

The Prior's Mill 'FEEL BETTER NEWSLETTER'

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Hello Summer!

As we enter our final half term of this academic year, it is important to look back at the patience that we have exercised this year—adults and children! Also, the impact that this year has had on our health. In a few short weeks, we will be entering our Summer holiday and it is as important as ever to take care of our mental health.

What is Mental Health?

We all have mental health. Mental health is about our feelings, our thinking, our emotions and our moods. Looking after our mental health is important. We all have small feelings every day; these can sometimes feel strong and overwhelming, whether happy or sad, but they go away before too long. Sometimes we experience big feelings; these feel strong and overwhelming for a long time. They stop us doing what we want to in our lives.



Tips for talking to your child about Mental Health

1. Make conversations about mental health a normal part of life: Anywhere is a good place to talk; in the car, walking the dog or cooking together. Model everyday talk about feelings such as by talking about a TV character's feelings.

2. Give your full attention: We all know it's horrible to be half listened to. Keep eye contact, focus on the child and ignore distractions.

3. Check your body language: Try to keep it open and relaxed and make sure you come down to the child's level.

4. Take it seriously: Don't downplay what the child is saying or tell them they're "just being silly". Resist the urge to reassure them that everything is fine.

5. Ask open questions: Such as "How did your day go today?" This will help to extend the conversation.

6. Calmly stay with the feelings that arise: It can be our automatic reaction to steer away from difficult emotions.

7. Offer empathy rather than solutions: Show that you accept what they are telling you but don't try to solve the problem.

8. Remember we are all different: Respect and value the child's feelings, even though they may be different to yours.

9. Look for clues about feelings: Listen to the child's words, tone of voice and body language.

10. Some ways to start a conversation about feelings might be: "How are you feeling at the moment?" "You don't seem your usual self. Do you want to talk about it?" "Do you fancy a chat?" "I'm happy to listen if you need a chat."



Summer

Summer is a time for fun,
To jump and play in the sun!
Swimming, sandcastles, slip-and-slides,
Bumper cars and thrilling rides!
Summer is a time for fun,
To eat a hotdog in a bun!
Camping and amusement parks,
Bright fireworks in the dark!
Summer is a time for fun,
To blow bubbles and catch each one!
Shells, sandals, and the seashore,
Sprinklers, picnics, and so much more!

Who can help?

This website from the NHS offers expert advice and practical tips to help you look after your child's mental health and wellbeing as well as the rest of the family.

<https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/>



NSPCC

The NSPCC are offering support and advice if you feel your child is struggling with their mental health and anxiety due to the coronavirus. More information and advice can be found on their website.

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

Goodbyes and New Beginnings

It is also the time of year where there are some bigger changes for some of the children in our school. Our Nursery children will be moving up to Reception, our Reception children will move up into Y1, our Y2 children will leave KS1 and enter KS2. Finally, our Y6 children will be moving onto their secondary schools! No leap to the next stage in school, is bigger than another and any change can feel huge and concerning. One thing that will always stay the same, is the support that our children will be given. At Prior's Mill, we are committed to making sure our children feel safe and happy at school. We will work closely with our secondary schools to ensure that the children who are moving on feel as confident as possible about their new beginnings. One thing is for sure ... nothing stays new for very long!



Preparing Your Child For the First Day Back in School

As schools begin to open to more children, parents and children may well be feeling anxious. Here's some ideas of how best to prepare.

Be Calm.

Your child will take their lead from you and be reassured if you are steady and matter of fact.



Be Curious.

These are strange times and their imagination may run away with them. Listen, and try not to dismiss or minimise their fears but validate how they are feeling – “it’s completely fine to feel like that at the moment” or “I can really understand why you would feel like that”



Be Positive.

Remind them of all the ways they have learnt to keep themselves safe: washing their hands regularly, sneezing and coughing into their elbow, not hugging others and staying in their own space.



Be Thankful.

Help your child think of things they are looking forward to: being with their friends, seeing their teacher, favourite activities but be mindful some of these may not be available for them



Be Supportive

Younger children particularly may struggle with separation anxiety and may become tearful, clingy or act out. Reassure them that you will miss them too and think of them through out the day. It might be helpful to draw a little heart on their wrist and one on yours too. You can call it the hug button and when they find they are missing you they can press the heart and know that you will be doing the same at home. Sometimes having a little object to remind them of you through the day helps but please check this out with your school first.



Be Prepared.

Support your child to be aware of changes that may have happened to their classroom environment since they were there last and rehearse any new routines that school may have shared. Rehearse and practice your ‘goodbye’ routine and create a ‘hello’ greeting for the end of the day for them to look forward to.

