

# A dose of Health & Wellbeing



Berkshire Healthcare  
Children, Young People and  
Families services

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

December 2024

## Season's 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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# Your mental health

Busy lives can really challenge our mental health. You might feel you are juggling schoolwork, family life, friendships, social media, your physical and emotional health, the list goes on. Here are some little things you can do to help you feel better able to 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](#)

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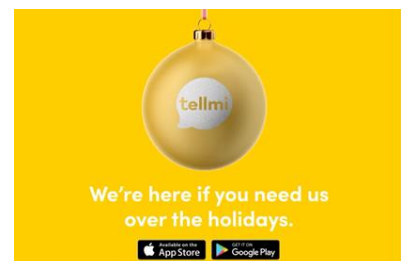
## When you can't tell anyone else, Tellmi

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

Tellmi makes it easy to talk about whatever is on your mind, it encourages you to share your 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.

**Tellmi is there for you, 365 days a year.**

The holidays can be a time for rest and celebration, but we know they can also be stressful. Tellmi is here to help. Whether you're feeling bored, lonely or just need a safe space to talk, our app is open - even on Christmas day.

Connect with others, share your thoughts and feel better, whatever the season.

Click [here](#) to access Tellmi

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# Wellbeing Action Plan

**Charlie Waller** (the mental health charity) have updated their Wellbeing Action Plan for children in Key Stage 2, but it may also benefit you in key stage 3 (11-14 years). The plan helps you identify your own challenges and what could help you. It's designed to be personalised and helps you to build your own wellbeing toolkit. [Wellbeing Action Plan for children | Charlie Waller Trust](#)

If you're in 6th form or Key Stage 4 and have a trusted adult you can talk to there is also a plan that helps you identify your strengths and manage your wellbeing when things feel tough. [Wellbeing Action Plan \(young person\) | Charlie Waller Trust](#)

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

If you're feeling worried, stressed or down about things, it's ok to ask for help. Telling someone you're finding things hard is a strength, not a weakness. This practical guide offers advice on how to take those first steps and gives information about organisations that can offer support.

[Asking for help mental health resource for young people](#)

Advice & tips for managing your mental health during exams:

[Exams: Managing your Mental Health](#)

How to look after your digital wellbeing:

[Managing mental wellbeing in an 'always on' digital world](#)

Self-belief - having the confidence in your ability to cope with the ups and downs of life.

[How to build your-self belief](#)



# 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 you may be unaware of the dangers of consuming such a highly addictive substance.

## Some facts 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](#)

[Vaping | Childline](#)

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



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# Managing your mobile phone use

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

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

**Prioritise real-life connections:** Try to spend quality time with friends and family without distractions. Try and find hobbies or activities that don't involve screens.

**Turn off notifications:** Constant pings can increase the urge to check your phone, 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. 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.

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## Do you know the dangers of button batteries?

**If you have a younger family member or you're a babysitter – make sure you know the facts!**

Not only can a button battery 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 careful. For more information visit:

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

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## 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](#).





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## Food rumours: do you know what is true or false?



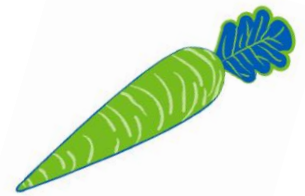
Check out these rumours, what do you think?

- ? Eating chocolate gives you spots
- ? All fat is bad
- ? Energy drinks are a good source of energy
- ? Missing breakfast will help you lose weight
- ? Eating carbs makes you put weight on

[Find out here what's true here: Video: 5 Food Rumours | Health For Teens](#)

And for information on nutrition, diet and your weight visit:  
[Nutrition & Diet | Lifestyle | Health for Teens](#)

## Are you vegan/vegetarian, or thinking about it?



Make sure you 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](#)

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## Getting more active

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

Aim for 60 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous 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.

Try 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 young people, which can build up your confidence and self-esteem, help you to meet new people and improve low mood and/or other emotional health concerns. To find out more the activities they have 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

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# 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 you stay safe while outside in the dark.

- Wearing or carrying something bright or fluorescent helps you to be seen. Yellow and orange are the brightest.
- Wear 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 you cycle or use a scooter, make sure they have working lights, reflectors, and wear a helmet.
- Put away your phone and take out your earphones, especially while crossing the road, so you can hear the traffic properly and are aware of what is going on around you.

Did you know that you could be breaking the law if you are over 14 and not wearing a seatbelt?

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

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

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

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# Are you up to date with your immunisations?

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

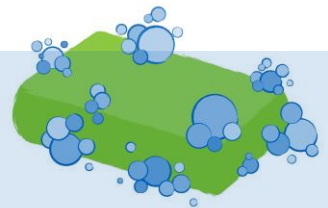
Vaccines are free, they prevent you becoming ill from infectious diseases and have helped to save millions of lives globally.

You can check your red book (PCHR) or speak to your GP to check whether you have received all your immunisations. If you were vaccinated outside of the UK, you'll need to provide evidence to your GP practice so that they can check whether you need further vaccinations.



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

## Ward off winter bugs and germs



One of the easiest ways to protect yourself from getting sick and stop the spread of infection from those nasty bugs & germs is by washing our hands.

### Follow this 'handy' advice!

- Wash your hands with soap and clean water for at least 20 seconds. Be sure to get a good lather going and clean the back of the hands, between the fingers and under the nails. Dry them using a clean towel.
- Wash your hands before and after eating, when they are dirty, after going to the toilet, before and after handling food, after you blow your nose, cough or sneeze, after touching pets/animals and their food or equipment, and after handling rubbish/the bins.
- [Watch this video from WHO](#) and find out if you are actually washing your hands properly!

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# 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 you having 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 choosing your 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. Try to wear your bag correctly—with both straps over your shoulders, this can help prevent back pain and posture issues.

## Size and capacity

Make sure the bag is proportionate to your body - too large, and it may strain your 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

Select a bag that suits your taste, but 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 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](mailto:Bracknellforest.SN@berkshire.nhs.uk)

Reading

**0118 904 7320**

[csnreading@berkshire.nhs.uk](mailto:csnreading@berkshire.nhs.uk)

Wokingham

**0118 904 7330**

[csnwokingham@berkshire.nhs.uk](mailto:csnwokingham@berkshire.nhs.uk)

West Berkshire

**0118 904 7325**

[csnwestberks@berkshire.nhs.uk](mailto: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:

- Sleep
- Low mood
- Self-harm
- Body changes
- Relationships
- Emotional health & wellbeing
- Healthy eating
- Anxiety and stress
- Drugs and alcohol
- Smoking and vaping
- Bullying

**Text: 07312 263266**

## Visit our website

For more help and support in Berkshire.

[cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/school-nursing](https://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.**

