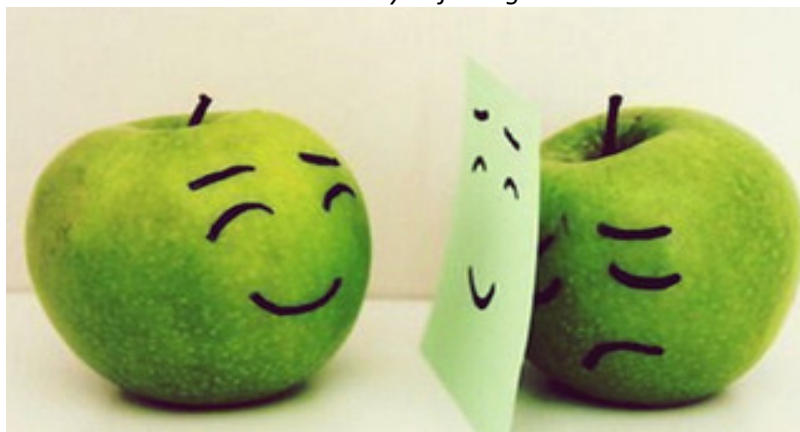


How are you feeling?



“There is no health without mental health.” (World Health Organization, 2009)

Our emotional and physical health can be severely compromised during these unsettling times. **Self-care** is very important, as we are often the last person we think about and look after.

It's particularly important at this time to enable us to be as resilient as possible for ourselves, and also to manage and alleviate our pupil's worries, and to provide them with re-assurance.

Some hopefully helpful links are detailed below:

Mental Wellbeing audio guides- from NHS Every Mind Matters

Understanding anxiety - colourful guide from the Priory Group

A free app for sleep, anxiety and stress- from Insight Timer

e-learning: staying mentally well through Covid19 - from **Pooky Knightsmith**

Working from home wellbeing action plan - from the Charlie Waller Memorial Trust

With this in mind, as we move towards schools re-opening, we wanted to outline our guiding principles for how to move forward through this transition as smoothly as possible. We are adopting the following imagery and acronym:

Be the SWAN

Safe

Welcoming

All together

Nurturing



creative
EDUCATION

*With huge thanks and credit to Dr Pooky
Knightsmith from Creative Education.*



Safe

We want you and your child to feel safe, calm and re-assured, and to know that it will be okay to come back to school. So we are already working on creating an environment that is and feels physically and emotionally safe for all of us. We want to build up predictability and consistency around hygiene and other safety rules which school staff will role-model noticeably, and praise your child for following accordingly. We will support any child through any misunderstandings and refer to the benefits of what we are doing.

We want to invite suggestions from you and work in partnership so that you have a genuine voice in building this new normal for your child. We want you to feel involved and invested, and to start to re-inforce these rules and messages at home in advance of the pupil's return. This is one of the reasons for the Home school safety agreement.

We hope to involve the pupil's to some extent in co-creating rules surrounding social times and movement around the site; if we work with them, they will have a sense of ownership and the rules would have more meaning for them.

Welcoming

When the pupil's return, we want them to feel excited and happy coming into school and we want them to know that we are genuinely delighted to have them back and to be able to see them again. We have sincerely missed them. They will need to know that they belong, and feel a part of things and we will do everything we can to enable this.

All Togetherness

So, how can we create these warm, welcoming feelings of care and nurture when we can't touch and need to keep a safe distance? We need to create a truly inclusive environment in which the pupil's feel surrounded by support, and know that they can rely on all the adults around them and that we are all reinforcing the same messages and sense of togetherness.

Nurturing

Recent research conducted at Reading University highlights the importance of allowing the pupil's time and space to re-connect socially with their peers. A key point is to play the long game here, and not rush ahead with trying to make up for lost time or to add intense academic pressure and stress to the pupil's, some of whom are already in a high alert state.

We will focus primarily on settling your child in, on meeting their social and emotional needs first and foremost, and on their readiness to learn skills. The general expert consensus is that we should be laying the foundations for them in terms of nurture first and foremost, not solely teaching them in the plain, traditional sense. Therefore, the first week is predominantly welfare meetings in very small cohorts so the pupils have chance to voice their opinions/concerns and how they have felt during lockdown.

This Covid generation of pupils are going to be unique, and we want to enable them to flourish which will not be an overnight job. We have the potential to do a lot of good here, and to repair the significant rupture that this virus has caused and to prepare our pupils to be strong adults in the future as well as happy and resilient pupils in their present.

Anticipating their concerns

It's important to recognise that each child is unique, and that they may have had very different experiences of Home Learning and staying at home, even within the same family. Many pupils will naturally have mixed feelings and attitudes about coming back to school.

A tip is to be alert and attuned to how your child is feeling as they might have a particular worry about returning to school that can be addressed. Older pupils talking can be easier through a shared activity like walking the dog or baking a cake.

Thank you for everything that you are doing to support your child at home. It is appreciated. Take care
Mrs Lomax- Vice Principal- Pastoral care and support

Evidence based approaches for enhancing well-being:

The 4 pillar plan – how to relax, eat, move and sleep your way to better health:

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Pillar-Plan-Relax-Longer-Healthier/dp/0241303559>

5 Steps to Well-being : <https://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/Pages/improve-mental-wellbeing.aspx>:

If you give them a try, you may feel happier, more positive and able to get the most from life.

- **Connect** – connect with the people around you: your family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. Spend time developing these relationships. Learn more in [Connect for mental wellbeing](#).
- **Be active** – you don't have to go to the gym. Take a walk, go cycling or play a game of football. Find an activity that you enjoy and make it a part of your life. Learn more in [Get active for mental wellbeing](#).
- **Keep learning** – learning new skills can give you a sense of achievement and a new confidence. So why not sign up for that cooking course, start learning to play a musical instrument, or figure out how to fix your bike? Find out more in [Learn for mental wellbeing](#).
- **Give to others** – even the smallest act can count, whether it's a smile, a thank you or a kind word. Larger acts, such as volunteering at your local community centre, can improve your mental wellbeing and help you build new social networks. Learn more in [Give for mental wellbeing](#).
- **Be mindful** – be more aware of the present moment, including your thoughts and feelings, your body and the world around you. Some people call this awareness "mindfulness". It can positively change the way you feel about life and how you approach challenges. Learn more in [Mindfulness for mental wellbeing](#).