



Inclusion Newsletter

4th February 2022

This term's Inclusion Newsletter is linked to Children's Mental Health Week, which this year is running from 7th-13th February. This is a national event designed to highlight awareness of mental health needs in young people. We will be marking this in school next week with a range of assemblies and class activities linked to this theme. In particular, we will be exploring popular children's books that navigate childhood experiences and feelings, such as the Tom Percival collection, serving as a catalyst for starting conversations about mental health. You can find free Children's Mental Health Week resources for families by visiting the website at <https://www.childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk/parents-and-carers/>

This page also includes a fantastic section called 'Parenting Smart', which contains practical advice related to a huge range of specific issues, including sibling rivalry, sleep, anxiety, 'when someone dies', managing behaviour and coping with separations.

Most of you will already know that Mrs Wood is our Home School Support Worker, so if you require any support or advice related to aspects of your child's wellbeing, please do contact her. She is also about to complete her training as an Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA), which will enable her to deliver a wide range of targeted interventions to individuals or groups of children who need some support for their emotional wellbeing, behaviour or social interaction. We have also recently welcomed Brie Way, a practitioner from the Medway Mental Health Support Team, who will be at Riverside every Wednesday and can offer support to both parents and children. Mrs Wood and Brie will be hosting a workshop for parents on 16th March at 2pm, in which they will explain more about their roles and share some advice and guidance linked to ways in which you can support your child's emotional wellbeing and mental health. Please do put this date in your diaries and we will send home more information nearer the time.

Although there are people like this in the school with specialist roles focused on wellbeing, we consider the mental health of our Riverside family to be everyone's responsibility. All staff at Riverside are constantly working hard to help children improve their emotional wellbeing and build their resilience, either through daily contact in class or on the playground, or supporting individuals with specific issues or experiences. Therefore, if you feel that your child is having difficulty managing his or her emotions, coping with anxiety or needs some help to deal with a particular problem or traumatic event, please do let us know. Please also remember to check the Wellbeing page on Class Dojo, on which we share links to additional support available locally as well as advice around various aspects of wellbeing.

Please remember, if you ever have any suggestions, queries or concerns about anything to do with inclusion and SEND, then do call or come and see me at the school.

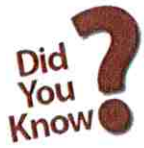
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Spotlight on.....

Mental Health and

Emotional Wellbeing



'Social Emotional and Mental Health' is a recognised category of need under the current SEND Code of Practice.

Mental Health or Emotional Wellbeing needs can be anything from small worries that are fairly quick and easy to deal with, to more severe difficulties that may require quite intensive support. They may occur in the short-term as a result of a particular event or situation, or be longer lasting. If children are experiencing anxiety or finding it difficult to manage their emotions, it can impact quite significantly on their lives both at home and at school, affecting aspects like self-esteem, confidence, motivation, relationships, behaviour and learning.

Riverside staff have all received training this academic year on 'Trauma Informed Practice', which enables us to recognise signs that a child might be struggling with their mental health and identify appropriate support.

~ It's really important to be open about mental health and ensure that children feel comfortable to share when they are feeling low, anxious or worried. As mentioned overleaf, stories are a great way to enable discussions about emotions and feelings. Have a look at the 'Reading Well' booklist, which has titles to support children's mental health and wellbeing, and others related to living with diagnosed conditions such as ASD and ADHD. The books have been chosen and recommended by leading health professionals in discussion with children and families. The list is mainly targeted at children in Key Stage 2, but includes a wide range of reading levels to support less confident readers and encourage children to read together with their siblings and carers. Almost all of the books can be accessed for free through Medway libraries. Visit the website at <https://readingagency.org.uk/news/media/the-reading-agency-launches-reading-well-for-children-booklist-to-support-childrens-mental-health-an.html> for more details.

Helpful
Tips

Useful websites:

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/a-to-z/c/children-and-young-people>

<http://www.youngminds.org.uk>

<https://nipinthebud.org/child-mental-health-conditions/>