

Support and Well-being Bulletin

3rd April 2020

Dear parents and carers,

As we enter the Easter break, I wanted to take this opportunity to remind you of the materials already on the school website, and to signpost some additional resources. These are aimed at promoting your and your children's mental health during this challenging time, as well as supporting children with SEND (special educational needs and disabilities).

On the website – found in 'Support and Well-being' under the Home Learning tab:

- **Supporting your child's mental health during the school closure** – I have put together a collection of slides about self-regulation and managing anxiety, plus useful web links.
- **SEND support during school closure** – web links, tips and resources for supporting children with a range of different special educational needs and disabilities
- **'Dave the Dog' coronavirus story** - a colourful rhyming story to help children make sense of what is going on in a non-threatening context
- **Talking to children about Covid 19** - advice from mental health professionals
- **School closure social story** - a visual explanation of why schools need to close for the time being
- **Understanding the Coronavirus** - a story produced by elsa-support.co.uk
- **Visual timetable cards** - highly recommended to provide children with a visual structure of what to expect for the day
- **Supporting children with ASD** – a pack of great ideas and advice from the Freemantles outreach team
- **Coping with Covid 19 –NHS advice for parents and carers** – important advice and strategies to help alleviate the burden of the current situation.

Additional self-regulation Strategies:

Try these with your children at home.

ARM-PRETZEL



Hold for ten seconds.

This exercise has you **cross midline**, which can really help you focus if you are feeling **Slow and Tired**, or **Fast and Wiggly**.

Directions

- ★ Arms like a seal.
- ★ Cross arms.
- ★ Touch palms.
- ★ Interlace fingers.
- ★ Twist arms to chest.



PALM PUSH



Push your palms together, and hold for five to ten seconds.

This exercise can help you feel where your fingers and hands are by giving you **proprioceptive input**, which can then help calm you down whether you are feeling **Fast and Emotional** or **Fast and Wiggly**. It can also wake you up if you are feeling **Slow and Tired**.

Directions

- ★ Face your palms together.
- ★ Push them firmly together, and hold this position for five to ten seconds.



SEAT PUSH-UP



Sit on the floor with your legs crossed or in a chair with your feet flat. Push on the floor or on the chair with flat palms. Count for five to ten seconds.



This can help you feel where your fingers and hands are by giving you **proprioceptive input**, which can then help calm you down whether you are feeling **Fast and Emotional** or **Fast and Wiggly**.

This is a great exercise if you are feeling **Slow and Tired**.

(Note: Make sure not to lift your body too far off the floor, or you are not doing this exercise correctly—you may hurt yourself or become more **Fast and Wiggly**, or **Slow and Tired**!)

Directions

- ★ Sit with your feet crossed or in a chair with your feet flat on the floor.
- ★ Push your bottom up from either the floor, or from the seat of the chair with flat palms.
- ★ Hold for five to ten seconds.

FINGER PULL



Lock your two hands together by your fingertips, and hold for ten seconds.

This exercise can really help you feel where your fingers and hands are by giving you **proprioceptive input**, which can then help calm you down whether you are feeling **Fast and Emotional** or **Fast and Wiggly**.

I often tell kids that I work with: "Put all of your bad feelings into your finger pull, and keep pulling until you pull the feeling right out of your body!" Pull really hard until you want to stop. Give it a try, I bet this becomes one of your favorites!

Directions

- ★ Put one hand palm up, one hand palm down (both facing each other).
- ★ Touch fingertips together (except thumbs), and pull them apart as hard as you can.
- ★ Hold for as long as your body needs to (five to ten seconds, at least).



BUBBLE BREATH



Breathe in for five seconds, out for five seconds.

This is a good exercise to do, whether you are feeling: **Slow and Tired**, **Fast and Emotional**, or **Fast and Wiggly**. Getting oxygen to your brain can help you think better and make smarter choices, as well.

Directions

- ★ Imagine you have a wand of bubbles. When you breathe out, be careful not to pop it!
- ★ Place one flat palm on your heart, one flat palm on your belly.
- ★ Breathe in through your nose and hold your breath for five seconds.
- ★ Breathe out a large "bubble" through pursed lips, blow out and hold for five seconds.



These ideas are taken from 'Kids' Guide to Staying Awesome and In Control' by Lauren Brukner.

For further support, look at the 'Supporting your child's mental health during the school closure' slides on the school website.

Supporting home learning:

For those not already aware, **Twinkl** are currently offering 30 days of free access to all teachers and parents. Sign up at www.twinkl.co.uk/offer using the offer code CVDTWINKLHELPS.

They have a seemingly infinite selection of powerpoints, worksheets, games and other activities to support learning across all subjects and all key stages, plus materials designed specifically for various aspects of SEND.



This resource pack, for example, would be great for children with dyslexia or dyslexic tendencies. Found simply by typing 'dyslexia' into the Twinkl search bar.

For further advice and ideas on supporting children with SEND at home, look at 'SEND support during school closure' on the school website.

Support from your ELSA:

Our lovely Mrs Dhimi, who is our trained Emotional Literacy Support Assistant, has contributed these thoughts and ideas.

Special treasures...

I talk to many children about the importance of positive thinking, this activity is a way of putting into practice a positive thought. You will create a positive memory just by doing this activity and it will be there to remember when you need it.

I want you to think about your favourite things and where you could keep them.

It could be a drawer, a cupboard, a jewellery box, a sports bag, a DIY box, a shed, a handbag, etc. Give this special place a clean, asking for help if needed.

Before you start to put back your amazing treasures, make it extra special, such as a nice bit of fabric, tissue paper, wrapping paper, a cool towel or a coat of paint, etc.

Now replace your items back carefully, but leave one special item to one side.

Try to remember how you came by this item, for what purpose and why you love it.

Now relax for five minutes and remind yourself how lucky you are to have this item.

I'm sure this little activity will help you recall a very special moment that will lift your spirits.



For those with pets...

The other night, I couldn't sleep. Lots of thoughts were swirling through my head. Then something amazing happened, I cuddled my cat and he settled into his usual gentle purr... and within minutes I was gently eased into a lovely sleep. This left me thinking that we should all take time to do something for our amazing pets, whether they have legs, no legs, fur or fins.

I suggest you could groom them, wash them if you can, play with them more if possible.

You could clean their special area, whether it's a blanket, a bed, a cage, a tank or just make their spot tidy.

While doing this it would be a good time to think about all the lovely thoughts and feelings they bring to you.

Some pets may make you feel loved, some may make you laugh, some may be beautiful, some may be amazing to watch such as a fish tank and some may make you feel comforted like my cat.

Ask an adult to help if possible, but remember to think about how wonderful and lucky you are to have this extra special connection with your pet.



Mrs Dhimi also recommends the book 'The Boy, The Mole, The Fox and The Horse' by Charlie Mackesy for its beautiful illustrations and comforting words in this unsettling time.

The children who are supported directly by Mrs Dhimi in school have received support packs with ideas and strategies to work on. Please get in touch if you would like more information.

Kind regards and warm wishes for the Easter break,

Mrs Littlewood
Inclusion Leader