



## Principals' Letter – Spring Term 2021 Week Ending 15<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parent(s)/Carer(s)

We have written to you a lot recently so we just have a couple of quick reminders/requests as there is plenty of important stuff in the rest of the letter.

Please remember that our data team (email is [datateam@passmoresacademy.com](mailto:datateam@passmoresacademy.com)) can help with issues around such things as logging in if you need it. We have noticed that a small number of students have not logged in to check on work and just want to remind you that as parents/carers you can check what has been set by logging in yourself.

To support staff, can you please ensure that your young person logs in to their Teams sessions using their school email address. This helps staff to meet their safeguarding requirements and avoids the embarrassment of using mummyslitleboy@hotmail.com!

Finally, can we please ask that other people in the house are aware that microphones may be switched on during a live lesson and that everyone will be able to hear what is being said in the background. There have been a couple of incidents where our young people may well have learned some new phrases that were not completely appropriate!

Thank you for your continued partnership and understanding that we, as staff, are also learning as we go along and sometimes it will not always go to plan.

**Message from the Pastoral Team:** Thank you to everyone who attended the tutor time teams meeting today, if you did not please make sure you email your tutor to say 'Hi'. We had some lovely feedback from tutors to say what a pleasure it was to speak to you. Please make sure you attend every Friday on a week 1 at break time, when your tutor sends out the scheduled time.

**Thought of the Week:** This week's thought for the week has been 'What is a lie?' and is partly in response to the events which have been unfolding in the USA. We felt that many students may well have questions about what has been going on after the Presidential election, and hopefully the thought for the week topic will help them make sense of it. However, in a wider sense the subject is a life skill designed to get students thinking about when people might not be telling them the truth, and how they can combat this.

**A Message from Miss Watts:** Hi everyone, it's Miss Watts here and hoping you are all ok. As we all know we are all adjusting to this new way of online learning and sometimes it can get a little overwhelming. One thing we know for sure is how to look after our health when it comes to exercise, eating and drinking, but do you all know what to do to look after your well-being and more importantly, what works for you? Of course, food and exercise may also come under that category for well-being but sometimes we need to know what else can help lift our mood or change our mindset. I propose that everyone in your household writes a list of activities and things that they enjoy, resulting in making them feel more positive. If possible, have this list visible so that if you notice your child seems to be feeling sad or frustrated then simply ask them to look at their "Happy List" and get them to pick a couple of activities/things they can do to help with their mindset. Likewise, for you as parents/carers and teachers. Even adults struggle and sometimes need a break, so look at your "Happy List" and pick a couple of things that will help you to feel happier.

Such examples could be:

- Enjoy a hot chocolate
- Put on your favourite jumper
- Have a hot shower
- Sit on the sofa with your pet and just enjoy their company
- Watch your favourite movie or a couple of episodes from a series you are watching
- Try out a new recipe
- Lay on the bed and listen to music that reminds you of past happy times
- Turn up the music and get your whole family to dance around for a mad 10 minutes

Whatever makes you happy, no matter how big or small (and within the restrictions), write it down on your "Happy List" and use it when you need to. Sometimes we all need a break and it's these little things that can give us what we need. Take care and stay safe.

**Keeping mentally and physically well during lockdown: A message from Miss Banks to our students:**

As we continue to live with restrictions, maintaining physical health which comprises of exercise, diet and lifestyle and sleep has become an important factor in our daily lives. A healthy active lifestyle is essential to meet these needs, exercise benefits us both physically and mentally and keeping up with this routine on a daily basis will really improve your wellbeing. Here are few things to think about as we continue to stay at home.

Following a routine will give your day structure, if you are someone who does not have a set wake up time it may be worth thinking about implementing this, waking up early and having the time to eat breakfast gives your brain fuel ready to tackle your day of online learning and exercise. Make sure you get around 8-9 hours of sleep per night, the best sleep is the sleep you get before midnight, this will help you feel better and more energised. It is also important to have down time put the phone, or iPad down and close the laptop at least an hour before bed. This will help your brain to switch off, allowing your body time to wind down and recharge.

During the day it is important that you make time to move and stretch, if you have many live lessons, make sure you get up and move. Make time for exercise, you have your regular set PE lessons that are a combination of HIIT, online workouts and an optional outside walk, run or cycle. It is very important you stick to this, give every PE lesson a go. If it isn't a day for PE make sure you do something to get you moving, it is very easy to become sedentary during these times, make sure you make time for exercise even if it's a 10-minute workout or a walk.

Eating well is good for your physical and mental health, make sure you try and eat five portions of fruit and vegetables a day, this can be a variety of fresh, tinned, frozen and dried - all count. Having regular meals is very important. Starting the day with breakfast such as wholemeal toast or porridge will stop you from snacking on unhealthy foods. Try and think about how you can have healthy snacks throughout the day and reduce your sugar intake, think about having a piece of fruit. Make sure you are drinking enough fluids which helps your body to function properly. Six to eight glasses is recommended.

Here is a link to BBC Food, could you select a meal and make it for your family next week?

[https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/collections/quick\\_and\\_cheap\\_dinners](https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/collections/quick_and_cheap_dinners)

You may be feeling overwhelmed with the work that you are having to do, perhaps a little demotivated. It is important that you take time to switch off, it may be good to spend some time to stay away from social media. Think about alternative things that you could do, watch your favourite TV programme, start a puzzle, or play a game with a sibling. Try some meditation, find a quiet space, listen to your breathing. Take time to be in nature, if you can go outside, get out daily with your family, take time to walk or run. If you cannot leave your house, get out in the garden or even looking out your window can help.

It is now more than ever important to be kind, during this time of uncertainty and change, you will have good days and bad days, it will get easier. It is important to be kind to the people around you and yourself. Make sure you are patient with yourself and your family, if you are struggling, make sure you talk, tell someone how you are feeling you will feel better for it.

Miss Banks.

**Safeguarding:** This week our safeguarding posters focus on mental health and well-being. There are probably lots of families experiencing difficulty at this current time and we hope you can take the time to reflect on the advice given. The "10 Conversation Starters" are aimed at parents/carers whereas the "Good Mental Health in Isolation" is aimed at anyone.

At National Online Safety we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information they need to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one platform of many which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit [www.nationalonlinesafety.com](http://www.nationalonlinesafety.com) for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

# SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

## 10 Conversation Starters for Parents

Talking about mental health to children is sometimes hard. To the point that we can put off raising the subject, not wanting to unearth problems or raise overwhelming subjects that we perceive our child is too young or not ready for. But rather than keeping children in the dark, this guide is designed to help you confidently talk about mental health, so they feel comfortable talking about their own worries and end any stigma before it begins.



#WakeUpWednesday

### 1 LISTEN

This sounds obvious, but it's not something we are always great at. Active listening is where we listen without interrupting or making judgments and show interest in what is being said. If your child feels listened to in the 'smallest of problems' they will become confident that you will listen when the 'biggest of problems' arise.

### 2 ASK TWICE

The campaign from time to change is great. <https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/support-a-2x-campaign>. Be tenacious about your child's wellbeing. Children instinctively know when your questions and support come from a place of wanting to help and care.

### 3 THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A STUPID QUESTION

This advice also relates to the first point. If your child can ask you any questions about the smallest of things and you listen and answer without shaming or bawling, then they will have more confidence to ask the biggest of questions.

### 4 BE OPEN AND HONEST

Children appreciate honesty, particularly if you are having to share information or talk about a difficult subject. For example, you may be talking about death or loss: 'It's very sad that Nana has died' or 'I feel sad that Nana has died'. How you talk about a subject will differ depending on their age and developmental maturity. Talking about death to a younger child for example will be different to that of an older teen, as their experience and understanding of death is different.

### 5 KNOW WHEN TO SEEK HELP

Assess the severity of the mental health difficulty you are noticing. Is the difficulty making it hard for your child to function regularly throughout everyday life? How frequently is your child affected, how long does it last and how persistent is it? Are they having problems controlling the difficulty? Talk to your child about your concerns and that it is likely they will need further support beyond family and friends.

### 6 TALK ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH NATURALLY

Speak about mental health as part of everyday life, so that talking about our feelings and those of others is normalised. If the usual 'are you ok?' is not creating an opportunity for dialogue then say something like 'I know when something like that has happened to me I felt like this... is that how you are feeling or are you feeling something else?'

### 7 EMPATHISE

'It makes sense that you would feel this way, it is understandable'. Children often worry about things that we, as adults, might see as trivial or silly. However, for them at their age and stage it is a big concern and they need our kindness and care when they show their vulnerability and share their worries.

### 8 HELP YOUR CHILD FEEL SAFE

Teens particularly feel that by talking about their worries or concerns that this will make things worse. Reassure your child that you will discuss a plan of action together and what may or may not need to happen next. If they are a younger child, it is likely you will need to lead the conversation and explain next steps.

### 9 MIND YOUR LANGUAGE

Be mindful of the language you use at home to describe and talk about mental health. Stigma often arises from misconceptions and a choice of language which is harmful. Using the word 'mental', 'man-up' or other such words in a derogatory way won't encourage your child to talk about their mental health for fear of being bawled.

### 10 IT IS OK TO SAY 'I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO NEXT'

Adults do not have all the answers but often children think they do. It is ok to acknowledge that what your child is experiencing is not something you have come across before or know anything about, but that you will work it out together and seek help together.

## 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 of Education, advising them on their mental health green paper.



## Sources of Information and Support

Your GP  
 Young Minds <https://youngminds.org.uk/>  
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/ptsd-anxiety-depression/>  
<https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/news-and-blogs/parenting-tips/2016/november/a-simple-guide-to-active-listening-for-parents/>  
<https://www.themix.org.uk/mental-health>

[www.nationalonlinesafety.com](http://www.nationalonlinesafety.com) Twitter - @nationalonlinesafety Facebook - /NationalOnlineSafety

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# HOW TO MAINTAIN GOOD MENTAL WELLBEING DURING ISOLATION

WELLBEING IS ABOUT BEING ABLE TO EXPERIENCE GOOD HEALTH, HAPPINESS AND HIGH LIFE SATISFACTION. INCLUDING MANAGING YOUR STRESS. IT'S NOT ALWAYS EASY TO FIND THE RIGHT STRATEGIES TO ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN YOUR WELLBEING. OFTEN THE MOST SUCCESSFUL METHODS ARE THOSE TO YOU AND ONE THAT CAN BE CONSISTENTLY APPLIED LIKE FOR INSTANCE, EVERY WEEK.

## TOP TIPS FOR ALL

### MINDSET & THOUGHTS

SOMETIMES WE CAN ONLY SEE THE PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES. TRY TO TAKE A FEW MOMENTS EVERY DAY TO REFLECT. PERHAPS THROUGH WRITING IN A JOURNAL OR SPENDING FIVE MINUTES IN THE MORNING TO NOTICE SOMETHING WE CAN BE THANKFUL FOR AND FEEL POSITIVE ABOUT.



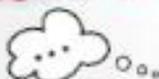
### KEEP PHYSICALLY ACTIVE

STUDIES SHOW THAT THERE IS APPROXIMATELY A 20-30% LOWER RISK OF DEPRESSION FOR ADULTS PARTICIPATING IN DAILY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY. TRY TO GO FOR A WALK DURING THE WEEK OR JOIN A CLASS OR LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUP. MANY PEOPLE FIND THAT JUST THE CONNECTION WITH THE OUTDOORS HELPS TO 'RESET' THEIR MIND AND WELLBEING FOR THE DAY.



### POSITIVE THOUGHTS

WHEN YOUR THOUGHTS ARE OVERWHELMINGLY NEGATIVE, WE CAN FIND IT HARD TO FIND HEADSPACE TO THINK POSITIVELY. TRY THIS... IMAGINE YOU ARE SAT ON TOP OF A HILL AND YOU ARE LOOKING DOWN AT A TRAIN TRACK BELOW WHERE TRAINS ARE COMING AND GOING. NOW IMAGINE THE TRAINS ARE YOUR THOUGHTS. WATCH THEM COME AND GO, BUT DON'T GET ON THE TRAIN. JUST WATCH THE THOUGHTS COME AND GO IN YOUR MIND WITHOUT ACTUALLY FOLLOWING THE NEGATIVE ONES DOWN AN UNHELPFUL/NEGATIVE TRACK. JUST WATCH IT PASS!



### GOOD QUALITY SLEEP ZZZZZ

IF YOUR MIND FEELS FULL UP OR YOUR EMOTIONS ARE OVERWHELMING, YOU WILL FIND IT HARD TO ENJOY A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP. THERE ARE LOTS OF FREE MEDITATION AND SOOTHING SOUND VIDEOS ON YOUTUBE (WAVES, RAIN, CALMING MUSIC) OR FIND A PODCAST WHICH IS FUNNY OR HUMOROUS. WRITE YOUR THOUGHTS DOWN ON A PAD OR CREATE A 'TO DO' LIST. THEN PUT THE PAD OUT OF SIGHT UNTIL THE MORNING. DEEP BREATHING FOR AT LEAST 3 MINUTES CAN ALSO HELP. IN SLOWLY THROUGH YOUR NOSE AND OUT SLOWLY THROUGH YOUR MOUTH.

### EAT WELL

A 2014 STUDY FOUND HIGH LEVELS OF WELLBEING WERE REPORTED BY INDIVIDUALS WHO ATE MORE FRUIT AND VEGETABLES. THE KEY TO BALANCING EATING WELL WITH BUSY FAMILY LIFE IS TO PLAN AHEAD. IF YOU CAN PLAN WEEKDAY MEALS AND BUY THE INGREDIENTS AHEAD OF TIME THIS REDUCES THE NUMBER OF 'LAST MINUTE' UNHEALTHY MEALS.



### ACCEPTING HELP

WE MUST BE ABLE TO LEAN ON OTHERS WHEN NECESSARY. IT IS UNREASONABLE FOR US TO ASSUME WE WILL NEVER NEED HELP THROUGHOUT OUR LIFE. THIS MEANS ACCEPTING HELP WHICH MAY BE VOLUNTEERED OR ASKING WHEN THE NEED ARISES. THE HELP COULD BE THROUGH A FRIEND, RELATIVE OR SERVICE YOU TRUST, INCLUDING NATIONAL HELPLINES.



### DOING GOOD DOES YOU GOOD

THERE IS A STRONG RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WELLBEING AND COMPASSION. DOING GOOD CAN HELP LOWER STRESS LEVELS AND IMPROVE YOUR WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH. HOWEVER, THIS CAN ALSO WORK THE OTHER WAY AND YOU SHOULD ALWAYS ENSURE THAT YOU ARE NOT HELPING OTHERS AT THE COST OF YOUR OWN WELLBEING.



### STAYING CONNECTED

HIGHER RATES OF MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS, SUCH AS DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY, ARE ASSOCIATED WITH LONELINESS AND SOCIAL ISOLATION. OFTEN SOCIALISING WITH OTHERS CAN FEEL LIKE A LOT OF EFFORT IN THE EVENING WHEN WE'RE TIRED. HOWEVER, HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS TO OTHERS HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON MAINTAINING GOOD WELLBEING. USING VIDEO CALLS-LIKE STREAMING OR 'FACE-TIMING' IS A GREAT WAY TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY IF YOU'RE FEELING ISOLATED. IF YOU PREFER CALLING, PICK UP THE PHONE FOR A CHAT. MAINTAINING GOOD RELATIONSHIPS HELPS TO SET A GOOD EXAMPLE FOR CHILDREN, AS THEY NOTICE AND IMITATE THE BEHAVIOUR AND EMOTIONS OF THOSE AROUND THEM.



The National College

### 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.



FOR FURTHER INFO, CHECK OUT THESE ONLINE RESOURCES:

<https://www.nhs.uk>

<https://www.nhs.uk/mentalhealth>

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

<https://www.nhs.uk/mentalhealth>

Web: [www.thenationalcollege.co.uk](http://www.thenationalcollege.co.uk) | Email: [enquiries@thenationalcollege.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@thenationalcollege.co.uk) | Facebook: [@thenationalcollege](https://www.facebook.com/thenationalcollege) | Twitter: [@thenationalcollege](https://twitter.com/thenationalcollege)

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# REDUCE STRESS IN 16 SECONDS

1. Take a deep breath in for 4 seconds.
  2. Hold your breath for 4 seconds.
  3. Exhale for 8 seconds.
- Repeat as many times as required.

**Online Parent Workshops:** Mind have been delivering their third Child Anxiety Workshop but their next group will be on Challenging Behaviour. The dates for this are:

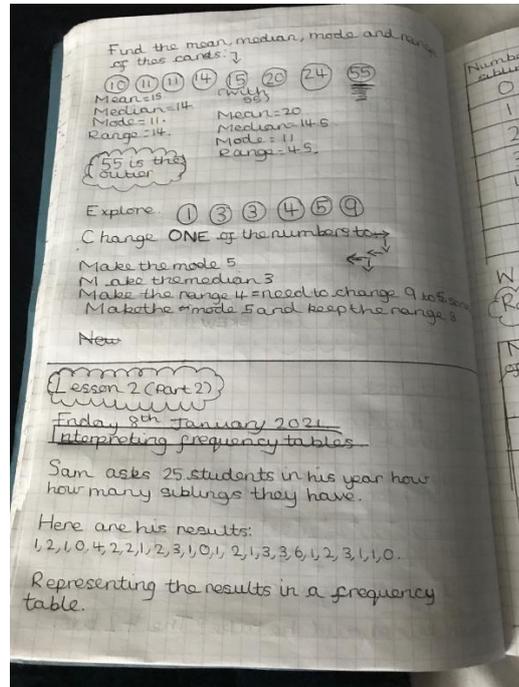
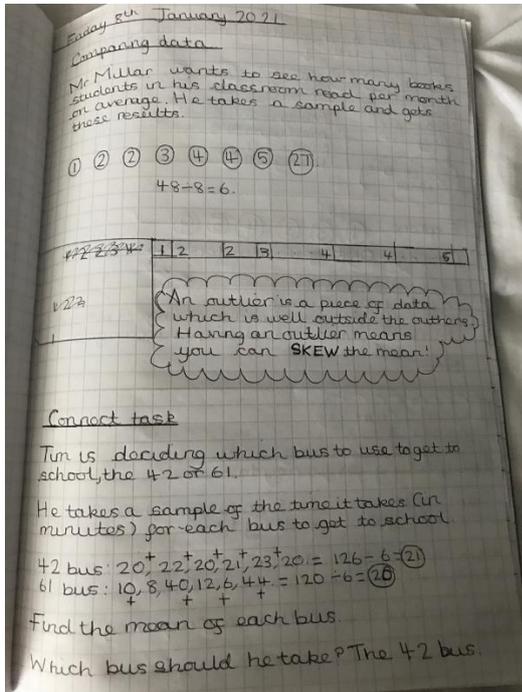
24 February 2021  
03 March 2021  
10 March 2021  
17 March 2021  
24 March 2021  
31 March 2021

This workshop is suitable for parents of children aged 4-11 years. Should you be interested please contact Mrs Ahmad for an application form [r.ahmad@passmoresacademy.com](mailto:r.ahmad@passmoresacademy.com).

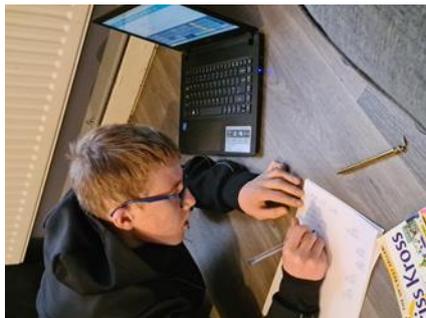
**Maths Department:** Here is a small celebration of work completed on Hegarty Maths for the week 5<sup>th</sup> January – 8<sup>th</sup> January:

- Year 7 **Megan Jones** 5.4 hours completed and 162 questions answered
- Year 8 **Gemma McAusland** 3 hours completed and 63 questions answered
- Year 9 **Ryan Machachi-Hockley** 4.7 hours completed and 99 questions answered
- Year 10 **Tyler Begley** 3.1 hours completed and 41 questions answered
- Year 11 **Blaise Turnstill** 6.5 hours completed and 84 questions answered

A special mention to **Evie Bricknell**. Some excellent work Evie, well done!



George in Year 9 has been putting a lot of hard work into his maths. His mum sent in this photo of him working out his answers. Keep up the good work George!



**English Department:** Students were asked to write a poem based on one or more of these three pictures. This short poem has been sent in this week.

Rolling thunderclouds,

Bolts of deathly darkness fall,

Engulfing us all.

Written by **Sam Wix**



**Accelerated Reader:** Well done to all our Accelerated Reader participants who have been quizzing since we broke up for the Christmas holidays. Here are our top readers for this term, so far. Additional congratulations to **Alfie Liddle**, **Lara Stringer** and **Bailey Adams**, who have already added over 100,000 words to their totals, this term!

Liddle, Alfie  
Stringer, Lara  
Adams, Bailey  
Nicholls, Ella  
Suren, Janhavi  
Yussif, Matin  
Morgan, Travis  
Kilbey, Harry  
Muliulyte, Milena  
Mignot, Lucien  
Chambers, Daisy  
Garmata, Austeja  
Le, Kin  
Iona, Elena H  
Read-Smith, Alfie  
Morgan, Olivia  
Jones, Lois E  
Humphries, Millie K  
Evans, James C  
Peirce, Aaron J  
De Lima, Lucas  
Vare, Ryan  
Beregi, Peter G  
Quigley, Lily N

**Healthy Eating at home:** Well done to **Keanu Barnsley** for making his healthy curry at home this week. It looks delicious!



**Learning Festival:** Make Happen are offering a weeklong 'Learning Festival' from the 1st-5th Feb. Please look at the link and you will see a timetable of events that you can attend for free. The places are limited to 500 people so if you want to attend make sure you arrive on time. All events are via zoom.

[feb2021-lockdownlearningfestival-v2.pdf \(makehappen.org\)](https://www.makehappen.org/feb2021-lockdownlearningfestival-v2.pdf)

**Year 11s:**

New City College (Epping Forest) have a virtual open day on Saturday.  
Epping St Johns sixth form applications close today.



Natalie Christie & Vic Goddard  
**Co-Principals of Passmores Academy**

TEACHarlow

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Interested in becoming a primary or secondary teacher?  
Contact Gareth Walsh on [g.walsh@passmoresacademy.com](mailto:g.walsh@passmoresacademy.com)