

Wellbeing Newsletter

Alphington Primary School

December 2023



Message from the Headteacher

Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome to the latest edition of our Wellbeing Newsletter. We all know that Christmas can be an amazing, magical time of year but it can also be a difficult and challenging time for some people, so we have some advice and support that may be useful.

Winter Wellness

Tip 1

Keep to a daily routine – with shorter, colder days, it can feel harder to keep our normal activities going. We usually feel better if we're up and dressed, eating at regular mealtimes and going to bed at the same time.

Tip 2

Stay connected – a friendly natter by phone, online or meeting friends in a way that feels comfortable to us can help us feel connected.

Tip 3

Do things you enjoy – in the bad weather, it is even more important to take time to enjoy ourselves each day. It can also be fun to try something new, get creative or dust off an old hobby.

Tip 4

Get outside for some sunlight and exercise – try to get outside for at least 20 minutes of exercise each day.

Tip 5

Look after your physical health. Keep warm – Public Health England recommends that indoor temperatures should be between 18 and 21°. Eat well – eat regular, nourishing, hot meals including plenty of vegetables. Stay hydrated – drink 6 to 8 glasses of fluid each day and have regular hot drinks on cold days. Sleep well – if you're struggling to get a good nights sleep, check out NHS Get Help Sleeping guide. Keep active – it's important to keep moving. We can walk the stairs or try an online exercise or yoga video.

Tip 6

Make a plan – make a plan for days of celebration that are special to you.

Tip 7

Relax and unwind – Take some time each day to relax. Find what works for you, whether that's watching the bird table, caring for your plants, going for a run, or getting up and moving to your favourite festive tunes.

Tip 8

Drink sensibly – taking a mindful approach to what we're drinking can have huge benefits for our physical and emotional health.

Tip 9

Write it down – keeping a journal can be a great way to explore and organise our thoughts. It can help us plan our day, express gratitude and understand our worries and feelings.

Tip 10

Ask for help – if we're struggling, it's ok to ask for help if we need to, there's always someone to talk to. Ringing or texting a helpline can help us feel better too.

12 Top Tips for Children and Young People to Enjoy a TECH-FREE CHRISTMAS

The Christmas holidays are tailor made for families to enjoy relaxed quality time in each other's company – but with distractions like pinging phone notifications, the lure of games consoles and online Boxing Day sales, that can be more difficult than it sounds. Staying off our phones, laptops and tablets, however, can really help us to appreciate the things that genuinely matter at this special time of year. Follow our 12 top tips for a tech-free festive season ... Yule be glad you did! Merry Christmas!

CHRISTMAS CRAFTING

Get out the paper, glue and scissors and have a go at hand-making cards or gift tags. You could also create your own decorations to add a uniquely personal touch to the Christmas tree.

NATURE QUEST

Try a scavenger hunt in the garden or your local park. Challenge yourself and your family to find natural treasures that are symbolic of this time of year – like holly or pinecones, say.

CAROL KARAOKE

Sing your hearts out with a Christmas carol karaoke night. Pick out your favourite tunes and enjoy a musical celebration with family and friends.

WANDER DOWN MEMORY LANE

How about making a scrapbook filled with your favourite memories from Christmases gone by? Unleash your creativity while you enjoy reliving those magical holiday moments.

TRY REFLECTIVE JOURNALLING

Jot down your thoughts, feelings and reflections on the holiday in a notebook or diary – you could also list some of your main goals for the new year.

WRAP IT UP

Take time to get inventive with some luxurious gift wrapping. Break out the wrapping paper, ribbons and bows to make parcelling up those presents into a creative adventure.

WALK IN A WINTER WONDERLAND

Delight in the great outdoors with some gentle walks over the holiday. The family can all wrap up warm as you add to your step count and savour the crisp winter air together.

BE A SEASONAL CHEF

Get the whole family working together in the kitchen for some Christmas cooking. Choose a recipe and whip up a festive feast that all of you can enjoy.

ENJOY A CHRISTMAS STORY

Christmas is a perfect time for sparkling stories. Get cosy and lose yourself in a brilliant book, from Dickens to Dr Seuss or a more modern favourite by Chris van Allsburg or Tom Fletcher.

SNOWY SCULPTURES

If we're fortunate enough to get a white Christmas this year, make the most of the opportunity by having a family snowman-building competition!

GAMES NIGHT GALA

Dive into some old-school fun with a tech-free games night. Classic board games and card games have stood the test of time for a reason!

GOODWILL TO ALL

You and your family could spend a day volunteering – perhaps at a food bank or helping a local charity. After all, kindness and thinking of others are part of what Christmas is all about.

Meet Our Expert

Mirva Ahmed design and deliver the UK's only specialist postgraduate mental health qualifications. They also provide training and support to education organisations and local authorities – empowering school leaders and staff with the knowledge and tools to shape their settings into inclusive communities where the mental health of pupils and personnel is prioritised.



The National College

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#WakeUpWednesday

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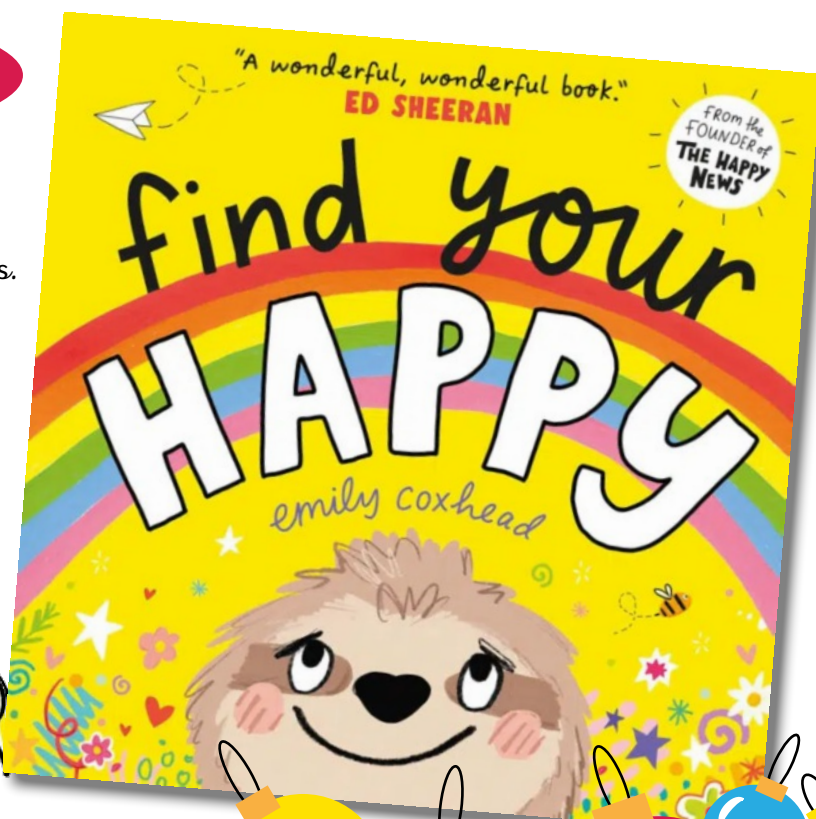
Book recommendation

Find your happy by Emily Coxhead

A joyful and imaginative book all about feelings.

Feeling happy is a wonderful thing!
But do you ever feel sad or angry, frightened or shy? Everyone does sometimes, but with a little help from Sloth and the people you love, there is always a way to FIND YOUR HAPPY!

Full of vibrant illustrations and practical ideas, this is an accessible, friendly and uplifting book of feelings.



How Parents and Carers can cope this Christmas

Christmas always has the potential to be a difficult time of year for families and children, especially for those who have experienced adversity. There are lots of pressures on parents and carers to create a 'perfect Christmas' for children. However, because of COVID-19 and the wide ranging implications that it has had, many families will have experienced bereavements and financial hardship this year. Furthermore, many families will not be able to see loved ones during the festive break, and opportunities for parents to see friends and seek support will also be limited. Additionally, we have heard about the increase in domestic violence and mental health problems during the last year, which will have had an impact on many families.

Include the children in the planning

Ryan Lowe explains that it is useful to start planning things that you can do during the festive time with your children. Even very young children have great ideas, and if children are involved in the planning they are more likely to be engaged with the process.

Help children understand the significant financial hardships this year

Parents may need to prepare children in advance that presents and outings may be different this year. It is important to allow children to feel sad that things won't be the same, but then it's possible to start planning what can be done.

Put value back into non-material things

Playing board games or making a family board game together, making up extra questions that are particular to your family.

Connect with family and friends even when you cannot be together

You could send other families and friends the same board or card games that you are buying or making for your own children, then you can play the games over video link if you're not able to see them face to face this year. Get Creative

As Christmas is likely to be spent mostly at home this year, you can go to town on the decorations and make the house feel festive. There are lots of resources for creative craft ideas available freely online. As parents are likely to have more time with their children during this holiday period, it is an opportunity to try out different crafts at home and enjoy some special time with your children.

Be honest with the children

If there has been a big loss or bereavement this year then it would be better to include it in the thinking and planning rather than try to pretend it didn't happen. Include a place for prayers for loved ones, or a time to think about the losses that took place, and include some time for reflection on the differences in family life now that things are different.



15 free things to do at Christmas

1. Check out your local Christmas lights

There's no better way to feel the Christmas cheer than seeing a brightly lit festive holiday light display. Most cities offer some sort of Christmas light display in the town centre, so find yours and take a visit to get into the festive spirit.

2. Go on a Christmas light hunt

When it gets dark, take a walk around your neighbourhood to look at some seasonal decor for a free light show. See how many festive displays and Santa pop-ups you can spot while you're out and enjoy spending time with your loved ones discussing which houses are your favourites.

3. Visit a church

Many churches have concerts, musicals, plays, candle lighting services, and other programs throughout the festive period. Take a look to see what's happening in your local area.

4. Wander around your local Christmas market

There are tons of wonderful markets dotted across the country filled with festive decorations, foodie treats and handcrafted gifts. Find one that's local to you and browse the crafts and gifts to really get a feel of the festive season.

5. Go out for a wintry walk

It may be tempting to hide under your duvet during the colder months but why not explore the great outdoors? Nature can look so different in the cold so bundle up and take a walk through a scenic trail. You might catch a sprinkling of snow.

6. Go carolling

"The best way to spread Christmas cheer is singing loud for all to hear." So, round up a group of friends or family and take a trip to your neighbours' houses and sing your favourite Christmas carols.

7. Christmas movie night

You can't go through the Christmas season without watching at least one holiday favourite (or ten), and there's nothing better than curling up and watching a movie on a cold winter night. Make a watchlist of films you want to get through before Christmas. Let each family member choose a favourite holiday flick to watch with the family. Wrap up under a blanket with some hot chocolate to make it extra cosy.

8. Go on a winter scavenger hunt

Put together a winter scavenger hunt for your kids and have them check off animals, plants, and other wintry things they'll see along the way. This can be a fun way to get children excited about nature.

9. Birdwatching

Thousands of migratory birds come to the UK's shores in the winter. Why not invite birds to your own garden by making your own homemade bird feeder using just pine cones, peanut butter, birdseed and a bit of string?

10. Play Christmas tree eye spy

While on a walk with your children, play eye spy" for all the Christmas trees you see in the windows of houses.

11. Upcycle a Christmas jumper

This Christmas, rather than buying a new jumper, why make your own Christmas jumper instead? Decorate a jumper or sweater that you already own, whether it's a festive or not, and jazz it up with a festive flare.

12. Go stargazing

Some of the most beautiful skies can be seen during the winter. Cold nights generally mean clear night skies – perfect for watching the stars come out. Wrap up warm and take a walk outside in the dark to do a spot of stargazing. With the app, StarView, all you need to do is point it at the sky and it'll identify the stars for you.

13. Collect pine cones

A great festive activity is wrapping up warm and going for a walk in the park to collect pine cones. You can use these to do some fun Christmas crafts, or just pop in a bowl to decorate your house for the festive season.

14. Make a cosy indoor den

Not feeling like going out in the cold? Gather as many pillows, cushions and blankets as you can to build a cosy den indoors to unleash your inner child and keep warm. Cosy up with a good book and a hot drink, or just catch up on some sleep. You could even hang some fairy lights in there to make it even more magical.

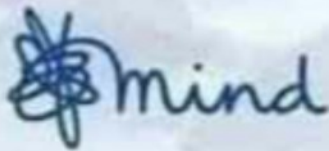
15. Wreath making

Why not decorate for the season by making your own winter wreath? Gather evergreen leaves, branches, pine cones and anything else you can find. Then, use wire to stick on your evergreen leaves and branches and make your own DIY wreath. Make it more festive by adding your own baubles, ribbons or anything you'd like and hang it over the fireplace or on your front door.

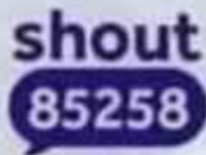


COPING AT CHRISTMAS

Christmas can be tough. That's why it's important to know there's always someone you can talk to.



☎ 0300 123 3393
📞 Helpline
🌐 mind.org.uk



☎ Text SHOUT to 85258
📞 24/7 text service
🌐 giveusashout.org



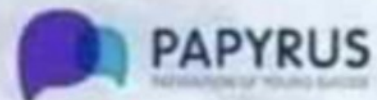
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📞 Helpline for men
🌐 thecalmzone.net



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📞 Under 35s Helpline
🌐 papyrus-uk.org

