January 2024

Dear Parent & Carers,

Last week we dedicated our first day back at school to teaching strategies that help children to manage their mental health in a positive way. Each week we will encourage children to practise some of these strategies in school.  Research shows that when children learn and practise self-regulation skills, they are forming pathways in their brains that increase their ability to manage stress now and in the future.

We recognise that school, family events and friendships can sometimes be an overwhelming experience for children, which can trigger strong emotions and cause children to react without thinking.

Some examples of the strategies we teach children include:

* Mental breaks (e.g. book, colouring, creativity, games).
* Physical break (e.g. dance, walk, stretch).
* Sensory experiences ( e.g. sound, taste, touch, movement)
* Grounding activities (e.g. deep breathing, slow counting, yoga, meditation).
* Social support (e.g. asking for help, talking through their actions with a member of staff and identifying how they can move forward with this emotion).

When it is clear that a child is becoming distressed and overwhelmed, we always find the time to help where we can.  In some instances, staff will ask children to use a strategy to help them feel calmer and happier.

Ultimately, we would like children to recognise when they are struggling and quietly use a strategy that helps them.   During the course of this term, we will create a dedicated section on our school website with more information about the many ways we support children’s mental health in school.

Our best wishes

Mrs Frances Light Rudland

SENDCo and Senior Mental Health Lead