

26 November 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Bedford Borough Council is reporting staggering numbers of children and adults who are experiencing mental health issues, and family struggles. We are very aware that our pupils have also been affected by the ongoing impacts of Covid-19 this year. As a school we have planned our subject teaching for the year to revisit topics and fill gaps in knowledge and skills. We are trying to build confidence with regular small assessments so that we can continue to adapt what we do, without causing too much pressure. We know that lots of pupils and families are struggling with their own wellbeing.

This newsletter shares a range of ways to access support that may help your child and your family. In addition, I would encourage you to share any information with the school:

Safeguarding concerns: safeguarding@wootton.beds.sch.uk

Anxiety and wellbeing issues:

- ❖ Year 9 team led by Miss Clark: year9pastoral@wootton.beds.sch.uk
- ❖ Year 10 team led by Mrs Strickland/Mr McInerney: year10pastoral@wootton.beds.sch.uk
- ❖ Year 11 team led by Mr Kane: year11pastoral@wootton.beds.sch.uk

Family financial difficulties:

- ❖ If your child is in receipt of the pupil premium, or if you think your family may now be eligible for free school meals, Mr Stewart: istewart@wootton.beds.sch.uk

The school can support your child with grounding techniques and strategies to manage anxiety and stress. We can help organise homework and study, and support you to support your child at home. We seek to provide this support to help your child continue to learn. Like many schools, we are also maintaining our regular routines.

It is important that pupils know that lots of people may be unsettled and worried because of the impact of Covid-19 and that this does not make them different. Please find, at the end of this newsletter, a comprehensive list of resources for pupils and families. My thanks to Mrs Enser, Deputy Head, for collating it.

Antibullying Week 2020

Last week was Antibullying Week 2020 and given the unprecedented times we are currently living through we are more reliant than ever on online activities. Showing kindness online can mean so much to someone else. It is a choice we can all make that helps others, put people's needs before our own and which can generate feelings of empathy and compassion. Small gestures can have a large impact and often one act of kindness can lead to more, making the world a happier and more positive place.

Don't forget that your child can report any concerns they may have about bullying on the following email addresses:

- inclass@wootton.beds.sch.uk
- outofclass@wootton.beds.sch.uk



National Online Safety
#WakeUpWednesday

14 WAYS TO BE KIND ONLINE

Showing kindness online can mean so much to someone else. It is a choice we can all make that helps others, puts people's needs before our own and which can generate feelings of empathy and compassion. Small gestures can have a large impact and often one act of kindness can lead to more, making the world a happier and more positive place. That's why we've created this guide to suggest a few simple 'acts of kindness online' that can benefit people's mental health, support their wellbeing and encourage a more positive approach to engaging online.

1. BE POSITIVE

Post about things that make you happy and that you're thankful for. It could brighten up someone else's day.



2. OFFER TO HELP

Sometimes a friend or family member might post a question online or ask for help with something they can't do themselves. If you know the answer or are able to offer help, provide support and send a response. Something that may be easy for you might be difficult for someone else.



3. SHOW APPRECIATION TO OTHERS

If somebody you know has done something good or shown kindness themselves, thank them for it. It costs nothing and showing them that you appreciate it means so much.



4. SHARE FUNNY VIDEOS OR IMAGES WITH FRIENDS & FAMILY

We often come across funny videos or images online that make us laugh and then we move on. If you found it funny, your friends and family might too. It could help someone smile who may be having a bad day.



5. LIKE, LOVE & CELEBRATE

If somebody posts something that you like on social media, like it, love it or celebrate it! It's a small gesture but could mean a lot.



6. VIDEO CALL YOUR FRIENDS & FAMILY

It can be easy to be consumed by daily routine. Using apps like Zoom, FaceTime or WhatsApp are great for connecting with others far away and shows you're thinking of them even though you can't physically meet them in person.



7. TELL SOMEONE YOU'RE THINKING OF THEM

We can't always tell how people are feeling online and just dropping somebody a message to ask if they're ok or that you're thinking of them could literally make their day.



8. SHARE POSITIVE POSTS

If you see something online that inspires you, share it with people you know. An inspirational quote, a beautiful photo or a motivational video can lift spirits, improve self-esteem and help make people feel better about themselves.



9. HOST AN ONLINE QUIZ

Video conferencing apps are a great way to get friends and family together. If you know someone who is feeling lonely, host an online quiz and invite them to join in. It could really cheer them up.



10. THINK BEFORE YOU COMMENT

Sometimes thinking before you act can be just as significant as acting in the first place. Showing thought before you comment could stop you posting something hurtful, offensive or negative. It's always better to post positively or post nothing at all.



11. BE COMPASSIONATE & UNDERSTANDING

Being empathetic towards others and their situation is often an act of kindness and selflessness that gets overlooked. If you notice someone who is upset, drop them a message and offer to listen.



12. CONNECT FRIENDS & FAMILY WITH SIMILAR INTERESTS

You may know two people amongst your friends and family who you trust and know well who have similar interests and likes. Introducing them can be a great way for them to make new friends but remember to always ask their permission first.



13. RECOMMEND SOMETHING YOU ENJOY DOING TO OTHERS

If you enjoy doing something online, such as playing a game, or if you've found a great learning resource, share it with others. Even if you've watched a good film, letting others know can be an act of generosity that brings them excitement or pleasure at a time when they might need it the most.



14. PRAISE OTHERS FOR THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS

Sometimes your friends or family might post something online that they're proud to have done. It might be an exam they've passed, learning a new skill or just completing a task. Either way, it's always kind to recognise hard work and effort through praise and celebration.

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 for Education, advising them on their mental health green paper.



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The staff at the school will be working hard over the training days, but I have also encouraged them to look after their own wellbeing and rest as we move into December. I hope you all also manage to enjoy some relaxing family time.

Best wishes

CMcMorn

Mrs McMorn

Head of School

External Providers of Support

The pastoral team at Wootton Upper School works tirelessly to support the needs of the students they work with but sometimes it is important to signpost external providers of support for both young people and their parents/carers. Please find a selection of these listed below.

Provider	Details
NHS	<p>NHS is here to support your mental health during the coronavirus pandemic, as well as your physical health.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important to note that if you are really struggling with your mental health and it is disrupting your everyday life seek professional help and talk to your GP. If you need urgent mental health support, call 111 option 2. • If you are concerned about the mental health of your child, please contact your GP or check online self-referral options for under 18 years olds at: www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression • If you're experiencing stress and anxiety, you can get further information, including how to self-refer to psychological therapies at: www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression • Every Mind Matters aims to help people take simple steps to look after their mental health, improve their mental wellbeing and support others. To learn more about how to look after your mental health and create your own action plan, visit: https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters
Kooth	<p>www.kooth.com</p> <p>Kooth provide online mental health and wellbeing support to young people via any internet accessible device. Kooth provides an opportunity to interact in a supportive way with other young people as well as receive support from qualified counsellors.</p>
Samaritans	<p>Telephone: 116 123 (24 hours a day, free to call)</p> <p>www.samaritans.org</p> <p>Provides confidential, non-judgemental emotional support for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair.</p>
Mind Infoline	<p>Telephone: 0300 123 3393 (09:00-18:00 Monday to Friday)</p> <p>Text: 86463</p> <p>www.mind.org.uk/information-support/helplines</p> <p>Mind provides confidential mental health information services. With support and understanding, Mind enables people to make informed choices. The Infoline gives information on types of mental health problems, where to get help, drug treatments, alternative therapies and advocacy.</p>
SANEline	<p>Telephone: 0300 304 7000 (16:30-22:30)</p> <p>www.sane.org.uk/what_we_do/support/helpline</p> <p>SANEline is a national out of hours mental health helpline offering specialist emotional support, guidance and information to anyone</p>

	<p>affected by mental illness, including family, friends and carers. It is a confidential service for those aged 16 or over.</p>
The Mix	<p>Telephone: 0808 808 4994 (11:00-23:00)</p> <p>Crisis Support Text Service: Text THEMIX to 85258</p> <p>www.themix.org.uk/get-support</p> <p>The Mix provides judgement-free information and support to young people aged 13-25 on a range of issues including mental health problems. Young people can access The Mix's support via phone, email, webchat, peer to peer and counselling services.</p>
Childline	<p>Telephone: 0800 1111</p> <p>www.childline.org.uk</p> <p>Childline is a private and confidential service for children and young people up to the age of 19. You can contact a ChildLine counsellor about any topic – no problem is too big or too small.</p>
Elefriends	<p>www.elefriends.org.uk</p> <p>Elefriends is a supportive online community where you can be yourself. Elefriends is run by Mind and provides an online space where you can be yourself.</p>
SHOUT	<p>www.crisistextline.uk</p> <p>Text Service: Text SHOUT to 85258 to text with a trained Crisis Volunteer who will provide active listening and collaborative problem solving.</p> <p>Shout provides free, confidential support 24/7 via text for anyone in crisis.</p>
Think Ninja	<p>https://www.healios.org.uk/services/thinkninja1</p> <p>A free app for 10-18 year olds which provides an opportunity to understand fears relating to coronavirus, isolation struggles and how to stay connected to family and friends, worried about personal health and the health of family members, mental strength and coping techniques to use during the pandemic.</p>
Young Minds	<p>Telephone: 0808 802 5544 (09:30-16:00 Monday-Friday)</p> <p>https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/parents-helpline/</p> <p>A source of support for parents and carers who are worried about the mental health of their child.</p>
Family Lives	<p>Telephone: 0808 800 2222</p> <p>http://familylives.org.uk/</p> <p>Support to anyone parenting a child.</p>