

A dose of Health & Wellbeing

Your bitesize guide to a healthier lifestyle,
from your school nursing team
for parents of secondary school aged children

December 2024

Seasons Greetings from your School Nursing team!



What do you think of our newsletter?

Do you find this newsletter helpful? What would you like to hear about?

[Let us know here](#)



Thank you!

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Wellbeing Action Plan for children

Charlie Waller (the mental health charity) have updated their Wellbeing Action Plan for children in Key Stage 2. It may also benefit those in key stage 3 (11-14 years). The plan helps children identify their own challenges and what helps them, it is designed to be personalised and enables children to build their own wellbeing toolkit. To find out more visit:

[Wellbeing Action Plan for children | Charlie Waller Trust](#)

For young people in 6th form and Key Stage 4, you can use these resources to have a guided conversation to help them identify their strengths and manage their wellbeing when things feel tough.

[Wellbeing Action Plan \(young person\) | Charlie Waller Trust](#)

Charlie Waller offer a huge range of resources to help you to support your child, here are some examples:

A guide for parents & carers on how to support a young person who is self-harming

[Coping with self-harm resource](#)

A guide to depression for parents and carers

[Supporting a child with depression | Charlie Waller Trust](#)

How parents and carers can support a child with anxiety

[Supporting a child with anxiety | Charlie Waller Trust](#)

A guide for parents and carers to help understand how they can support a child with an eating problem

[Supporting a child with an eating problem](#)



Mental health tips

Parenting, stress, shorter days, and busy lives can all challenge our mental health. Here are some little things that can help us cope.

- Get close to nature
- Try and improve your sleep habits
- Keep moving
- Eat healthy food
- Be open minded to new experiences
- Plan things to look forward to
- Learn to understand and manage your feelings
- Talk to someone you trust for support
- Be aware of using drugs and/or alcohol to cope with difficult feelings
- Try to make the most of your money, and get help with problem debts

For more detailed information for each tip backed by evidence from research, visit: [Our best mental health tips - Mental Health Foundation](#)

When they can't tell anyone else, Tellmi

Tellmi is a safe anonymous app where your child can talk about absolutely anything, from anxiety to autism, self-harm to self-esteem. Sharing their concerns can really help them feel better. There are moderators checking everything to keep them safe and in-house counsellors on hand if they need extra support.

Tellmi makes it easy to talk about whatever is on their mind. Encourage them to share their problems and get help and advice from a supportive community.

Here is a short video explaining how it works: [How Tellmi Works](#)

[Tellmi: Better Mental Health on the App Store](#)

[Tellmi Therapy](#) This is Text based therapy, no waitlists and no number of limit on sessions.



Cutting the cost of keeping warm

By making some small simple changes we can save money while staying safe and well. For some free advice visit: [Cutting the cost of keeping warm](#)

Vaping

Did you know that a 2% disposable vape that delivers 500-600 puffs is delivering the same amount of nicotine as 50 cigarettes? (2% is equivalent to 20 mg strength of nicotine).

All disposables contain a liquid called nic salts. It's combined with a natural acid to neutralise the otherwise harsh pH which means that even high strengths can be vaped easily as they are made palatable, especially when then combined with sweet and fruity flavours. It's easy to see why a young person may not be aware of the dangers of consuming such a highly addictive substance.

Some facts to help you talk about vaping

- Vaping is a way for adults to stop smoking – not something for non-smokers to try.
- Most vapes contain nicotine, which is an addictive substance that can be hard to stop using once you have started.
- Nicotine is riskier for young people than for adults, as evidence suggests the developing brain is more sensitive to its addictive effects.
- Vaping is substantially less harmful than smoking but that does not mean it is harmless.
- Vaping exposes users to some toxins, and we do not yet know what the risks might be in the longer term.
- In the UK, it is against the law to sell nicotine vaping products to under-18s or for adults to buy them on their behalf.
- Some disposable vapes on sale are illegal and do not meet UK safety regulations. They can contain high levels of harmful substances.

Get to know the facts, find out more on the [FRANK website](#).

[Vapes | FRANK](#)

[Nicotine | FRANK](#)

It's important to talk to young people about the dangers so that they can make informed decision. Here are some websites that can help.

[Vaping | Childline](#)

[Vaping myths and the facts - Better Health - NHS](#)



Managing mobile phone use

Limiting mobile phone use can really help improve your focus, relationships, and overall wellbeing.

Set boundaries for screen time: Set specific times for phone use, such as after homework or meals. App timers or screen time settings can help them to stay within limits.

Prioritise real-life connections: Encourage your child to try to spend quality time with friends and family without distractions. Help them find hobbies or activities that don't involve screens.

Turn off notifications: Constant pings can increase the urge to check your phone, help them turn off non-essential notifications to reduce interruptions and stay focused on tasks.

Create phone-free zones: Keep phones out of reach during meals, homework and especially one hour before bed. Using electronic devices near bedtime can disrupt your sleep pattern. Make sure they use an alarm clock instead of a phone to wake up.

Reflect on your usage habits: Chat with others about how much time they spend on their phone and how it makes them feel. Screen-time trackers can help you identify areas to cut back and encourage a healthier balance.



Healthy eating



For advice to help the family eat well visit [Healthy Steps](#). You can sign up to receive information on small steps to improve your and your family's health and well-being from nutrition experts, as well as suggestions on getting the family active and budget-friendly recipes.

Is your child vegan or vegetarian, or thinking about it?

Make sure they know how to get a balanced healthy diet, check out this information on the Health for Teens website:

[Becoming Vegetarian: Just The Facts | Health For Teens](#)

[Becoming a vegan- Just the facts | Health For Teens](#)

The importance of vitamin D



To keep bones and muscles healthy, everyone should consider taking a daily vitamin D supplement especially in the autumn and winter, when we cannot make enough vitamin D from sunlight.

Just 10 micrograms a day is all you need – it's the same for teenagers, children & adults. For more information visit [the NHS website](#).

Getting more active

Did you know that children need to be active for at least 60 minutes every day?

Aim for 60 minutes per day of moderate activity. Moderate activity is exercise where you can still talk but not sing, whereas doing vigorous activity it would be difficult to talk without pausing the activity.

Encourage your child to break up long periods of time not moving with at least some light activity.

Sport in Mind run free sport and physical activity sessions for children and young people, which can build up their confidence and self-esteem, help them to meet new people and improve low mood and/or other emotional health concerns. To find out more about the activities available and where, visit:

[Youth Community Sessions | Sport in Mind](#)



Sport In Mind



Physical activity for children and young people (5 – 18 Years)



BUILDS
CONFIDENCE &
SOCIAL SKILLS



MAINTAINS
HEALTHY
WEIGHT



DEVELOPS
CO-ORDINATION



STRENGTHENS
MUSCLES
& BONES



IMPROVES
SLEEP



IMPROVES
CONCENTRATION
& LEARNING



IMPROVES
HEALTH
& FITNESS



MAKES
YOU FEEL
GOOD

Be physically active

Spread activity
throughout
the day

Aim for an
average of at least

60

minutes per day
across week

All activities
should make you
breathe faster
& feel warmer



PLAY



RUN/WALK



BIKE



ACTIVE TRAVEL



SWIM



SKATE

Activities to
develop
movement
skills, and
muscle and
bone strength
**ACROSS
WEEK**



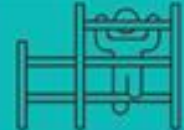
SPORT



PE



SKIP



CLIMB



WORKOUT



DANCE

Get strong



Move more

Find ways to help all children and young people accumulate an average of at least 60 minutes physical activity per day across the week

Keeping safe in winter

Lots of serious accidents happen because drivers don't see another road user until it's too late.

The evenings are getting darker, so make sure your child is as safe as possible while outside in the dark.

- Wearing or carrying something bright or fluorescent helps your child to be seen. Yellow and orange are the brightest.
- Give them something reflective; even just a small reflective patch of material will shine in a car's headlight from far away, and reflect light from streetlights.
- If they cycle or use a scooter, make sure they have working lights on the front and back as well as reflectors.
- And be strict on your child wearing their helmet while riding their bike or scooter.

Did you know that they could be breaking the law if they are over 14 and not wearing a seatbelt? If they are under 14, the driver is responsible for making sure they are buckled up

[This article from THINK! has lots of advice to help keep safe on the roads](#)

Watch:

[Road Safety Awareness – YouTube](#)

[Think! Teen Road Safety – YouTube](#)

[This video shows the importance of bike helmets](#)



Asthma advice in the cold weather

Managing asthma can sometimes be more tricky in the winter. As the temperature gets colder outside you might notice their asthma symptoms worsen. It might make breathing more difficult or they might wheeze and cough more. Here are some tips to help.

- To help prevent asthma attacks caused by the cold, cover their mouth and nose loosely with a scarf so that the air is warmed before it is breathed in.
- Get them to drink lots of fluids to help keep the mucus in their lungs thinner so the body can remove it more easily.
- Make sure they take their preventer inhaler regularly as directed by their GP and that their reliever inhaler is always available.
- Have their asthma reviewed regularly by their GP or asthma clinic.
- If they are using their reliever inhaler three or more times a week, book an extra asthma review.
- Make sure your child has an up-to-date care plan in school.

For further hints and tips about managing asthma please [visit Asthma UK.](#)

Safety advice

Carbon monoxide alarms

Carbon monoxide is created by faulty gas appliances. It has no smell, is tasteless and invisible but can kill. Sadly, we still read about these preventable deaths, make sure your home is fitted with an alarm.

The Safe homes programme offers a free carbon monoxide alarm: [Safer Homes Carbon Monoxide Alarms](#)

E-scooter and e-bike fire safety guidance

Lithium-ion batteries, similar to those in our mobile phones, are used to power many e-scooters and e-bikes. If these and associated charging equipment are substandard, damaged or misused then there is a risk of the batteries overheating. This may lead to an unusually intense fire that can give off toxic gases and large amounts of smoke with very little warning.

[Fire safety guidance for e-scooters and e-bikes | Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service](#)

Do you know the risks of button batteries?

Not only can they get stuck in a small child's food pipe and cause choking, they can cause internal bleeding and even death if swallowed. Batteries react with saliva to create caustic soda, the same chemical used to unblock drains!

There may be even more in your home over Christmas, so be extra vigilant.

For more information visit: [Button batteries – The dangers of button batteries and how to stay safe – Home Safety - RoSPA](#)

Buying and receiving toys

Sadly, there are an increasing number of unsafe toys being sold online, but with many people feeling the pinch this Christmas the appeal of cheap toys could have fatal or serious consequences. If you have or have contact with younger children carefully check the toys they receive this Christmas or indeed at any time of year.

For free fact sheets visit: [CAPT ToySafety factsheet.pdf](#)

For top tips on buying safe toys:

- [8 dangerous gifts that could be a nightmare this Christmas](#)
- [How to buy safe toys online](#)
- [Toy safety guide](#)



Do you have damp and mould in your home?

Maintaining a safe and comfortable home is essential for your family's wellbeing. This guide from Allergy UK is specifically designed for renters and residents of council and housing association properties living with a mould allergy, providing vital information on how to address common housing issues, such as mould and dampness. It also has good advice on how to manage mould and dampness in all of our homes.

[Wellcome Home Housing Guide](#)



Is your child up to date with their immunisations?

We are starting to see local outbreaks of some nasty illnesses and diseases such as measles.

Vaccines are free, they prevent children becoming ill from infectious diseases and have helped to save millions of lives globally.

You can check your child's red book (PCHR), speak to your GP, or phone our local child health service (0300 5611851) to check whether they have received all their immunisations. If your child was vaccinated outside of the UK, you'll need to provide evidence to your GP practice so that they can check whether your child needs any further vaccinations.

To find out more visit the [NHS Vaccinations website](#) and the [Berkshire Healthcare website](#)

Choosing the right school bag

Our school nurses are having increasing concerns about some of the school bags they see young people using. Inappropriate school bags could lead to health problems such as shoulder, neck and back pain, and numbness in arms and hands now and in the future. The spine structure develops and changes every year in young people, so protection is important.

Here are a few things to consider when helping your child choose a bag.:

Ergonomics and comfort

Padded Straps: Opt for wide, adjustable, and padded shoulder straps to distribute weight evenly and prevent strain.

Back Support: A padded back panel helps improve comfort and protect against pressure from books or devices.

Weight Distribution: Look for bags with multiple compartments to help balance the load. Encourage them to wear their bag correctly—with both straps over the shoulders, which can help prevent back pain and posture issues.

Size and capacity

Make sure the bag is proportionate to the body - too large, and it may strain the shoulders; too small, and it won't hold essentials.

A capacity of 20-30 litres is typically ideal for carrying books, devices, and personal items.

Durability, quality, fabric

Choose a bag made from durable materials like nylon or polyester that can withstand daily wear and tear and is waterproof.

Reinforced stitching and sturdy zippers help ensure the bag will last.

Style and design

Neutral colours or timeless designs can make the bag versatile and long-lasting.

Storage and organisation

Look for bags with multiple compartments to keep books, lunch, gadgets etc organized.

Look for one with a laptop sleeve if you need to carry electronics.

Side pockets for water bottles or umbrellas are convenient.

Health and safety

A lightweight bag is crucial; the total weight of the bag and its contents should not exceed 10-15% of your child's body weight.

Reflective strips or bright colours enhance visibility

Budget

Investing in a high-quality bag can save money in the long run

Know where to go if you need medical advice



Minor cuts and grazes
Bruises and minor sprains
Coughs and colds

Self Care

Stock your
medicine cabinet



Minor illnesses
Headache
Stomach upsets
Bites and stings

Pharmacy



Feeling unwell?
Unsure?
Anxious?
Need help?

NHS 111



Persistent symptoms
Chronic pain
Long term conditions

GP Advice

Out of Hours call 111



Choking
Chest pain
Blacking out
Serious blood loss

A&E or 999

Emergencies only

Follow us on social media



How to contact your School Nursing team

Call or email

Monday-Friday 9am-5pm, Reduced cover during school holidays.

Bracknell Forest

0300 365 6000

Bracknellforest.SN@berkshire.nhs.uk

Reading

0118 904 7320

csnreading@berkshire.nhs.uk

Wokingham

0118 904 7330

csnwokingham@berkshire.nhs.uk

West Berkshire

0118 904 7325

csnwestberks@berkshire.nhs.uk

Text us



Monday-Friday 9am-4.30pm (excluding bank holidays).

You can send a text message to our school nursing service for confidential help and advice via ChatHealth, if you are a parent or carer of a child aged 5-19. We can offer advice and support on many topics like:

- Bedwetting
- Sleeping
- Growing up
- Emotional health & wellbeing
- Dealing with medical conditions at school
- Healthy eating

Text: 07312 263194

Visit our website

For more help and support in Berkshire.

cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/school-nursing

Season's greetings to you and your families. We wish you all a healthy, safe and happy time over the Christmas break.

