnesses.

What you need to know about well-being and mental health apps



The rise in awareness of mental health issues has given way to several easily accessible services to help with such problems - for example, wellbeing apps promising to serve as an assistive tool for anyone in need of support. While these can be useful to some, there are a few risks which are important to consider - especially if a child or young person is using the app.

Of course, it can be tricky to know exactly where the safety concerns lie with a service intended to help and support its users - and it can be harder still to safeguard younger users. The attached poster breaks down the online safety risks of mental health and wellbeing apps, before letting you know how best to keep children and young people safe if they ever wish to use these services.

If you require any additional information or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the school office.

Yours sincerely,
Mrs E. J. Pickford (Headteacher) & Team

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Top 10 tips for winter wellbeing

MindWell

Visit MindWell, the mental health website for people in Leeds, for our full guide to staying well over the colder months.

Explore how to:

1. Keep a daily routine
2. Stay connected
3. Do things you enjoy
4. Get outside
5. Stay active
6. Make plans
7. Relax and unwind
8. Drink sensibly
9. Write it down
10. Ask for help



We've got practical advice to make your winter more manageable.

Visit MindWell

bit.ly/MindWell-winter
[@MindWellLeeds](https://twitter.com/MindWellLeeds)
www.mindwell-leeds.org.uk



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What Parents & Educators Need to Know about MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING APPS

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

When looking at options for supporting a child's mental health, the sheer volume can be overwhelming. There are many wellbeing apps available, but unfortunately not all are trustworthy. It's important to evaluate which resources are suitable, reliable and effective. This guide lets you know what to consider before installing such an app, to determine just how useful it's going to be.

QUALITY & RELIABILITY

Mental health apps can be a useful starting point when looking for wellbeing advice and strategies and can be a useful extension to the in-person services available. However, they aren't a substitute. Information on the quality of some of these apps is scarce. They may look cute and child-friendly, but have they been designed by a mental health professional? Furthermore, do they have research to back up their content?

PLACE RESPONSIBILITY ON CHILDREN

Some apps add the words 'kids' or 'children' to their title or use cartoon icons to make them more appealing to young people. When signing up for some of these apps, some will speak to the parent directly, saying something along the lines of "Your child is good to go. Let them take it from here". It's important to remain involved in the child's mental health journey, so regular check-ins are recommended.

DISREGARDING APPROPRIATE SUPPORT

Young people who feel anxious and have trouble sleeping may download a mindfulness app to help. While this is a good strategy initially, it's not addressing the root of the problem. A child could simply try managing these symptoms themselves (as opposed to speaking out and seeking professional help), which could potentially worsen their anxiety in the long run.

LACK OF PERSONALISATION

Mental health or wellbeing apps are useful tools for the short term, teaching users several helpful habits to manage their condition – such as keeping an illness diary, improving nutrition and practising mindfulness exercises. As every person is unique – and children especially will grow and develop in different ways – these apps struggle to tailor themselves to users' individual needs. For example, many apps don't distinguish between the ages of users and can offer extremely generic advice.

DATA SECURITY

As with any other app – not just those for mental health and wellbeing – it's wise to check out the privacy policy before downloading it. Some of these applications may share data with third parties for numerous reasons (such as targeted advertisements), and if a user is sharing personal and sensitive information within the app, they probably don't want it ending up elsewhere without their consent.

IN-APP PURCHASES

Many apps will provide their most basic features for free but will require you to pay for other aspects – such as a more tailored experience or access to additional resources. This could be a one-off fee or a regular subscription. Consider whether this is actually required. Is it benefiting the child, or could they receive the same support from a medical professional?

Advice for Parents & Educators

CHECK THE CREDIBILITY OF THE APP

Before you download a mental health and wellbeing app, investigate the developers. Have they consulted with qualified mental health professionals to create their resource? Also check whether the app is affiliated with any government or mental health organisations, as these are solid indicators of legitimacy. Reviews can also be a useful signpost to the app's quality. There are many good apps out there, but there are just as many that miss the mark.

SEEK PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

Trusted mental health and wellbeing apps designed by qualified, reputable organisations can be used alongside the personalised advice and support of fully trained professionals. These apps should never be considered a substitute for counselling or other tailored medical help. If you have real concerns about a child's mental wellbeing, you should seek appropriate advice from a suitable source, such as their GP – or Childline, who can be contacted by calling 0800 1111.

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