



Miss Suzanne Henderson - Assistant Headteacher- Senior Mental Health Lead

# Hopton Primary School Wellbeing Newsletter

January 2023



Mrs Katrina Bates - Assistant Headteacher- Senior Mental Health Lead

## Wellbeing and Mental Health at Hopton Primary School

At Hopton Primary, we are committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of pupils, parents, carers and staff.

Wellbeing and mental health is promoted in school for our pupils through our PSHE curriculum, the use of Zones of Regulation, small group wellbeing work, individual wellbeing work, wellbeing workshops and assemblies.

## Parent Workshops - Northorpe Hall

Rosa Forrest from Northorpe Hall is coming into school to offer two workshops for parents.

On Friday 13<sup>th</sup> January she is offering a workshop on self-esteem and resilience and on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> January there will be a workshop on wellbeing in a digital age.

Places are very limited, if you would like to attend please email, [suzanne.henderson@kirkleeseducation.uk](mailto:suzanne.henderson@kirkleeseducation.uk)

## 5 Ways to Wellbeing

### We're talking mental health.

Following the Five Ways to Wellbeing can protect and improve our mental health. If you can't do all five every day, just start with one - you'll soon see a difference!



#### CONNECT

Good relationships help our brains produce chemicals that make us happy. They give us a sense of belonging and self-worth.



#### BE ACTIVE

Physical activity is good for our minds and bodies, reducing stress and anxiety and boosting confidence.



#### KEEP LEARNING

Learning new things gives you new perspectives on the world around you and opens doors to new opportunities.



#### GIVE TO OTHERS

Acts of giving and kindness towards other people or in your community create positive feelings and a sense of reward.



#### TAKE NOTICE

Stopping to take in the present moment can give a more balanced outlook on life and help keep us from worrying about the past or future.

## FOCUS ON: Resilience

### What is resilience?

Resilience is **the ability to 'bounce back' after challenges and tough times.**

For children, challenges and tough times include experiences like starting at a new school, moving house, or welcoming a sibling into the family. They can also include serious experiences like being bullied, family breakdown, family illness or death. Children build resilience over time through experience. You can help your child learn skills and develop resilience by having a warm, supportive relationship with them.

### Why is resilience good for children?

Children who are resilient can **recover from setbacks and get back to living their lives more quickly.** And when children overcome setbacks and problems, it builds their confidence and helps them feel more capable the next time a problem comes up.

Resilient children are often good at solving problems and learning new skills. This is because they're more willing to try again even if things don't go the way they want the first time.

And when things don't go well and children feel anxious, sad, disappointed, afraid or frustrated, resilience helps them **understand that these uncomfortable emotions usually don't last forever.** They can experience these emotions and know they'll be OK before too long.

Resilient children are less likely to avoid problems or deal with them in unhealthy ways, like getting defensive or aggressive or intentionally hurting themselves. Resilient children are also likely to have better physical and mental health than children who struggle to be resilient.

### Relationships

Relationships are the foundation of your child's resilience.

Your child's most important relationships are with you and their other main caregivers. Strong relationships with you and other carers helps your child feel loved, safe and secure. This sense of safety and security gives your child the confidence to explore their world and to recover from any setbacks they experience.

Your child's relationships with grandparents, aunties and uncles, early childhood educators and teachers, and friends are also important. These family and community connections give your child a sense of belonging and the feeling that they're valued. These feelings help to build your child's confidence and resilience.

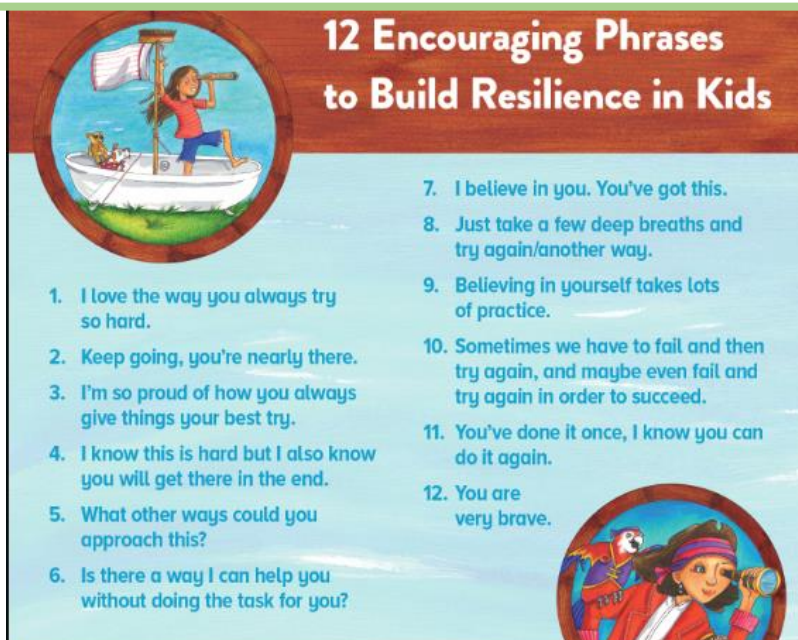
## Building resilience in children

**Children learn resilience through experience.** Each time your child overcomes a problem, it builds their confidence in their ability to handle the next challenge.

Here are some ways you can build your child's resilience:

- Support your child but try not to solve every minor problem or disappointment. For example, if your child doesn't get invited to a birthday party or didn't get what they want for their birthday, you could talk about how they feel instead of trying to fix the problem.
- Avoid predicting and preventing problems for your child. This might mean letting your child hand in homework that's wrong or not replacing a broken toy. Overcoming small challenges builds your child's resilience for bigger setbacks.
- Help your child to identify and manage strong emotions. For example, your child might be worried about a family member who's sick. You could say, 'I can see you're really worried about Granddad. It's OK to be worried. But remember we're doing everything we can to help him get better'.
- Encourage your child to have another go when things don't work out the first time they try something. Praise your child for trying, no matter the result. You could say 'I'm proud of you for finishing the race' or 'Well done for giving it another go'.
- Build your child's self-compassion. Self-compassion helps your child deal with disappointment, failures or mistakes by being kind to themselves. In turn, this helps them to move on from difficult experiences.
- Make it a habit to recognise and acknowledge when things are going well. For example, during family meals you could each share one positive thing from your day.
- Help your child to develop problem-solving skills in an age-appropriate way. For example, if a child at school says or does something unkind to your child, role-play or mind map how your child might respond next time.
- Find a positive role model who has experienced similar challenges to your child. For example, your child might find support in an older friend whose parents have separated or who has lost a family member.

(adapted from raisingchildren.net)



### 12 Encouraging Phrases to Build Resilience in Kids

1. I love the way you always try so hard.
2. Keep going, you're nearly there.
3. I'm so proud of how you always give things your best try.
4. I know this is hard but I also know you will get there in the end.
5. What other ways could you approach this?
6. Is there a way I can help you without doing the task for you?
7. I believe in you. You've got this.
8. Just take a few deep breaths and try again/another way.
9. Believing in yourself takes lots of practice.
10. Sometimes we have to fail and then try again, and maybe even fail and try again in order to succeed.
11. You've done it once, I know you can do it again.
12. You are very brave.

# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about SOCIAL MEDIA & MENTAL HEALTH

An estimated one-third of children have a social media account, so it's important that trusted adults know what content young people are consuming, what they're posting and the interactions they're having. On social media, it can be easy to go down 'rabbit holes' that aren't beneficial to our wellbeing. As platforms grapple with managing such 'legal but harmful' content, lives are being impacted – sometimes to tragic effect. We might be daunted by the scale of the tech giants and their content which so enthralls young people, but we can still help children to be aware of their mental wellness: recognising when something isn't OK ... and knowing what to do about content that upsets them.

## 1. UNDERSTAND THE ALGORITHM

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Algorithms rank content by user interest: someone who regularly interacts with sports news, say, will see the latest results at the top of their feed. Likewise, if a user browses content that can cause harm, that's what will be recommended to them in future. Someone who's had a bad day and looks for posts which reflect their mood will find similar content being suggested to them more and more.

## 2. AVOID THE MAIN FEEDS

Avoiding the default feeds on social media platforms limits the amount of recommended content that's shown. Users can opt to only scroll through the accounts they follow, use restricted modes, or highlight posts that they don't want to see more of. Explore the platform safety settings to see how you can take control of what your child's phone shows them when they open the app.

## 3. DISCUSS WHAT THEY'VE SEEN

Chatting about what your child's seen online keeps you aware of the content they're interacting with. Don't assume that platforms are screening out inappropriate material, or even that your child would recognise content as being harmful. Discuss who they follow, what posts they like and what comes up in their feeds: if alarm bells ring, it could be time for a more in-depth talk or to seek support.

## 4. LEARN HOW TO HIDE CONTENT

If your child stumbles across unsuitable content on social media, there's the option to hide that post as well as indicating you'd prefer any similar material not to be suggested in future. On some platforms, you might also be able to block posts that contain specific words, which is an excellent way to start taking control of what your child sees online.

## 5. SET DAILY LIMITS

Phones and most apps can tell you how much they're being used. Spending too long online can mean a child misses out on other activities that are important to all-round wellbeing. You could set some family rules – for everyone to follow – around device use, such as screen time limits and tech-free spaces: involving your child in creating this agreement makes them more likely to stick to it.

## 6. MONITOR THEIR ACTIVITY

Keeping a discreet eye on how your child is using social media can help ensure they're not entering potentially dangerous situations. As they grow up, of course, children need space to exercise their independence – but you can still occasionally ask to see what they're looking at. Be transparent about your own social media use and try not to sound judgemental about your child's.

## 7. TURN OFF PUSH NOTIFICATIONS

Even for adults, it's tempting to check an email or message as soon as the alert sound pings. Push notifications encourage people to open their apps and spend time on their device, so turning them off will help your child to practise mindful use of tech. Most of us have other things that we need to focus on as a priority – and those notifications will still be there later, when we have more time.

## 8. USE DEVICES TOGETHER

Giving children internet-enabled devices and complete freedom to explore platforms on their own can result in exposure to hugely damaging content. You could consider making a particular area at home a designated space to use phones, tablets and so on – making it much easier to monitor what content your child is viewing and (if necessary) steer them away from any potentially harmful paths.

## 9. ENCOURAGE OTHER ACTIVITIES

Mental health professionals often highlight the importance of exercise, quality time with loved ones, a balanced diet and restful sleep for our mental wellbeing. Spending hours on social media can cause us to sacrifice other activities that our brains need to feel well – so encouraging your child to put down their phone and enjoy something that doesn't involve a screen can be immensely beneficial.

## 10. TALK ABOUT PEER PRESSURE

Most platforms default children's accounts to private, so only people they've accepted as friends can see their posts. This reduces the risk of bullying or unkind comments, but – just like offline life – the digital world can still make children feel as if they need to act or look a certain way to fit in. Talk to your child about peer pressure, and listen to any concerns so you can provide the support they need.

## Meet Our Expert

Shazia Sarwar-Azim is executive headteacher at a specialist primary school and, as an emotional therapy coach, works with school leaders to focus on the SEND, mental health and wellbeing agenda. A passionate advocate for vulnerable learners, Shazia is a Fellow of the Chartered College of Teaching and the author of *The Rainbow Within*, a book which supports children with SEMH needs.



Sources: <https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-55026950>  
<https://www.fox.com/welg/algorithm-social-media-algorithm/>



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