

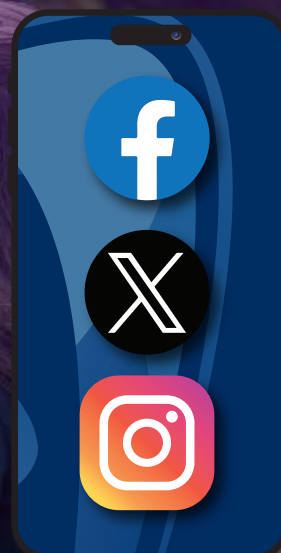


The Abbey School

"BE THE BEST YOU CAN BE"

Safeguarding Newsletter 2024/25

Date: 01/05/25



SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER

This edition addresses mental health issues, which have been rising among young people across the nation. It provides practical advice and information on how to seek help, who can offer support, and relevant contact details.

SIGNS OF CHILD MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

Any child or young person can develop mental health issues. It's important to remember that some mental health issues may not have visible signs. It can also be difficult for a young person to ask for help they may try to hide how they are feeling or what they are doing.

Recognising common signs indicating a young person is struggling and needs support can include:

- Sudden changes in mood and behaviour,
- Self-harming,
- Unexplained physical changes, such as weight loss or gain,
- Significant decline in academic performance or behaviour,
- Sleep disturbances,
- Alterations in social habits, such as withdrawal or avoidance of friends and family.

These signs may suggest that a young person is experiencing difficulties, but various other factors could also account for them.

Identifying the signs that a young person may be facing mental health challenges can be difficult. NSPCC offer parents/carers guidance to assist in supporting children who may be experiencing depression, anxiety, suicidal ideations, or self-harming behaviours.

The NSPCC website has a range of information to help parents and carers support their child's mental health.

[Signs That a Child Is Suffering From Mental Health Issues | NSPCC](#)

Supporting a child with depression or anxiety

Recognise the signs of anxiety and depression and get advice on how you can best support a child who needs your help.

[Learn more](#)

Young people and self-harm

Advice to help you understand why children and teenagers self-harm, and what you can do to support them.

[Learn more](#)

Mindfulness guide for families

Concerned about your child's mental health or well-being? Our best-selling mindfulness guide is filled with exercises and activities to help your child when it's all feeling a bit too much - helping them focus on how they're feeling in the here and now.

[Get your mindfulness guide](#)

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.



National Online Safety

#WakeUpWednesday



1 LISTEN

This sounds obvious, but it is not something we are always great at. Active listening is where we listen without interrupting or making judgements and shows 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-ask-twice-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.



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.



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 belittling, then they will have more confidence to ask the biggest of questions.



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.



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.



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 belittled.



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.



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/v>
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-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>




Coping with mental health issues as a young person or parent can be challenging. Asking for help is crucial, but finding the right advice and support can be difficult. Follow the link below to access information about different support services.

<https://activekent.org/>

Services for Young People

Home / Children & Young People / Mental Health Support / Services for Young People


[Save](#) [Share](#)



Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

Find child and adolescent Mental Health Services near you on the NHS website.


[Read more](#)



Kooth

An online mental wellbeing community, where young people aged 10-25 in Kent and Medway can access free, safe and anonymous support.


[Read more](#)



Mood Spark

Helping 10-16-year-olds to look after their emotional and mental health and find ways to bounce back when life gets tough.


[Read more](#)



Young Minds

Tips, advice and guidance plus real life stories written by young people who've struggled with their mental health.


[Read more](#)



Every Mind Matters

Self-care for young people offers self-care videos for loads of tips and techniques to help you take care of your mental health.

[Read more](#)



Children and Young People's Counselling Service

Offers counselling to support the emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people aged four to 19.

[Read more](#)

YOUNG MINDS

fighting for young people's mental health

Young Minds is a charity supporting young people, parents, and professionals in addressing mental health issues. Their website provides useful information on various mental health topics. Their main objectives are to:

- To stop young people's mental Health reaching crisis point
- No young person feels alone with their mental health
- Ensure all young people get the mental health support they need, when they need it, no matter what.

Shout

Text SHOUT to 85258.

Shout provides free, 24/7 text support for young people across the UK experiencing a mental health crisis.

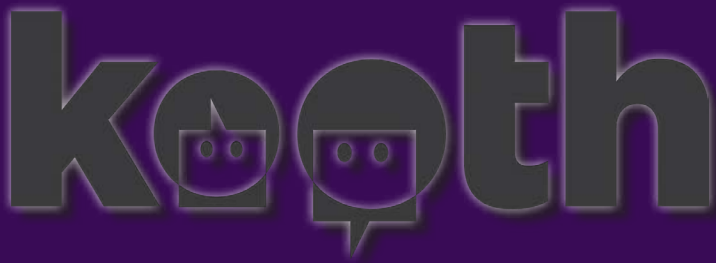


All texts are answered by trained volunteers, with support from experienced clinical supervisors.

Texts are free from EE, O2, Vodafone, 3, Virgin Mobile, BT Mobile, GiffGaff, Tesco Mobile and Telecom Plus.

Shout little book of coping skills - Link below to download a copy Our Little Book of Coping Skills which is a collection of the things texters have told Shout Volunteers they'll do to help them feel better after a conversation with our service. Whether you're feeling anxious, stressed or low, this booklet has plenty of tips and techniques you can try whenever you need them

https://giveusashout.org/documents/220/coping_skills_final_2024_1.pdf



Online counselling designed for young people

Kooth online counselling is trusted by over a million young people to support them with their mental health and wellbeing.

Kooth offer online counselling and mental health support in partnership with the NHS. Kooth is free, anonymous and a safe space to explore your feelings.

Online counselling is delivered via live text chat with a qualified counsellor or trained practitioner. There are no waiting lists, and you don't need to have seen a doctor first.



Qwell is a free and anonymous mental health support service for adults, offered by the NHS. It is accredited by the British Association of Counsellors and Psychologists to ensure high standards of wellbeing support, mental health therapy, and coaching.

<https://www.qwell.io/>

Papyrus

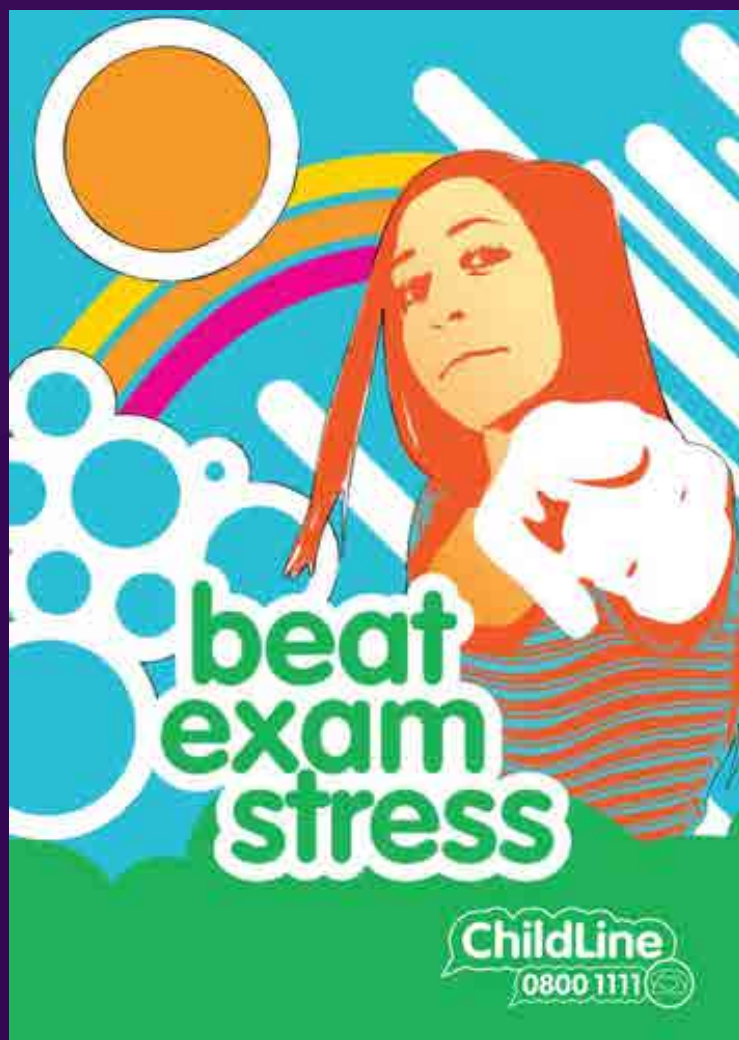
Offers confidential advice and support if you're struggling with suicidal thoughts, and information about how to make a safety plan. Its helpline service - HOPELINE247 - is available to anybody under the age of 35 experiencing suicidal thoughts, or for anyone concerned that a young person could be thinking about suicide. Opening times: 24/7 every day of the year

0800 068 4141
88247

pat@papyrus-uk.org

Exam time is approaching, and we want to help students and parents manage stress. You can talk to your subject teacher, Head of Year, or the pastoral team. Here are some tips to plan ahead, manage stress and take care of yourself to avoid feeling pressured.





Prepare for the big day

Check

- Have a good breakfast if you can.
- Make sure you know where the exam is being held and what time it starts. Give yourself plenty of time to get there.
- Take all the equipment you need for each exam, including extra pens and pencils.
- Take in a bottle of water and tissues.
- Go to the loo beforehand!

If you feel really anxious, breathe slowly and deeply while waiting for the exam to start.

Pace yourself

- Read the instructions before starting the exam.
- Ask the teacher or exam supervisor if anything is unclear.
- Read through all the questions before starting writing, and make sure you are clear how many questions you are required to answer.
- If there is a choice, start by answering the question you feel you can answer best.
- If you are stuck on a question, go on to the next. You can always come back to it later. If you are really stuck, try to have an intelligent guess anyway.
- Leave time to read through and check your answers before the exam finishes.

Plan how much time you'll need for each question.

Plan ahead

Do

- Have your own revision timetable – start planning well before exams begin. Your teacher should be able to help.
- Make your books, notes and essays user-friendly. Use headings, highlighting and revision cards, and get tips on other revision techniques from teachers and friends with experience of exams. You could also consider buying revision guides.
- Take notes of the important points when revising. Try to answer the questions of past exam papers – explain answers to tricky questions to someone else.
- Everyone revises differently. Find out what routine suits you best – alone or with a friend or parent/carer; early morning or late at night; short, sharp bursts or longer sessions; with music or without noise.
- Ask for help from your teacher/learning mentor, parent/carer or a friend if there are things you don't understand.

Don't

- Don't leave revision to the last minute.
- Don't avoid revising subjects you don't like or find difficult.
- Don't forget that there is life beyond revision and exams.
- Don't cram ALL night before an exam.

Pamper yourself

Remember it's important to eat and sleep well.

Put yourself first – this is an important time for you. Try to talk to your family about how they can make studying a little easier for you – for example, by agreeing times when you can have your own space, when they will try to be a little quieter around the house and when you'd rather not be disturbed (except perhaps for the occasional treat, such as a drink or snack).

Don't revise all the time

Make sure you give yourself time each day to relax, taking breaks to do something you enjoy – watch TV, listen to music, read a book or go out for a walk.

Perform as well as you can

- Knowing that you've done your best may help you overcome feelings of letting anyone down.
- Don't go through the answers afterwards with your friends. If it is only going to make you more worried.
- Try to put the last exam out of your mind and look ahead to the next one. You can't go back and change things.

You're you, so you can only do the best you can on the day.

Phew!

Exams over? Pat yourself on the back – it's time to relax and forget about them.

If you did well – congratulations!

But remember, there's life beyond exam results. Disappointing grades are not the end of the world, even if it does feel that way at the time. You might decide to re-sit, and in any case, there will be lots of other opportunities to express yourself and succeed later on in life.

Help and advice

During or after the exams, if you feel that you can't cope with the pressure or are feeling stressed, find someone to talk to. Don't bottle it up! Try to talk to your teachers, friends, or ChildLine.

Whatever your worry, it's better out than in
ChildLine is the UK's free, confidential helpline for children and young people. We're here for advice and support, by phone and online, 24 hours a day. Whenever and wherever you need us, we'll be there.

- Phone: 0800 1111 (24 hours)
- Website: www.childline.org.uk

Parents and carers can help too

Ask your parents or carers to give you encouragement and support, and not to put pressure on you. Arrange with them when you can have your own quiet time and space in the house to study without being disturbed. Don't forget to talk to them if you are worried – don't bottle things up inside.

Exams are important – but they are not the only key to a successful future.

ChildLine is a service provided by the NSPCC. NSPCC registered charity numbers 216401 and SC037717. Stores code NS/246. DJ5672/09.

NSPCC Publications, Weston House, 42 Curtain Road, London EC2A 3NH
Tel: 020 7825 7422 Email: publications@nspcc.org.uk



Useful Contact Numbers for advice & support

Mental Health Support

For immediate assistance regarding mental health support and resources, please refer to the following organisations:

- Kooth
- YoungMinds
- Shout - Text "SHOUT" to 85258 for 24/7 support
- Qwell: If you are an adult requiring mental health
- Kent Resilience Hub

For support around domestic abuse

- SATEDA
- Refuge
- Oasis Domestic Abuse Service

For support with homelessness or housing issues

- Porchlight
- Shelter England

If you have urgent child protection concern contact: 03000 411111

<https://kccchildrens.kent.gov.uk/web/portal/pages/home>

Or call 999 and report to Kent Police.

More information can be found on the school website. As well as help in school, advice can be found via the NSPCC and a dedicated NSPCC helpline is now available to support anyone. The dedicated NSPCC helpline number is 0800 136 663 and more information is available at: [Contact us | NSPCC](#)

We hope that you have found this information helpful if you have any further questions or concerns please do contact the school for support.

At The National College, our **WakeUpWednesday** guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guidance, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

MANAGING EXAM STRESS

At some point in their education, children are almost certain to encounter exam stress, which can cast a shadow over their mental, emotional and physical wellbeing. Mental health charity YoungMinds estimate that a staggering 87% of pupils suffer from exam stress – highlighting the urgent need to minimise its impact on children's health and happiness.



1 PRACTISE WORKLOAD WISDOM

This build up to exam season is such a busy and pressurised time in a child's education that it can be difficult for youngsters to avoid feeling overwhelmed. Encourage them to consider whether their current workload is realistic and allows them sufficient time to relax and recharge. Work with them in creating a revision timetable that's manageable and includes breaks and occasional days off.

2 ADVISE CLEARING THE CLUTTER

A disorganised work environment is proven to negatively affect our ability to focus, as well as our emotional state. Encourage children to keep their desk, notes and revision materials tidy – creating a dedicated, well-kept study space to promote maximum focus. Foster their creativity by suggesting they incorporate vibrant colours, mind maps and even quirky drawings into their revision notes.

3 MASTER THE MATERIALS TOGETHER

Revision seems far harder when a child is uncertain where to begin or what sources to consult. Support them in confirming revision materials with their various teachers – emphasising the importance of gathering a range of resources to get a more comprehensive understanding of the subject. Feeling more prepared should nurture the child's confidence and help to dispel some of their anxiety.

4 RECOMMEND CREATIVE NOTE-TAKING

Writing out notes in full – rather than simply bullet pointing – can be a strong start to a child's revision. Reinforce this idea, encouraging the use of flashcards (creating shorter versions of previously taken notes) for effective repetition and memorisation. Discuss the power of regularly reviewing notes to help them stay in the child's memory.

5 USE VISUAL AIDS AND MNEMONICS

Encourage the use of visual aids like videos and sticky notes to enhance learning. Some children find these resources far more useful than simply reading their notes as written. Explore creating mnemonics for a fun and effective study approach – and it's also worth noting that the strategic use of colours is a proven means of triggering recall during exams.

6 GATHER A 'TECH TOOLKIT'

Technology can be a huge advantage in exam prep. Educational YouTube channels and revision websites like BBC Bitesize can be immensely powerful resources for helping children to expand and retain their knowledge. You could also recommend the use of flashcard apps and educational podcasts for revision and reminders when young people are on the go.

7 KEEP IT FUN

Revision tends to go far more smoothly if children are having fun in the process. Injecting some humour into their notes, for instance, can make details more memorable – as can relating information to their real-life experiences. Try to encourage a variety of study methods, such as incorporating physical activity (even simply taking a walk) into their revision routine.

8 SUGGEST ACTIVE REVISION STRATEGIES

Make sure children are aware of different study techniques. You could emphasise the effectiveness of spaced repetition by reviewing material regularly over time to reinforce learning and improve retention. Discuss the benefits of active recall methods – such as self-testing or exploring a concept aloud – in identifying where their strengths and weaknesses lie.

9 ENCOURAGE A POSITIVE MINDSET

It can be easy for children's thoughts to fall into a downward spiral when they're stressed about exams. Try to foster a growth mindset by emphasising the importance of giving it their all rather than aiming for complete perfection. Positive self-talk and the use of affirmations can build confidence and reduce anxiety, while visualising success and setting realistic goals can help them stay motivated and focused.

10 HELP THEM TO SEIZE THE DAY

There are lots of things children can do on the day of their exam to reduce stress and increase their focus. Talk them through some helpful exam-day strategies – such as arriving early, reading the instructions and the questions carefully, and pacing themselves during the test. Suggest some relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing or visualisation, to help them manage any nerves before and during the exam.

Meet Our Expert

Minda Ahead design and deliver the UK's only specialist postgraduate mental health qualifications. Winner of the Social Enterprise UK 'One to Watch' award, the charity provides training and support to education organisations and local authorities. This guide has been written by Adam Elliott – a learning and development specialist who is also Associate Vice-Principal for Personal Development at Penistone Grammar School.

WakeUpWednesday

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NO EXCUSE FOR ABUSE

At The Abbey School, we strive to create a **safe and secure** environment for the school community. Our school is a **welcoming and inclusive place** where we all show one another respect and look out for each other.

We will not tolerate any **threatening, abusive or violent** behaviour and action will be taken when necessary.



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