

Secondary School Health Nurse Team Newsletter

Term 5 May 2018

This newsletter aims to provide families and young people with some useful tips for keeping healthy. Childhood is an important time to instill healthy habits and learn crucial life skills. Establishing these habits early on will help to improve your child's quality of life in the future and enable them to reach their full potential educationally.



Teenage Exam Stress

Exam time can be very stressful for everyone in the family. Your child may not want to sit all of their exams, or perhaps getting them to revise has become an uphill struggle. It's understandable that you will have concerns for their future and want them to do well in their education, so that they have plenty of opportunities after they leave school.

As a parent you can really help your child through this time, just by being there for them and encouraging them to talk about their feelings and fears. You can also ask for help from the school itself.

Here are a few ideas & great websites (search exam stress) to make exam time that bit more bearable
www.childline.org.uk
<https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/exam-self-care/>
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk>



Top tips for exam revision

- Make sure they have a comfortable place to work
- If you do not have a suitable spot, make it easy for them to study elsewhere, like the library
- Accept that some people can revise better with music or the TV on in the background
- Establish a revision routine by re-arranging the family's schedules and priorities
- Talk to the school about what they advise
- Be lenient about chores and untidiness, if you can
- Give them a break, tolerate the odd lost temper and some moodiness
- Try to avoid nagging, as it can help them lose focus
- It is never too late to study, revise or ask for help
- Don't go in for bribes; encourage them to work for their own satisfaction
- Schedule small and frequent rewards for their efforts
- Suggest a special evening or day out as it could give them a treat to look forward to
- Be calm, positive and reassuring and put the whole thing into perspective.
- **Don't worry** -They can always take an exam again, if it really doesn't go their way

Resilience

may be described as the ability to positively cope and adapt despite stress and adversity. An individual who is resilient possesses emotional strength which acts as a preventative measure against tension and pressure that a person may face in their every-day lives. Even small improvements in mental well-being can help a person to be more resilient.

The Government publication entitled 'Five ways to mental well-being' may help young people, and indeed all individuals, to build resilience and the document focuses on the following key areas to develop emotional strength:



Connect

Connecting with people is about connecting with family and friends. Building strong relationships and connections with people will support and enrich you every day.

Be active

Exercise makes you feel good and has the added advantage of being good for your physical health too.

Take notice

Savour the moment. Be curious and notice your surroundings. Remark on the unusual, notice the changing seasons and be aware of the world around you, notice tastes, smells and what you are feeling inside. Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what is important to you.

Keep learning

Try something new and set yourself challenges. Learning new things will increase your confidence and self-esteem.

Give

Do something nice for somebody else. Thank people, smile at people, volunteer for things, this can all help create connections with people around you.

<https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-at-work/taking-care-of-yourself/five-ways-to-wellbeing>

Preparing for Exams

Help your child get ready for an exam with plenty of planning and support. Encourage them to get pens, pencils and equipment ready the evening before. Try to get them to go to bed early so they are able to have a restful sleep. In the morning, arrange for them to have a healthy and nutritious breakfast to help them focus and concentrate. Go through a checklist to make sure they have everything they need. Give your child lots of encouragement so they feel more positive before they leave. Let them know how proud you are of them regardless of how they think they do.



After exams

Allow your child the opportunity to talk about how they have done, allow them to do the talking while you listen. Encourage them not to dwell on mistakes they may have made. Exam results mark the end of one phase in your child's life, and the beginning of another. This can be unsettling and difficult so let them voice their worries and expectations and listen out for any underlying serious issues.

Plan an event to mark the results, whatever they are and have some fun now with your child. Make it clear that you love and value your child for who they are, and not for what happened in an exam.



School Nurse for St Gregory the Great school is Ruth Vilella who is usually available 9am - 3pm Monday to Friday.

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