



@ St. Joseph's

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the third edition of our Wellbeing Newsletter.

In this edition, we have included information on tips for talking with your child and a selection of wonderful books to support mental health awareness across different ages.

Wishing you all a safe and happy half term.

Ms Wilson

Useful Number

YOUNG MINDS
fighting for young people's mental health

Worried about a child or young person? Call the Young Minds Parents' Helpline for free confidential advice via phone or email.

Opening hours are 9:30-4PM
Monday to Friday

Phone number 0808 802 5544

What is Mental Health?

We all have mental health. Mental health is about our feelings, our thinking, our emotions and our moods. Looking after our mental health is important. We all have small feelings every day; these can sometimes feel strong and overwhelming whether happy or sad, but they go away before too long. Sometimes we experience big feelings; these feel strong and overwhelming for a long time and can stop us doing what we want to in our lives.



Tips for talking to your child about their Mental Health

Make conversations about mental health a normal part of life: Anywhere is a good place to talk; in the car, walking the dog or cooking together. Model everyday talk about feelings such as by talking about a TV character's feelings.

Give your full attention: We all know it's horrible to be half listened to. Keep eye contact, focus on the child and ignore distractions.

Check your body language: Try to keep it open and relaxed and make sure you come down to the child's level.

Take it seriously: Don't downplay what the child is saying or tell them they're "just being silly". Resist the urge to reassure them that everything is fine.

Ask open questions: Such as "How did your day go today?" This will help to extend the conversation.

Calmly stay with the feelings that arise: It can be our automatic reaction to steer away from difficult emotions.

Offer empathy rather than solutions: Show that you accept what they are telling you but don't try to solve the problem.

Remember we are all different: Respect and value the child's feelings, even though they may be different to yours.



Look for clues about feelings: Listen to the child's words, tone of voice and body language.

Some ways to start a conversation about feelings might be: "How are you feeling at the moment?" "You don't seem your usual self. Do you want to talk about it?" "Do you fancy a chat?" "I'm happy to listen if you need a chat."

Books to support mental health awareness

Books that acknowledge or explore mental health issues can help to increase awareness, encourage dialogue, reduce stigma and develop real understanding.

The following suggestions offer a spectrum of different perspectives and are well worth seeking out. These include books that explore emotions for discussion with younger children, plus a range of teen/young adult reads that feature mental health issues. Check out the following website for more books. <https://www.booktrust.org.uk/booklists/m/mental-health-awareness/>

	<p>My Monster and Me by Nadiya Hussain and Ella Bailey</p> <p>Everybody gets anxious sometimes - but if the anxiety grows so big that it impacts on a child's ability to play or go out with friends, it needs addressing. This is such an effective book for reminding us all that though anxiety issues (or anger issues or indeed other mental health challenges) may be a part of life, they do not define us, and with the right strategies they can be managed.</p> <p>Interest age: 3-5</p>
	<p>The Cloud by Hannah Cumming</p> <p>This picture book delights in the act of making pictures - from the front to the back cover, there are pens, pencils and paintbrushes squiggling and revelling in line and colour. And it's also a story about drawing, and its power to communicate feelings and emotions.</p> <p>Interest age: 4+</p>
	<p>The Colour Thief by Andrew Fusek Peters and Polly Peters</p> <p>When someone in the family suffers from a mental illness, it can be hard to explain to young children. Depression affects not only individuals but their families too.</p> <p>Drawing on personal experiences of living in a family blighted by depression, this unusual, yet important, book may help youngsters to make sense of an illness they cannot see.</p> <p>Interest age: 4-8</p>
	<p>The Mystery of the Colour Thief by Ewa Jozefkowicz</p> <p>The colour is draining out of Izzy's world. Her mother is in a coma, following an accident. Her father is struggling to cope. Her best friend has dumped her in favour of "cooler" company. And all the while, a mysterious and menacing figure invades her dreams at night, apparently removing colours from the mural she and her mother lovingly painted together on her bedroom wall.</p> <p>The book paints a convincing picture of a harrowing time in a young life. The author's interest in juvenile mental health issues is clear and we see Izzy learning the value of time and talking in processing trauma. This is by no means a gloomy read, offering ample humour, hope and optimism.</p> <p>Interest age: 9-11</p>