



Mental Health and Wellbeing Newsletter

Edition 3

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Learning and Living Through Faith



Edition 3- Sleep

Welcome to our third edition of our school's Wellbeing Newsletter! This week we would like to share some top tips for sleep!

Sleep is a crucial time for our body to rest, reset and repair. Without quality sleep we leave our bodies to run on empty like a car with no petrol!

Feeling relaxed is important in the run up to bedtime for both parent and child. If your child is experiencing difficulties sleeping it can make you both feel anxious. Youngsters often pick up on stress levels so try to create a relaxing and calm environment as bedtime approaches.



Why is getting a good nights sleep important?

Getting sufficient sleep has been shown to benefit memory, learning, attention, mood, behaviour and physical health.

How many hours does your child need?

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Age	Hours of sleep
Pre-school (3 - 5 years)	11 - 13
5 - 9	10 - 11 hours
10 - 14	9 - 9.75
15 - 17	8.5 - 8.75
Adults	7 - 9

(Information from National Sleep Foundation and NHS Choices)

Exercise and activity

Exercise during the day is important to help us sleep but discourage lots of activity right before bedtime. Exercise affects our body temperature and the best time to exercise to promote sleep is 4 - 6 hours before sleep.

Diet

A healthy balanced diet promotes good sleep. A large meal too close to bedtime will interfere with sleep. If your child has a snack before bed, carbohydrates such as bread or cereal are good options. Monitor your child's sleep to consider how different foods may be affecting their sleep.

Relaxation top tips for bedtime

1. Turn off all screens an hour before bedtime – this includes television, laptops, tablets and mobile phones. Screen activities can be mentally stimulating and also may inhibit the production of melatonin, the sleep hormone that helps us to feel drowsy.
2. Set aside time earlier during the day to allow your child to share any worries with you. It can be helpful to share how their day has been and what is planned for the next day. Make sure to give them your full attention.
3. Dim the lights in the hour before bed to create a relaxing environment and aid the production of melatonin.
4. Fine motor skill activities such as craft activities, model making, jigsaws or colouring pictures can aid relaxation.
5. Massage can help some children to unwind.
6. Classical music can be very soothing and makes good relaxing music to play in the background during the bedtime routine.
7. Mindfulness is being increasingly used and there is evidence to suggest that it can be helpful to promote relaxation and sleep. There are a number of apps and products on the market that may be useful.
8. Encourage your child to concentrate on their breathing. Imagine breathing in a beautiful white light and blowing out any worries or troubles each time they exhale. Breathing exercises are also useful for parents to carry out and are a great exercise to enjoy together.
9. Teach your child to progressively relax the muscles in their body. They can begin by tensing their feet to the count of 5 and then letting them relax. Next, tense the calf muscles and relax, moving up to the thighs and so on until they have relaxed each part of their body. This is another good activity to try together.
10. End the day on a positive note by sharing 5 great things that have happened during the day.

Here are some websites to support you with topics surrounding children's mental health:



<https://thesleepcharity.org.uk/information-support/children/childrens-sleep-ebook/>

<https://www.wsh.nhs.uk/CMS-Documents/Patient-leaflets/PaediatricDepartment/6339-1-Sleep-a-guide-for-school-age-children.pdf>

