

## Parental Communication & Engagement



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### Message from Headteacher

It's been another busy week in school! It was our Year 11 Parents'/Carers' Consultation on Thursday and it was lovely to see so many parents/carers and students in attendance. The Hall was a hive of activity with lots of great feedback being shared.

I am looking forward to hearing more about how the Year 10 RS Debate Trip goes on Tuesday. Good luck to all our Year 11 Computer Science students who are taking part in a digital exam on Monday!

Don't forget to purchase your school production tickets, it's going to be amazing!

Best wishes.

**Mrs Sutton**  
Headteacher

### Key Letters/Information Sent Out Recently

The vast majority of all letters are now emailed home and we use electronic reply slips as much as possible. The criterion for 'selected student only' opportunities are based on various factors depending on the trip and its focus. Unfortunately, we are unable to allow every student the opportunity to be involved with every activity which we understand sometimes causes disappointment. If you require more details about the selection process for any opportunity please contact the event organiser.

- Ingestre Hall Invite Letter *\*Selected students only.*

### Events/Reminders

- Year 11 Computer Science Digital Exam - Monday 29 January 2024 at 2.30pm – 3.30pm;
- Year 10 RS Debate Trip - Tuesday 30 January 2024 at 9.00am - 12.30pm;
- Newquay Surf Residential 3<sup>rd</sup> Deposit Due (£100) - Wednesday 31 January 2024.

### Updates

#### Sanitary Products Collection! Citizenship Campaign – WC 29 January 2024

Some of our GCSE Citizenship students are doing a collection of sanitary products for their Citizenship Campaign and want to spread the word. The collection will be held all week in the atrium as students enter school **WC 29 January 2024**. Students can bring in any type of sanitary product and can leave them near the River Café. These donations will then be passed on to a local charity. Thanks for your support with their campaign.

## HELP! Reporting Absences/Appointments \*PRESS OPTION 1

We appreciate that sometimes trying to get through to the school via telephone can be difficult due to how busy the phonelines can be. Can we please ask that if you wish to report an absence or inform us of a future medical appointment or leave request that you press Option 1. **You can press Option 1 as soon as the welcome message starts.** You just need to leave a message on the answerphone if nobody answers. Your message will then be quickly picked up and actioned/responded to. By doing this it will REALLY help allow the phone lines to be much clearer for other callers to get through who are ringing on non-attendance related matters.

## Supporting Children's Mental Health

Please see below mental health tips!

At National Online Safety we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information they need to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one platform of many which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit [www.nationalonlinesafety.com](http://www.nationalonlinesafety.com) for further guidance, hints and tips for adults.

# SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

## 10 Conversation Starters for Parents

Talking about mental health to children is sometimes hard. To the point that we can put off raising the subject, not wanting to unearth problems or raise overwhelming subjects that we perceive our child is too young or not ready for. But rather than keeping children in the dark, this guide is designed to help you confidently talk about mental health, so they feel comfortable talking about their own worries and end any stigma before it begins.

**NOS National Online Safety**  
#WakeUpWednesday

- 1 LISTEN**  
This sounds obvious, but it is not something we always do well at. Active listening is where we listen without interrupting or making judgements and shows interest in what is being said. If your child feels listened to in the 'smallest of problems' they will become confident that you will listen when the 'biggest of problems' arise.
- 2 ASK TWICE**  
The campaign from time to change is great. <https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/support-ask-twice-campaign>. Be tenacious about your child's wellbeing. Children instinctively know when your questions and support come from a place of wanting to help and care.
- 3 THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A STUPID QUESTION**  
This advice also relates to the first point. If your child can ask you any questions about the smallest of things and you listen and answer without shaming or belittling, then they will have more confidence to ask the biggest of questions.
- 4 BE OPEN AND HONEST**  
Children appreciate honesty, particularly if you are having to share information or talk about a difficult subject. For example, you may be talking about death or loss: 'It's very sad that Nana has died' or 'I feel sad that Nana has died'. How you talk about a subject will differ depending on their age and developmental maturity. Talking about death to a younger child for example will be different to that of an older teen, as their experience and understanding of death is different.
- 5 KNOW WHEN TO SEEK HELP**  
Assess the severity of the mental health difficulty you are noticing. Is the difficulty making it hard for your child to function regularly throughout everyday life? How frequently is your child affected, how long does it last and how persistent is it? Are they having problems controlling the difficulty? Talk to your child about your concerns and that it is likely they will need further support beyond family and friends.
- 6 TALK ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH NATURALLY**  
Speak about mental health as part of everyday life, so that talking about our feelings and those of others is normalised. If the usual 'are you ok?' is not creating an opportunity for dialogue then say something like 'I know when something like that has happened to me I felt like this... is that how you are feeling or are you feeling something else?'
- 7 EMPATHISE**  
It makes sense that you would feel this way. It is understandable. Children often worry about things that we, as adults, might see as trivial or silly. However, for them at their age and stage it is a big concern and they need our kindness and care when they show their vulnerability and share their worries.
- 8 HELP YOUR CHILD FEEL SAFE**  
Teens particularly feel that by talking about their worries or concerns that this will make things worse. Reassure your child that you will discuss a plan of action together and what may or may not need to happen next. If they are a younger child, it is likely you will need to lead the conversation and explain next steps.
- 9 MIND YOUR LANGUAGE**  
Be mindful of the language you use at home to describe and talk about mental health. Stigma often arises from misconceptions and a choice of language which is harmful. Using the word 'mental', 'mess-up' or other such words in a derogatory way won't encourage your child to talk about their mental health for fear of being belittled.
- 10 IT IS OK TO SAY 'I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO NEXT'**  
Adults do not have all the answers but often children think they do. It is ok to acknowledge that what your child is experiencing is not something you have come across before or know anything about, but that you will work it out together and seek help together.

**Meet our expert**  
This guide has been written by Anna Bateman. Anna is passionate about placing prevention at the heart of every school, integrating mental wellbeing within the curriculum, school culture and systems. She is also a member of the advisory group for the Department of Education, advising them on their mental health green paper.

**Sources of Information and Support**  
Your GP  
<https://youngminds.org.uk/>  
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/mental-health/education/>  
<https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/news-and-blogs/parenting-tips/2016/november/a-simple-guide-to-active-listening-for-parents/>  
<https://www.third.org.uk/mental-health>

[www.nationalonlinesafety.com](http://www.nationalonlinesafety.com) Twitter - @natonlinesafety Facebook - /NationalOnlineSafety

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## Autism Empowerment Webinar - FREE



### Autism Empowerment Webinar

This one-hour lunchtime webinar is a brief exploration of how Autism can present, the history of Autism, diagnosis as well as differences in communication and social interaction. We will also be looking at how the environment can impact on someone with sensory processing challenges.

The main aim of this webinar is to focus on the many strengths autistic individuals have and how we can increase understanding and Neuro-inclusivity through education and raising awareness.

**Webinars are held on Zoom on the following dates:**

**Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> February 12:30 to 13:30**

**Friday 29<sup>th</sup> March 12:30 to 13:30**

**Friday 26<sup>th</sup> April 12:30 to 13:30**

At the end of the webinar, you will receive a certificate of attendance that will be emailed to your given email address.

**The cost of this one-hour webinar is only £5.50!**

To book your place on the webinar please either scan the QR code below or go to: [www.theautismtrainingnetwork.com/training](http://www.theautismtrainingnetwork.com/training)

"For every person who understands Autism better, another Autistic person will be happier:"-  
Libby Scott, Autistic Author (at age 11)



## Congratulations/Well Done Headteacher Commendations

Congratulations go to the following students who received Headteacher Commendations this week.

Samarth Chaurasia		
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