

The Prior's Mill 'FEEL BETTER NEWSLETTER'

Issue 2— .03.2021

Hello everyone, welcome back to our Mental Health Newsletter. Once again, we are back to school and what a journey it's been! I'm sure everyone — parents, teachers and children — is happy that a bit of normality has been restored.

We hope that this newsletter can spread some of the joy from the last weeks and will make you smile.

Mental Health Week!

As you know, the first week in February, was host to Mental Health Week! Everyday, the children took part in an activity to boost their mental health and well-being.

One activity was to take a photograph of something that makes them feel happy. We have collated these pictures to make a 'welcome back!' display for the children.



Top Tip One! Check in with how you are feeling.

It is normal for parents/carers to feel concerned about their child returning to school and all of the changes within school. Perhaps, walk your child through their day and reassure them that it is OK if they feel nervous or find the rules confusing. Children will also look for our responses to the situation to know how they should respond. Therefore, be mindful to model positive behaviour, using calm words and actions to create a sense of safety and security.

Top Tip Two! Make time to talk about feelings.

If you have noticed that your child may have worries about returning to school, it can be helpful to support your child to talk about how their feeling. Firstly, acknowledge the worry or label the emotion. If their worry is a practical worry then you can work with your child to problem-solve the worry by creating a plan, If your child's worry is not practical, then you can support your child to let go of the worry by doing something special or fun together.



Yes, I'm positive that you'll get through.

I know it hurts when you are blue.

But when you learn what you can do,

There just will be no stopping you.

Has your child been spotted yet?

Our teachers have been giving out a weekly award for a child in their class who has been positive and caring towards others.



Top Tip Three! Help your child to face their fears.

If your child is hesitant to go back to school, it can be helpful to create a worry list and rate each worry using 0-10 to determine how strong the worry is. For example, 10 being the most worried and 0 being not worried at all. Then put the worries in order from least to most worried at the top. You and your child can then create a step-by-step plan together to encourage your child to face their fears. After your child has had a go at completing each step, take the time to talk to your child about what they learned. You may find that your child learned that the worry did not happen, or it was not as bad as they thought it would be or that they coped better than they thought they would.

Top Tip Four! Listen, empathise and check your understanding.

When talking with your child, take care to actively listen to your child and then rephrase what they said. By rephrasing this back to them, they know they have been heard and this gives them the opportunity to correct you or add any new information. For example, saying things such as 'Okay, so you are worried about not seeing your family when you go back to school, have I got that right,?' It is also helpful to provide empathy for your child, for example, you could say 'I can hear that is really worrying you'. Now, try to support your child to look at the positives, for example 'would it be a good idea to plan a special activity together after school?' or 'we could have our favourite breakfast together before school'. Play detective to find out what your child may be looking forward to, such as playing with friends again.

Top Tip Five! Make it fun and rewarding.

Adjusting to new routines can be scary for children, particularly with all the safety rules in school. Try to make going back to school fun and rewarding by planning activities together that you can both look forward to. As we are encouraging children to face their fears, it may be helpful to add a reward for each time they face a fear or overcome a particular worry. Remember, rewards do not need to be expensive, simply playing your child's favourite game or planning a special activity together. Remember the simple things, such as giving praise for their efforts no matter how big or small makes a difference.

Mental Health Support Team

Here at Prior's Mill, we work with Alliance Psychology to provide our children and families with support from our very own Mental Health Support Team. The MHST aims to provide a range of counselling and psychological therapies to those who need it the most.



If you feel that you would like to explore more about the Mental Health Support Team or you feel that your child may benefit, please contact Miss Dalkin or Miss Rigg via the school office.

Hello, I'm Cheryl. I am school's Education Mental Health Practitioner. It is my role to help children with their thoughts and feelings. Sometimes emotions can be a bit hard to manage on your own and I am here to help. I will be working with some pupils on a 1-1 basis, small group work and whole class work.

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