



Donisthorpe Primary School Well-being Newsletter

Supporting the Emotional Well-being and Mental Health of Our School Community

Spring Term 2024

Welcome to our Spring Term Mental Health and Well-being newsletter.

At Donisthorpe, we are committed to supporting children, staff and parents in their wellbeing and mental health.

We know that wellbeing, physical and mental health are all vital to successful learning.

If you have any worries or concerns about your child's emotional behaviour or well-being, then please let school know. There will be things we can do to help further and support you.

Breathing exercises to help children with anxiety

Deep breathing is one of the best ways to lower stress in the body. This is because when you breathe deeply, it sends a message to your brain to calm down and relax. The brain then sends this message to your body. Breathing exercises are a good way to relax, reduce tension, and relieve stress.

Bumble Bee Breathing



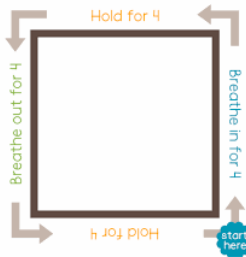
Breathe in through the nose. Exhale slowly and in a controlled manner while making a deep, steady humming sound like that of the bumble bee.

The humming sound should be smooth, even and continuous for the duration of the breath out.

Drawing

First draw a square, star and a triangle on a piece of paper.

SQUARE - follow the sides of the square, breathing in for 4 counts on one side and out on the next side for 4 counts again. Continue round the square.



STAR - use your finger to follow the sides of the star. Breathe in. Hold your breath on the tip and breathe out on the other side. Continue until you have been all the way around the star.



TRIANGLE - take a deep breath for 3 counts on side one. Hold your breath for 3 counts on the next side and finally out for 3 counts on the final side. Do these for a few minutes at a time.



Playing with bubbles

Playing with 'bubbles' is a great way to help regulate deep breathing. It is also something that can be done together with the rest of the family. Take a big, tummy pushing out breath before gently and slowly blowing to make the bubbles - making sure the tummy is contracting.

Below are two mindful breathing exercises that you can also do with your child:

Fiver Finger Breathing -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D SgOW879jJA>

Rainbow Breathing -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O 29e4rRMrv4>

Other ideas ...

Place an emphasis on resilience and strength

Focus on your child's skills, in terms of their daily life. Help them see they have many strengths to help them cope if feeling anxious or upset.

Looking after your feelings

If your child is feeling anxious try getting them to think about good things that make them happy. You can always get them to keep a diary and write down or draw about how they are feeling.

Yoga

Yoga is a fantastic, fun exercise that improves posture, flexibility, strength and balance. It can also help children to relax and encourage positive thinking. Why not try it out?

Grab a mat, blanket, or towel find some loose clothing to wear and click on one of the following links.

For younger children:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-BS87NTV5I>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ImHIWzP49M>

For older children:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0eJoUIBhLkE>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sM5MGLMNN_E

Things to say to your anxious child

1. I am here for you. You are safe.
2. Do you want to do some dancing or running to get rid of that nervous energy?
3. Tell me about it.
4. What would you like to say to your worry? What might your worry say back?
5. Let us draw your worry.
6. What does it feel like in your body? Where is your worry? How big is it?
7. Match your breath to mine.
8. Let us think up some endings for what could happen.
9. What is something we could do to make you feel better?

We would love to know if this newsletter is useful to you or if there are other support ideas you might need. Please let us know by email to slt@donisthorpe.leics.sch.uk

Places to go for help and support



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/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>

The NSPCC are offering support and advice if you feel your child is struggling with their mental health and anxiety due to coronavirus.



More information and advice can be found on their website:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk>

Young Minds - <https://youngminds.org.uk/>



Expressing Feelings

Why is it important to express feelings? Expressing our different feelings helps us to recognise and manage them. It helps us recognise when we might need help with our feelings. Expressing feelings can help stop strong or intense feelings from taking over our minds and bodies.

Ways for your child to express their feelings

- Writing – diaries, poems, stories, blogs
- Talking to others
- Acting, dancing and singing
- Music



Mindfulness Links for Children's Well-being

Take time to reflect (celebrating resilience)

Make time each day for your child and the rest of your family to reflect on what went well. It is important to recognise your successes and the things you are grateful for, no matter how small. You can ask your child to start a diary where they write two or three things they have been proud about or are grateful for that day.

Mindful techniques can also help you focus on the present rather than dwelling on negative thoughts.

Children of all ages can benefit from **mindfulness**, the simple practice of bringing a gentle, accepting attitude to the present moment. It can help you support your child by promoting happiness and relieving stress.

https://alderhey.nhs.uk/application/files/9815/8515/7280/Mindfulness_activities_for_kids.pdf

<https://biglifejournal-uk.co.uk/blogs/blog/mindfulness-resources-children-teens>

<https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/emotional-health/children-young-peoples-emotional-health/emotional-health-activities/mindfulness-activities>