

Looking after my
Wellbeing
during the school
holidays

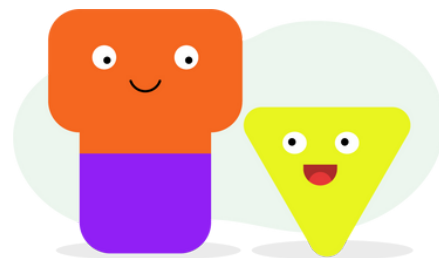
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Young Carers Wellbeing Practitioner

Parent Guide



Introduction: School Holiday Wellbeing and Back to School Wellbeing

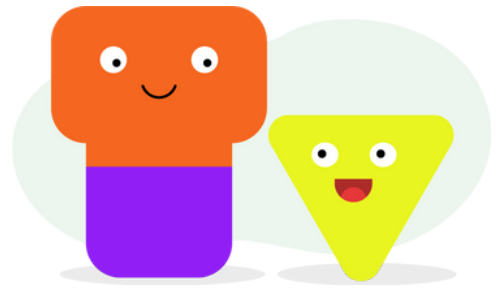
This booklet is designed to support your child as they prepare to go back to school and offer guidance to parents when supporting their children prepare for school over the summer holidays.

It is aimed at young people aged 4 to 17 years old preparing to go back to school or start college. The booklet starts by reflecting on how parents and guardians can support their children on their wellbeing journey in preparation for starting or returning to school.

It is recommended that parents/guardians familiarise themselves with the different activities, and if appropriate work through the activities with their children. This is to develop young people's confidence to practicing the different activities and strategies. Offering your child guidance as they work through the workbook will help your child to understand why they are doing different activities, and help them develop their own sense of awareness. The activities also aim to develop their communication skills around their thoughts, feelings and behaviours.

If during the different activities, you become concerned with your child's wellbeing, explore your concerns with your child. If appropriate, we would also encourage you to contact Carers in Bedfordshire and speak to a team member to explore your concerns.

Parent Guide



Is your child worried about going back to school?

Here are some tips to help your child manage their feelings of anxiety and stress:

Get talking.

Create a safe space for conversations to happen. Be open and consistently available. It may be easier to talk while doing an activity such as going for a walk.



Be calm – showing that you are relaxed can help your child mimic that behaviour which can reassure them that things might be difficult, but they are manageable



Listen and empathise. Spend time listening to your child. Try and normalise their feelings of worry, anger or sadness. Affirm that this is normal and everyone goes through similar things



Put their worries into perspective: educate them on their feelings and remind them that a worry is a thought and not a fact. Ask them if the worry is likely to happen. Explore alternative ways for looking at their worries.



Keep a routine – try and understand what makes their anxiety or worries worse, and make changes to reduce their effects; remind them of the importance of self-care

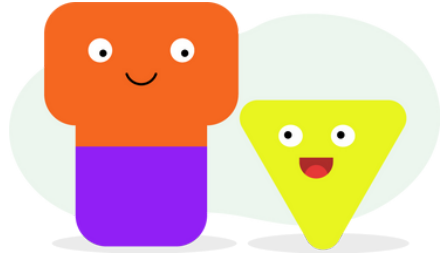


Role play: engage them in role play activities to practice different scenarios and responses by role playing. Remember to praise your child strengths and talents.



Check in – Check in with your child after implementing these steps along side other activities to see if their worries have changes. Use the anxiety thermometer on the next page to check in with them. This will help you to understand how your child is feeling at any point and adapt your approach to ensure your child is getting the support they need.,

Parent Guide



Using the thermometer to the left, ask your child how anxious/worried they are feeling (1 - feeling very anxious to 10 - feeling calm) . Reflect on what is causing any feelings of worry and anxiety.

You can record their weekly emotional changes/triggers/observations below:

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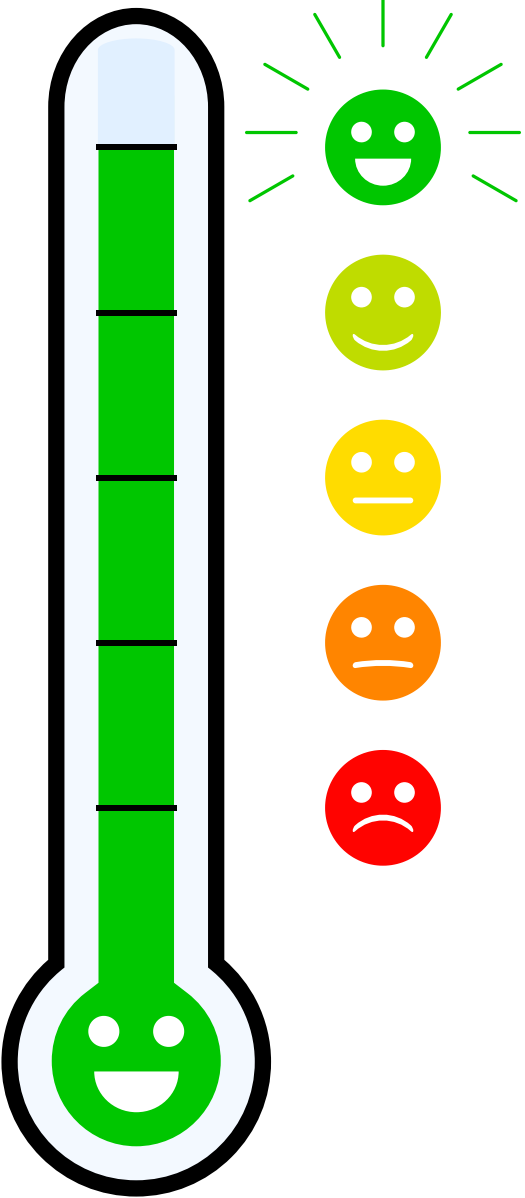
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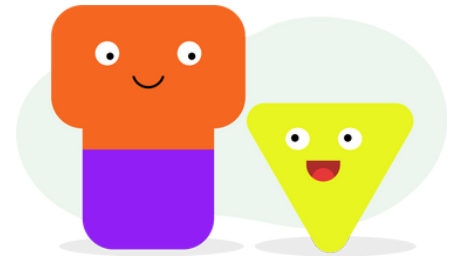
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Building Up Your Child's Resilience



Resilience can be understood as your child's ability to 'bounce back' when faced with difficulties. There are different factors that have been associated with resilience such as: physical and emotional security at home, education, friendships, talents and interests, positive values and social abilities. Here are some things that you can do to help build your child's resilience and manage their transition back to school:

Encourage strong peer relationships: Encourage your child to meet up with school friends during the holidays. This can be great in rebuilding and reconnecting friendships or even making new friendships.

Talk to your child: many children have questions and worries but may find it difficult expressing themselves. Start conversations with them and provide a space for them to be vulnerable.

Be flexible: understand that each child is different. If your child is going to find it difficult returning to school, and needs additional support then contact their school to explore the possibility of a re-integration plan.

Praise your child: compliment your child every so often and highlight their key skills and attributes.

Avoid comparing: every child is unique, so avoid comparing your child to their siblings, family members or friends. Share with them what makes them unique and make them feel special for their differences.

Encouraging autonomy: letting your child make decisions can help them have a sense of identity and boost their confidence. This could be something small such as asking what they want for dinner or game they want to play. Explore with them the importance of responsibility, consequences and risks of any situations. This can help them to practice making informed decisions

Keep them busy – provide them with a list of different activities and challenges that they can engage in over the holidays.

What is Wellbeing?

What is Wellbeing?

It is the feeling of being happy, healthy and comfortable. It is combination of my physical, mental, emotional health and social life.

What is Mental Wellbeing?

Mental wellbeing is about how we're feeling right now, and how well we can cope with daily life. Our wellbeing can change from moment to moment, day to day, or month to month.



What is Mental Health?

What is Mental Health?

Mental health is about how we think, feel and behave. Our mental health is on a spectrum and can range from good to poor.

Why do I need to look after my mental health?

Having good mental health makes life easier. It helps us to calm and comfort ourselves when we're upset. Having good mental health does not mean feeling good all the time.

Why is my mental health important for school?

- It can help me feel more productive (I can do lots of things!)
- It can help me understand how I am feeling
- It can help me feeling happier at school



What can I do to improve my mental health?

- Ask lots of questions
- Create a routine – You can have a daily activity check list (A star Chart!)
- Try out Mindfulness activities to see what helps you!
- Talk about your thoughts and feelings

What is Physical Health?

What is Physical Health?

It means taking care of your body so it stays strong and works well. It includes things like eating health foods, playing and exercising, getting enough sleep, and keeping clean.

Why do I need to look after my physical health?

It helps you feel good and have lots of energy! It can help you grow big and strong and can stop you from getting sick!

Why is my physical health important for school?

When your body is healthy, you can think better, learn faster and you have more energy to play with your friends! School can be more fun!



What is Emotional Health?

What is Emotional Health?

It means looking after our feelings! It is about knowing what to do with our feelings.

Why do I need to look after my emotional health?

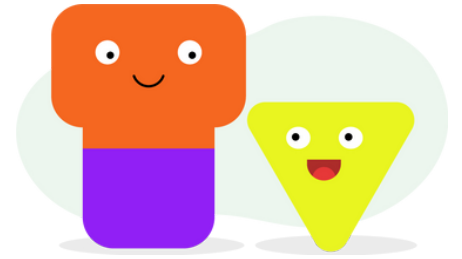
You need to look after your emotions so that you can feel good inside. When you understand your feelings and know how to express them, it helps you feel happier and get along with others.

Why is my emotional health important for school?

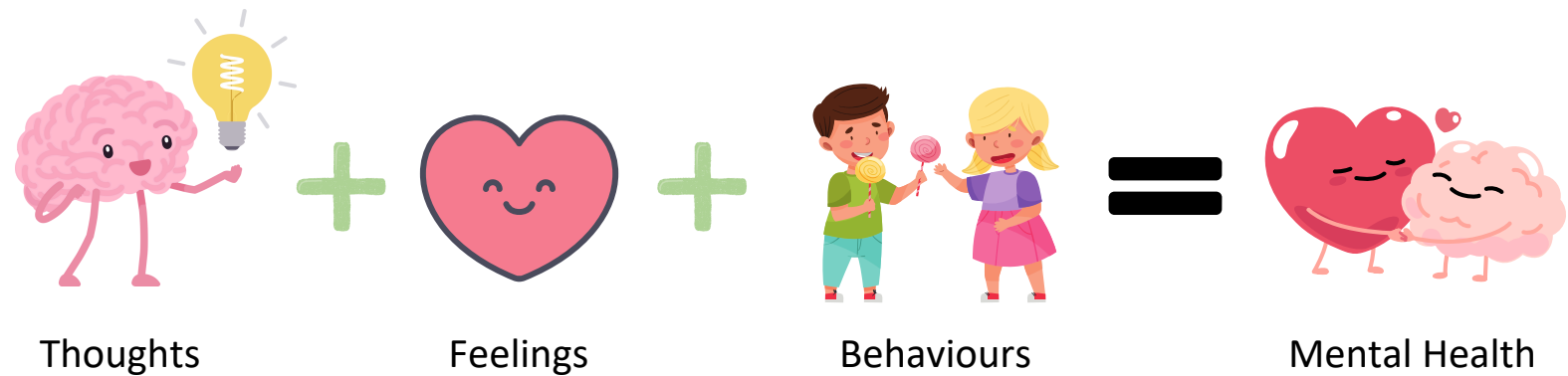
When you feel good inside, it is easier to pay attention, learn new things, and make friends. Looking after your feelings helps you stay calm, solve problems, and have fun with your classmates.



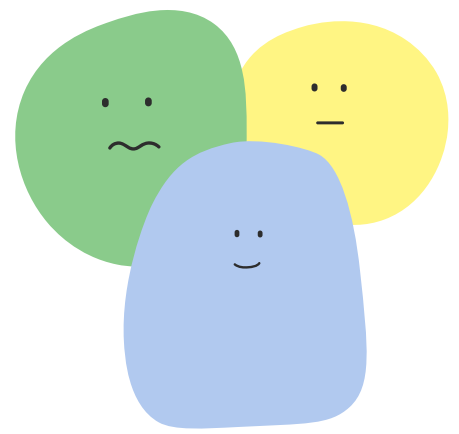
Support for 4 to 10 years olds



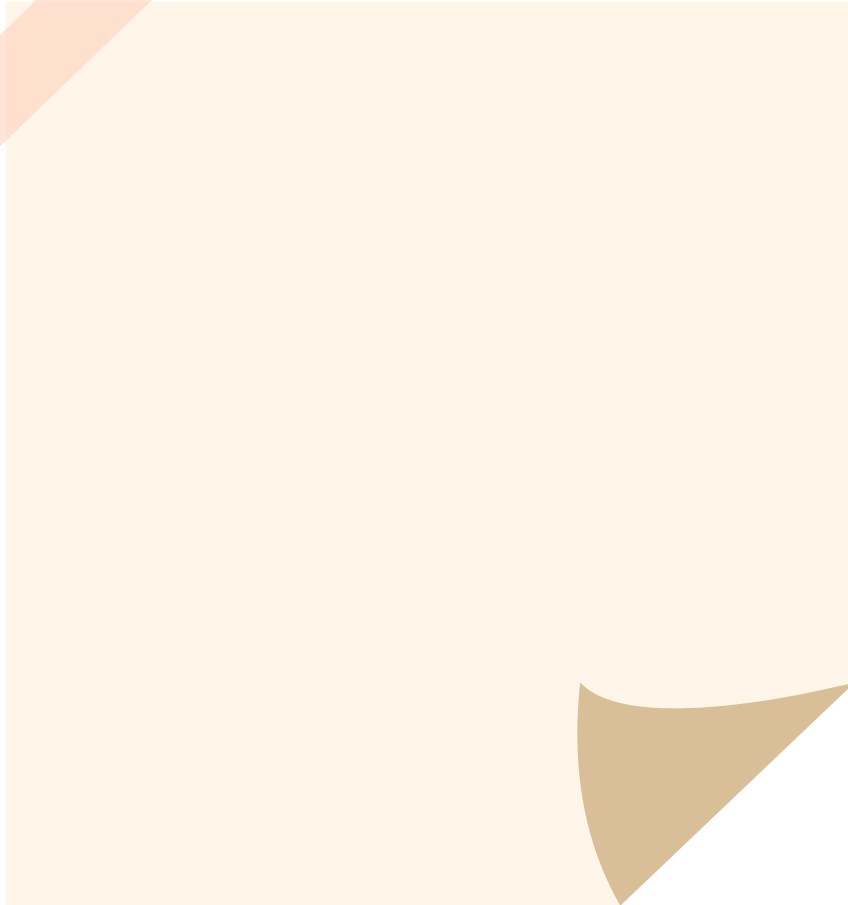
Our thoughts, feelings and behaviour all affect our mental health.



Mental Health Tips



Yay it is school holidays! But I am feeling worried about going back to school again in September! Do you feel like that too?



Are you feeling worried about going back to school? Tell me what is making you feel worried...



Mental Health Tips

Sometimes, our thoughts can make something seem scarier than it really is! But guess what? You can use your 'brave brain' to help you feel better.

Think about the fun things you'll do at school, like playing with friends and learning cool stuff! Talking to your parents or teachers can help you if you are feeling worried.

REMEMBER: You are not alone, and there are lots of people around you that are ready to help you!

Can you name some of the people that can help you when you feel worried about school?
(Use the box below).

A large, empty rectangular box with a light beige or cream color. The top-left corner is folded over, and the bottom-right corner is also folded over, creating a triangular flap. This box is intended for the user to write their answers to the question in the text block above.

Mental Health Tips

Sometimes, we are not always comfortable talking about our worries, but we can share our feelings in different ways. For example, you can:

- Draw a picture of what is on your mind
- Write a note or use a diary to share your thoughts
- Act it out using your toys

Sharing your feelings in these fun ways, can help you feel better, and let others know how to support you.

Can you think of some different ways you can share your worries? Write them in the space below...

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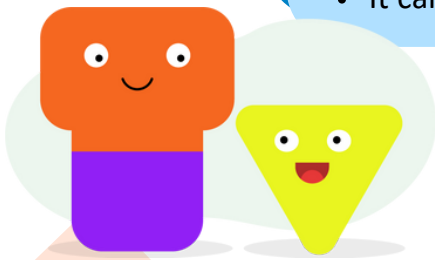
Mental Health Tips

What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness means paying full attention on what we're doing or feeling at the moment. We can use different activities to help us be present in the moment!

How Can Mindfulness help me?

- It can help to calm my mind.
- It can give me time to think about how I feel or what I am thinking about.
- It can help me slow down, so I can think about how I am feeling



How can mindfulness help you at school?

Tell me your thoughts...

Mental Health Tips



Try out this activity!

Try Mindfulness Breathing!
(Breathing exercises can help calm your mind)

The activity below is called 'Bubble Breathing', try it out!

Step 1:
Close
your eyes

Step 2:
Pretend that you are
blowing a bubble
through a wand

Step 3:
Slowly take a deep
breath
through your nose

Step 4: Then breath
slowly through your
mouth to get your
bubbles as big as
possible.

Step 5: **Repeat**
steps (1 to 4)

What did you **think** of when
trying out this activity?

What do you **notice** about
your body?



Mental Health Tips

How can having a routine help with your mental health?

It can help with:

- Learning – and remember new things!
- Coping with difficult situations
- Friendships - keeping friends, and connecting with others
- Build my confidence
- Improve my attention and awareness
- Starting new hobbies or interests



What would you include in your morning routine?

What would you include in your bedtime routine?



Using the example on the next page, see if you can plan your week. Use the tasks you listed to fill in the table!

Mental Health Tips

Example: See the example below of a morning and evening routine

Wake up and get dressed _____

Have Breakfast _____

Wake up and get dressed _____

Get my bag packed! (Don't forget my packed lunch if I take one to school!)

Leave the house! _____

9am to 3pm - School _____

4pm - Afterschool Club _____

5pm - Snack Time/ Homework time/ Change from school clothes _____

6pm - Dinner Time _____

7pm - Bed Time _____



Mental Health Tips

Monday

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Mental Health Tips

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Mental Health Tips

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Mental Health Tips

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Mental Health Tips

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Mental Health Tips

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Mental Health Tips

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Physical Health Tips

Did you know that our bodies do amazing things that we are not aware of? Our bodies know when we are worried about something in the future, like starting a new school, or a going to a new year group? Your body might feel a little funny, like having a tummy ache or feeling extra tired. This is just your body's way of saying it needs some extra care.

You can help your body feel better by getting lots of sleep, eating healthy foods, and playing outside. These things can help your body stay strong, and help you to feel happy.

Eat healthy food!

Eat lots of fruit and vegetables! And don't forget to drink lots of water!!

- 5-8 years old (5 glasses a day or more!)
- 9-12 years old (7 glasses a day or more!)



Sleep!!

You should be trying to have between 9 and 12 hours of sleep every night! This can help you feel rested and ready for school!



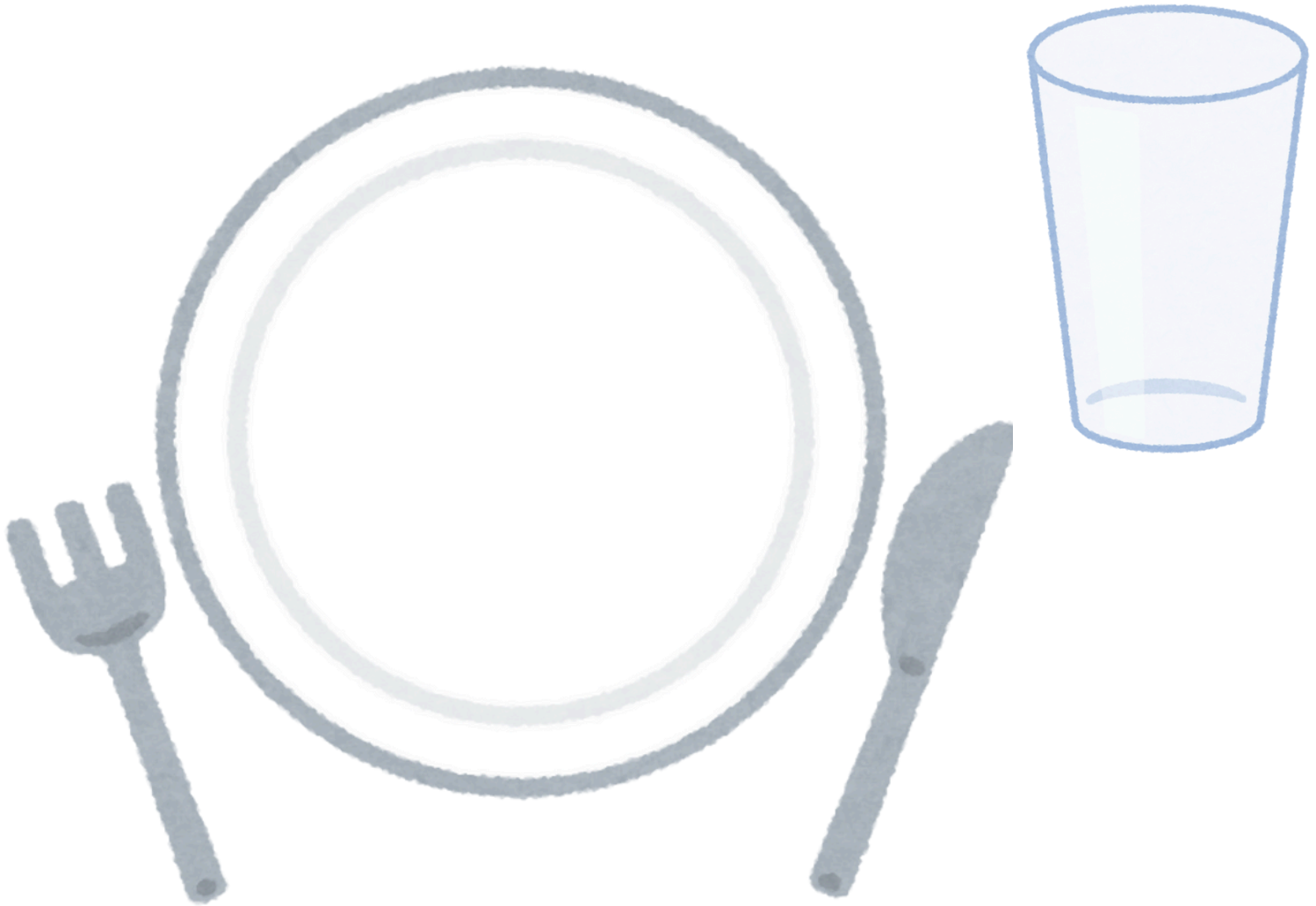
Stay Active!

Move around! Play outside! You can play a sport or dance to your favorite music! Go for walks!

**Physical
Health
Tips**

What does your healthy plate of food and drink look like?

Draw your food and drink below.



What protein is on your plate? E.g. fish, chicken, meat, dairy, nuts

Does your plate include vegetables and fruit?



Emotional Health Tips

Taking care of our feelings is important, especially when we have to go back to school. To look after our feelings, we can:

- Talk to someone we trust about how we feel, like a parent, carer, teacher, a friend.

Sometimes if we are not okay, we might feel sad or grumpy, and not want to do things we normally enjoy.

If we feel this way, try:

- Taking a break or
- Do something you love, like playing a game or hugging our favourite toy.

REMEMBER: It is always okay to ask for help, and share your feelings with someone who cares about you.



Learn, play and have fun!

Playtime (break time and lunch time) are important for happiness!

You get to play with your friend, you get to be creative!

Express your feelings

Talk to your parents, carers, teachers, friends about how you feel.



Stay Positive

Think about the good things that are going on in your life. What things can you be grateful for? See some examples below:

'I go to a good school'
'My teachers are nice'
'I like learning new things'

Staying positive means that you think about all the good things or bad things - and tell yourself things like:

'I will be okay!'

'Things will get better!'

'Sadness is only visiting for the moment, Happiness will be back soon!'

Staying positive, does not mean you have to be happy all of the time!



Emotional Health Tips



Diaries or journals can be a great way to help you think about how you are feeling.

Sometimes we may be feeling happy, and know what made us feel happy. But sometimes, when we feel angry or sad... we do not always know why.

Using a feeling diary or journal can help us think about our day, and what we liked about our day... and also what we can learn from our day.

Have you ever used a diary or a journal before where you write down your feelings?

Try using the Feelings journal below to describe your week. See the example below.

Date	Draw a Face showing your feelings	Describe your day	Colour your mood (what colour matches your mood? Colour the box in)	How was your day? Was there anything you liked about your day? Was there anything you did not like about your day?
Example Tuesday 29th August 2024		I felt happy because I played with my friend		I had a good day today. I liked my lunch today, it had my favourite snack. I did not like that I had to wake up early to go to school, but I was happy once I saw my friends.

Activity: Try writing in the *Feelings Journal* about your week on the next page.

Emotional Health Tips

Now its your turn... Have a go at writing in the Feelings Journal



Date	Draw a Face showing your feelings	Describe your day	Colour your mood (what colour matches your mood? Colour the box in)	How was your day? Was there anything you liked about your day? Was there anything you did not like about your day?

Emotional Health Tips



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Emotional Health Tips



Date	Draw a Face showing your feelings	Describe your day	Colour your mood (what colour matches your mood? Colour the box in)	How was your day? Was there anything you liked about your day? Was there anything you did not like about your day?

Emotional Health Tips

Well done for finishing your Feelings Journal! If enjoyed it, try creating your own Feelings Journal at home. You can buy a book, and use the same titles! Ask for help if you need it!



Date	Draw a Face showing your feelings	Describe your day	Colour your mood (what colour matches your mood? Colour the box in)	How was your day? Was there anything you liked about your day? Was there anything you did not like about your day?

You can also look after your emotional health during the school holidays and get ready for school by:

1. Playing Outside: What do you like doing outside? Who do you like playing with?

2. Reading: Do you like reading? List some school holiday stories that are on your list to read!

3. Practice your hobbies or try a new hobby: List some hobbies that you like doing. Is there anything new you would like to try?

4. Feelings: Talk about your feelings with your parents, siblings, friends. Who are the people that you talk to about your feelings?

You can also look after your emotional health during the school holidays and get ready for school by:

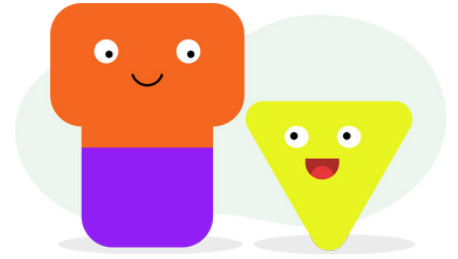
5. Practice mindfulness: Spend a few minutes a day being quiet and focus on your breathing. This can help you feel ready for the day.

6. Spend time with friends: Who are your friends? How do you spend time with them? (Phone calls, playing together, doing activities etc)

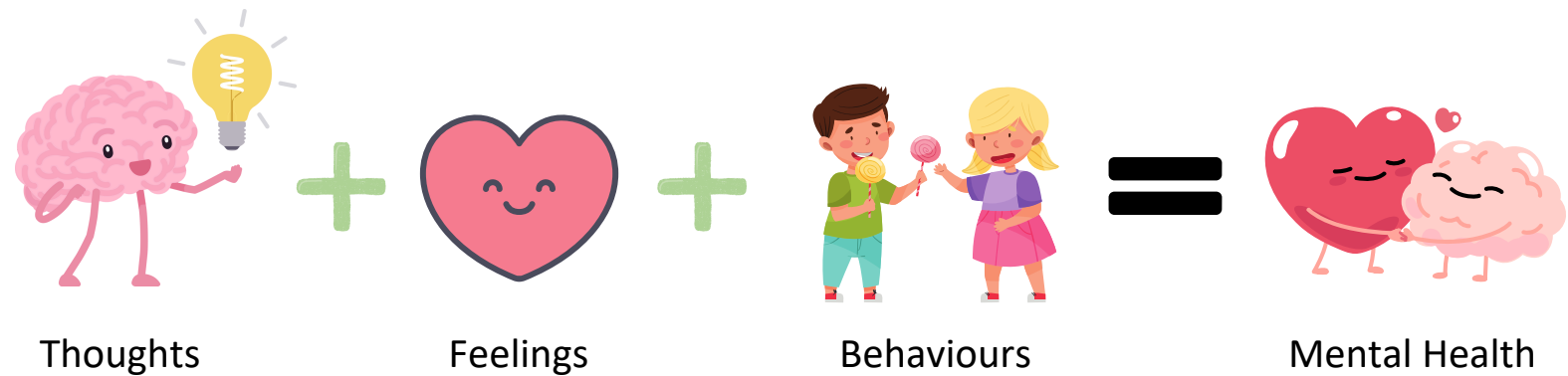
7. Sleeping well: What time do you go to bed? What time do you wake-up? Do you sleep all the way through the night?

8. Eating: What do you like eating? What is your favourite meal to eat? See if you can help cook it! Are you eating breakfast, lunch and dinner?

Support for 11 to 17 years olds



Our thoughts, feelings and behaviour all affect our mental health.



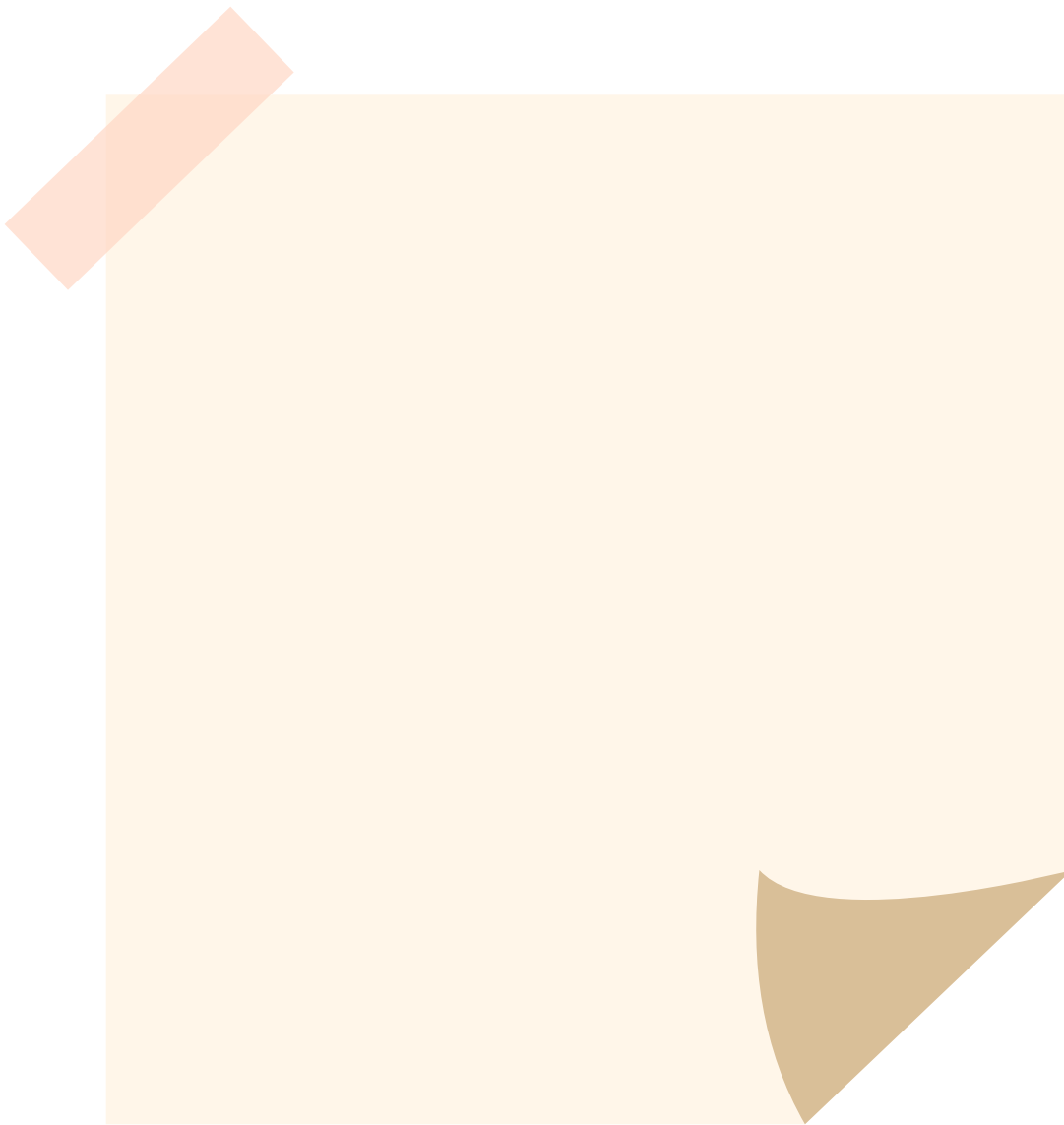
Mental Health

Taking care of our thoughts and feelings is important, especially when we go back to school. To look after our feelings, we can talk to our friends, family or someone else we trust.

If we are not feeling good, we might be more tired than usual, get headaches or lose interest in things we enjoy.

When we feel sad, it is helpful to do things we enjoy and make us feel happy.

What makes you feel happy?

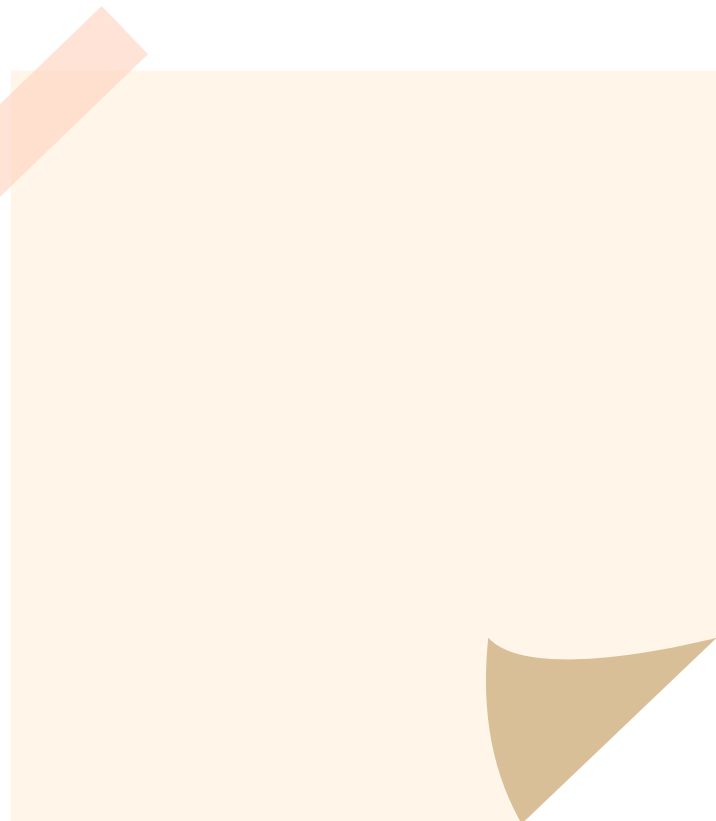
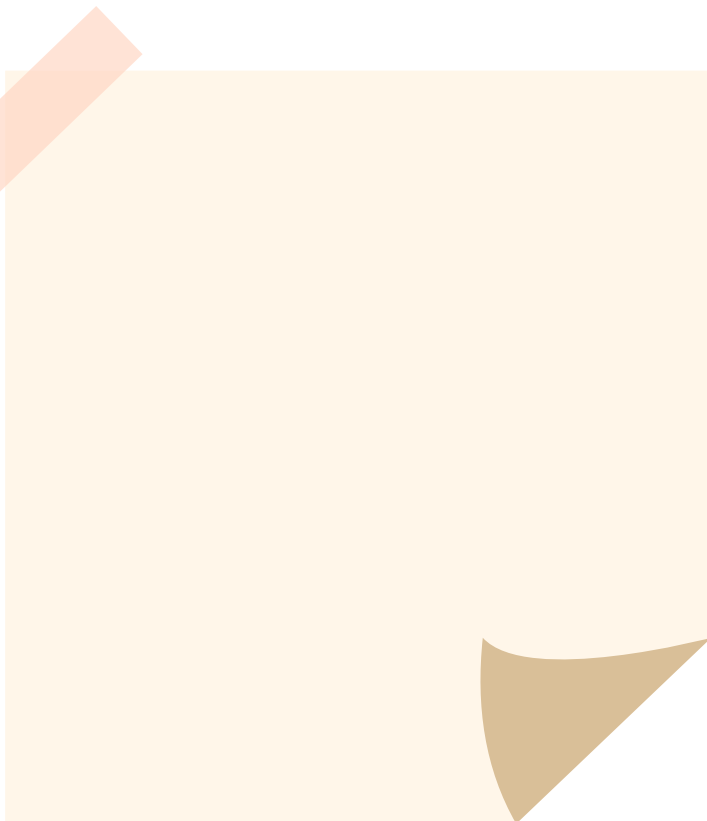


Mental Health Tips

How can you stay organised over the school holidays and when you go back to school?

- Get a planner (or diary) to help track when your homework is due, or when you have afterschool activities!
- Have a routine
- Take breaks!
- Keep your mind fresh by taking small regular breaks.
- Set goals! Make yourself small achievable goals to feel more confident!

Write a list of all the things you need to do to get ready to get back to school. This can include buying school equipment, doing any holiday homework etc.



If you are experiencing any worries, anxiety or stress when preparing to go back to school, try some of the below to see if they help you feel better:

- **Talk about your feelings:** Share your thoughts and worries with someone you trust. Talking about your feelings can help you feel supported and understood.
- **Get organised:** start organising your school equipment, and clear your study area!
- **Set a routine:** Start adjusting your sleep schedule a week or two before school begins. Go to bed and wake up at regular times.
- **Stay active:** Doing a physical activity can help reduce stress and improve your mood e.g. walking, running, dancing!
- **Practice mindfulness activities:** Spend a few minutes each day engaging in a mindfulness activity. Try the one on the next page! You can also download apps, or use YouTube to search for guided meditation activities.
- **Stay connected:** Reach out to friends, or attend upcoming events before school starts. Reconnecting with friends can make the transition back to school much easier and more enjoyable.
- **Think about the positives:** Reflect on what you are looking forward to at school like learning new subjects, seeing friends. Focusing on the positives can help reduce anxiety.
- **Limit screen time:** Too much screen time can affect your sleep and mood. Try to limit your use of phones, tablets etc during the day, and maybe have a turn off time 30 minutes or more before bed.
- **Eat well:** Having a balanced diet can help you feel better physically and mentally. Try eating more fruit or vegetables everyday. Don't forget water.
- **Ask for help when you need it:** If your feeling overwhelmed or stressed, always ask for help! Do not leave it till later!

Mindfulness

What is it?

It means paying full attention on what we're doing or feeling in the moment. We can use different activities to help us be present in the moment!

Why does it help?

- It can help to calm my mind
- It can give me time to think about how I feel or what I am thinking about.
- It can help me slow down, so I can think about how I am feeling

Try out the Mindfulness activity on the next page!

Body Scan Meditation (5-10 minutes)

1. Lie down in a comfortable position. Close your eyes and take a few breaths.
2. Slowly bring your attention to different parts of your body, starting from your toes and moving up to your head.
3. Notice any sensations, tension or relaxation in each part of your body.
4. Spend a few minutes on each area, then slowly bring your attention back to the present.

After you have done it, think about the below – and write down any reflections if you want:

1. What did it feel like when you were doing it?
2. What did you think about? Was your mind blank, or did other thoughts enter your head?

My Coping Toolbox

1. Create a list: Make a list of activities and strategies that help you feel better when you're stressed, worried sad – or just feeling low. This can include things like listening to music, talking to a friend, drawing, reading, using breathing exercises.
2. Draw your toolbox: On the blank page, draw a big toolbox. Inside the toolbox, draw and write the activities, strategies, coping skills, words/phrases that help you from your list.
3. Reflection time: How do these activities help you?

Write a list of all the activities, strategies, coping skills, words/phrases that help you in your toolbox in the space below:



**Mental
Health
Tips**

Now, try and draw your own Toolbox. Include some or all of the things on your list!



1. What thing in your toolbox do you use the most?

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2. How do you feel after using one of your coping skills?

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3. Is there a new coping skill that you would like to try?

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Grounding Techniques

Grounding techniques are exercises that help you refocus on the present moment. It helps to distract yourself from anxious feelings. They can help you manage your strong feelings or emotions.

You can use grounding techniques in any situation to help create space in your mind from worrying thoughts and feelings in any situation.

Activity: Grounding Techniques

5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Exercise

When feeling anxious or overwhelms, try this grounding exercise:

Think of:

1. 5 things you can see
2. 4 things you can touch
3. 3 things you can hear
4. 2 things you can smell
5. 1 thing you can taste

Why does this help?

This exercise helps you bring your focus to the present moment, and away from other thoughts that may be stressful or negative.

Visualisation Techniques

Visualisation is a technique that you can use to create a strong mental image of a future event. Practicing visualisation can help you prepare for something in

Activity: Body and Mind - Muscle Relaxation

Body and Mind: Muscle Relaxation

1. Lie on your back on a comfortable but firm surface. A floor with carpet or yoga mat may work better than a bed for this technique.
2. With eyes closed, take a few seconds to relax and focus on your breathing.
3. Start by tensing and then relaxing a group of muscles that *aren't* currently troubling you. This helps you better recognize when your muscles tense and when they're relaxed.
4. Next, begin working your way through your body's muscle groups. You can start anywhere, but it can help to pick a place where the progression feels natural, such as from your head to your toes or vice versa.
5. Tense the first group of muscles as you inhale slowly. Hold that tension for about five seconds. Be sure not to tense your muscles so tightly that it causes pain.
6. As you exhale, relax those muscles all at once. Visualize the tightness and tension leaving your body with your breath.
7. Rest for 10 seconds between muscle groups, but continue slow, steady breathing as you rest.
8. Proceed to the next muscle group and repeat.

Creative Visualisation

1. Find a quiet space where you can sit comfortably. Close your eyes, and take in a few deep breaths. Imagine yourself at school, feeling confident and excited.
2. Visualise what your classroom might look like with your friends and teacher.
3. Picture yourself participating in activities, playing games, talking to your peers.
4. Think about if there is something you want to achieve, what are your goals?
5. Think about yourself achieving these goals, and how proud you will feel.
6. As you exhale, relax your muscles, and feel the positive feelings covering your body.

Mindful Walking (10-30 minutes)

1. Go for a walk outside, choose somewhere you feel safe walking. You can go on your own, walk with someone you trust.
2. Focus on the sensation of your feet touching the ground, the movement of your legs, and the rhythm of your steps.
3. Think about your surroundings – the sights, the sounds and smells.
4. If your mind starts to wander, bring your mind back to the act of walking.

Activity: Mindful Walking (10-30 minutes)

After you have done it, think about the below – and write down any reflections if you want:

1. What did it feel like when you were doing it?

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2. What did you think about? Was your mind blank, or did other thoughts enter your head?

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Physical Health Tips

Sleep!!

You should be trying to get 8-10 hours of sleep every night! This can help you feel rested and ready for school!

It is so good for your physical growth, and also your cognitive functions!

Getting ready to go back to school is a great time to think about staying healthy! Taking care of your body helps you feel strong and energetic which is super important for school.

When you eat nutritious meals, exercise regularly, and get enough sleep, your body works better, and you feel more focused and ready to learn!

What healthy choices are you going to make this year?

Eat healthy food!

- Eat lots of fruit and vegetables! And don't forget to drink lots of water!!
- Choose nutritious snacks (and avoid too much junk food!)

13 years and older (10 glasses a day or more!)

Stay Active!

- Exercise regularly – aim to exercise for 1 hour each day!
- Try out new exercises or sports! Mix it up! You do not need to be the best or the quickest! Go at your own pace!
- Learn about your body
- Think about how your body responds to different exercises
- Exercise can help not only your physical health, but also your emotional and mental health!

Physical Health Tips

Physical Health- Why is it important?

Taking care of your physical health is super important! Staying active and eating well gives you more energy, helps you concentrate and boosts your mood! It also helps your body grow strong and keeps you from getting sick quickly.

When you feel good physically, it is easier to handle school stress and have fun with your friends.

So make sure you keep moving, eat healthily and have a good sleep routine to start the school year off right!

Exercise Routine – Do you have one already? If not, why don't you create one!

- Try to aim for at least 30 minutes of activity everyday
- Try taking up a new activity or sport
- Try including stretches in your daily routine
- Try creating a fun fitness challenge with your friends or family! E.g. Everyone set their own goals like 'I aim to do 20 pushups/sit-ups/squats each day. Track your progress and celebrate your achievements together!

Physical Health Tips

Activity: Create a weekly schedule to mix different types of exercises and keep it fun! Try to challenge yourself each week!

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
Exercise Goal for today: e.g. go for a 30 minute walk			
Did you do your physical exercise today?			
What is keeping you motivated today?			
How did you feel mentally and emotionally after exercising?			
How did you feel physically after exercising?			
What did you enjoy about today's exercise?			
What did you challenges did you face during you exercises?			
Did you notice any improvements or progress?			
What is one goal you want to set yourself for your next workout?			

Physical Health Tips

Activity: Create a weekly schedule to mix different types of exercises and keep it fun! Try to challenge yourself each week!

	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Exercise Goal for today: e.g. go for a 30 minute walk		
Did you do your physical exercise today?		
What is keeping you motivated today?		
How did you feel mentally and emotionally after exercising?		
How did you feel physically after exercising?		
What did you enjoy about today's exercise?		
What did you challenges did you face during you exercises?		
Did you notice any improvements or progress?		
What is one goal you want to set yourself for your next workout?		

Physical Health Tips

Activity: Create a weekly schedule to mix different types of exercises and keep it fun! Try to challenge yourself each week!

	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Exercise Goal for today: e.g. go for a 30 minute walk		
Did you do your physical exercise today?		
What is keeping you motivated today?		
How did you feel mentally and emotionally after exercising?		
How did you feel physically after exercising?		
What did you enjoy about today's exercise?		
What did you challenges did you face during you exercises?		
Did you notice any improvements or progress?		
What is one goal you want to set yourself for your next workout?		

Emotional Health Tips

Teaching your brain short cuts to help with your thoughts and feelings can improve your wellbeing and help you feel less stressed. They are like little tricks to keep your mind and heart feeling good, just like how you take care of your body by eating healthy, exercising and getting enough sleep.

Looking after your emotional health is important because it helps you feel better and cope with challenges. When you are feeling your best, you can:

- Handle stress and tough times better;
- Feel more positive and happier;
- Have better relationships with family and friends;
- Focus better on schoolwork and activities;
- Enjoy life more!

Your emotional health is just as unique as you are, and there are many ways in which you can support your wellbeing. Some might work for you, and some might not. Some might work some of the time, and not at other times. That is why it can take a while for us to understand what our thoughts and feelings are trying to communicate to us.

It is important to take time to get to know yourself and learn how you communicate to yourself about yourself. This can involve taking the time to explore your feelings and what influences your feelings – you can do this in a variety of ways such as journaling, exercising, practicing mindfulness or meditation, talking about your feelings and the list can go on.

Some different ways of looking after your emotional health have been listed on the next page. Have you tried any of them before? What did you notice about yourself after trying them? Did any of them work? Did any of them help very much? Are there any that are new? Think about which ones you can try out! You can also do your own research to see what other options there are – or you can talk to a trusted friend/adult to see what works for them and why!

Part 1: Write a letter to the 'YOU' that is going to be starting school in September.

Think about the below:

Write about your Present self:

What challenges are you facing right now?

What worries/anxieties are you feeling as it gets closer to school starting?

What song expresses what you are feeling now

What else would you like to include in this part of your letter?

Write about your Future self:

What traits and characteristics you would like to have (e.g., confidence, funny, kind, brave etc.)

What song you would your future self wants to have as their life theme song

How would your future self resolve some of the issues that you are going through right now?

What advice your future self would give you current self (e.g., keep working hard, stay positive etc.)

What else would you like to include in this part of your letter?

Using a journal/ diary or piece of paper that you can keep start your letter. Address the letter to yourself (use your name).

Activity: Feelings Jar

Materials needed: A jar/box; small pieces of paper, pens/markers, stickers or other decorations

Instructions:

1. Decorate the jar: Start by decorating the jar/box with your stickers or decorations. Make it personal – things that make you happy.
2. Label each piece of paper with different emotions e.g., sad, happy, angry, excited, proud, nervous.
3. Daily check-in: Each day, take a few minutes to reflect on your feelings on a piece of paper and place it in the jar. You can also add a short explanation of why you felt that way.
4. At the end of the week, take out the feelings and discuss these feelings with a trusted friend or family member. Share why you felt that way. If they were difficult emotions, explore ways to cope with them.
5. Reflect on how you could use different coping strategies to manage your feelings.

Part 2: Reflection Time

After writing your letter, reflect on any emotions that that your felt when you were writing.

- Were there any positive emotions?
- Were there any difficult emotions?
- Were there any feelings that you found it difficult to name or describe?
- Did you experience any overwhelming feelings?

Think about who you would share some of these big feelings with. Think about the benefits of sharing your feelings. Take some action, and ask this person for some quality time and space to share these feelings. Think about what time of support you want from the person e.g. someone to just listen, to help you come up with solutions etc. Use the space below to write down your thoughts.

Emotional Health Tips

Building resilience!

What is resilience?

Resilience is your ability to adapt to in situations of stress (your ability to bounce back). It is a trait that you can develop and train! (Like a muscle!).

How do I become resilient?

Learn from challenges and setbacks! This can help you grow stronger emotionally and develop a positive mindset. Focusing on your strengths and practicing staying optimistic can help you to shift your focus from your problems to the good things in your life. Find healthy outlets for stress such as expressing yourself verbally, creatively, or through relaxing activities which can re-energize you. Developing healthy habits in your daily life can help you be more prepared to handle life's challenges.

Emotional Health Tips

What habits can you practice in your daily life to help you become more resilient?

Connect with friends

Spend time with friend who support and encourage you!

Feeling stressed?

Practice using relaxation strategies e.g. Deep breathing or even try yoga!

It is okay to ask for help!

It is not embarrassing or weak to ask for help! We all need help every now and then! Ask your parents, teachers, friends or whoever you trust if you feeling overwhelmed!

Practice time management -Prioritise your tasks, create a study timetable to help manage your schoolwork (or exams!)

Continue or try new hobbies or interests!

Spend time on activities you enjoy!

Benefits!

It can help you relax and recharge!

Mindfulness and Meditation

Try different mindfulness activities to see what works best for you! They can help reduce stress and improve your focus!

Take time for yourself!

Take time to reflect on your feelings and experiences!
This can help you understand or manage your emotions better

Health relationships and friendships!

Surround yourself with positive friends and family!

Emotional Health Tips

Reflections

Activity: Try practicing a new habit this week that you have not tried before.

Reflection: Did it work for you? Did you like it? What did you like about it? Pair up with a friend or family member to practice different habits. At the end of the week, come together to discuss your thoughts around the habits used. Reflect on how you can begin using them at school. Note down your thoughts below:

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Other Helpful Resources

It's okay not to be okay – there is always someone who will be there to help, support, and listen to you. There is a list of some helpful people below:

- ★ Parents/Carers
- ★ School teacher
- ★ Support Worker at CiB
- ★ Wellbeing Practitioner at CiB
- ★ School Counsellor



Talking therapy, counselling and wellbeing support is offered through GP services and Carers in Bedfordshire. There are other apps and helplines that can be helpful.

Helplines

- **NHS:** To get urgent medical help, use the NHS 111 online service, or call 111 if you're unable to get help online
- **SHOUT:** Shout is a 24/7 text service – it is a place to go if you're struggling to cope and you need immediate help – Text 85258 for immediate help
- **SAMARITANS:** Access confidential emotional support at any time either by emailing or called 116 123
- **HOPELINE:** confidential support and advice service for: children and young people under age of 35 who are experiencing thoughts of suicide – Call 0800 068 4141 any day 9am-12am
- **SIDEKICK:** from Action for Children – specifically for young carers. Text 07888 868 059 or email sidekick@actionforchildren.org.uk

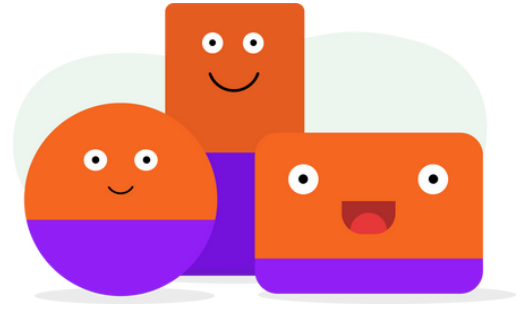
Apps

- **SMILING MIND**: practice daily meditation and mindfulness exercises
- **MOOD PANDA**: track your mood and get anonymous support
- **DEPRESSION CBT SELF-HELP GUIDE**: learn to control stress that contributes to depression
- **SLEEP CYCLE**: track your sleep so you can get woken up at the perfect time for your mood
- **MOODPATH**: depression and anxiety tracker and test (ages 13-25)
- **BREATHR APP**: Designed for young people offering mindfulness exercises, which may be fun and accessible for you to try
- **SEL-ANXIETY MANAGEMENT (SAM) APP**: SAM includes lots of information about anxiety, as well as calming activities to help you feel more relaxed
- **MINDSHIFT**: designed to help teenagers struggling with anxiety or low mood. It includes tracking tools, positive thinking activities, relaxation tips, and inspiring quotes/stories
- **PACIFA**: aims to help with anxiety, depression and stress using techniques based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and mindfulness
- **HEADSPACE**: train your mind for a healthier, happier life (ages 13-25)

Self-harm apps:

- **BLUEICE**: App to help young people manage their emotions and reduce urges to self-harm
- **CALM HARM**: Reduces urges to self-harm and manage emotions in a more positive way





Following these wellbeing tips can help you start the school year with confidence and feel more positive!

Practice some of the different activities. Think about which ones you like, and try them out!

Remember, taking care of your mental, emotional and physical health is important for an enjoyable school experience!!

Always talk to a trusted adult at home or school if you feel you need any support.

NOTE: The enclosed guidance is not a quick-fix. It should not be used to replace any psychological intervention. It is intended to be utilised as a guidance toolkit for back to school preparations.



Young Carers
Bedford Borough

Your wellbeing toolkit.

**This booklet is filled with information,
activities, colouring and ideas on how to
support your wellbeing.**

We are an experienced charity supporting Young
Carers across Bedford Borough.



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