St John Paul II Multi Academy
*Be not afraid*

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**Children's Mental Health Week**
**3rd-9th February.**
**'Know Yourself, Grow Yourself'**

The week of 3rd to 9th February, marks Children's Mental Health Week, and this year's theme is 'Know Yourself, Grow Yourself.' It's a wonderful opportunity for parents and carers to open up conversations with their children about mental health and well-being.

**What does 'Know Yourself, Grow Yourself' mean for our children?**
As children grow, they face new challenges, responsibilities and opportunities to discover who they are. The theme *'Know Yourself, Grow Yourself'* encourages self-awareness and personal growth, two essential building blocks for mental health and well-being.

**Why self-awareness matters**
Self-awareness is the ability to recognise and understand your emotions, strengths, weaknesses, and values. For children, this skill is crucial as they navigate friendships, academic pressures, and personal identity. When children are self-aware, they can:
- **Manage their emotions:** recognise when they're feeling stressed, anxious, or overwhelmed and take steps to cope.
- **Make better decisions:** understand their values and priorities, which helps them avoid peer pressure.
- **Build stronger relationships:** communicate more effectively and empathise with others.

**How personal growth builds resilience and confidence**
Personal growth happens when young people challenge themselves to learn, improve, and step out of their comfort zones. It's about progress, not perfection.
Through personal growth, young people can:
- Develop resilience: learn to bounce back from setbacks and see failure as a stepping stone to success.
- Build confidence: gain a sense of achievement by setting and reaching goals.
- Adopt a growth mindset: believe that abilities and intelligence can improve with effort and persistence.

## HOW CAN PARENTS AND CARERS SUPPORT THIS AT HOME?

PARENTS/CARERS PLAY A VITAL ROLE IN NURTURING SELF-AWARENESS AND PERSONAL GROWTH IN THEIR CHILDREN. HERE ARE A FEW WAYS YOU CAN HELP:

**01.**
**Encourage open conversations:** Talk about emotion. Model self-awareness by sharing your own feelings and how you handle challenges.

**02.**
**Celebrate effort, not just results:** Praise your child for trying their best, even if things don't go perfectly.

**03.**
**Create opportunities for growth:** Let your child take on age-appropriate responsibilities, try new activities, and solve problems independently.

## The importance of sleep in mental health

Sleep plays a vital role in your child's mental health and overall well-being. For primary-aged children, a good night's sleep is essential for emotional balance, learning, and physical health. Yet, with busy schedules, screen time, and excitement about the day ahead, many children don't get the rest they need.

## Why sleep matters for your child

Sleep isn't just about rest— it's when your child's brain and body do some of their most important work. Here's how sleep supports your child's mental health and development:

- I**mproves mood and emotional regulation:** a well-rested child is better equipped to handle frustrations, challenges, and social interactions.
- **Boosts learning and memory:** sleep helps consolidate what your child has learned during the day, making it easier to retain new information.
- **Reduces stress and anxiety:** consistent sleep patterns can lower stress levels, helping your child feel calm and focused.
- **Supports physical health:** sleep strengthens the immune system and promotes healthy growth.

## Signs your child might not be getting enough sleep

It's not always obvious when children are sleep-deprived, but here are some common signs to watch for:

- difficulty waking up in the morning
- frequent mood swings or irritability
- trouble focusing or remembering things at school
- increased hyperactivity or impulsivity.

## TIPS FOR BETTER SLEEP HABITS

**1 Set a consistent bedtime routine**
A predictable schedule helps signal to your child's brain that it's time to wind down.

**2 Limit screen time**
Encourage your child to avoid screens at least an hour before bedtime, as blue light can interfere with sleep.

**3 Create a calm sleep environment**
Keep your child's bedroom cool, quiet, and dark to promote restful sleep.

**4 Encourage relaxation activities**
Reading a book, listening to soft music, or practicing deep breathing can help your child relax before bed.

**5 Model good sleep habits**
Children learn by example, so demonstrating the value of prioritising sleep is crucial.

### HOW MUCH SLEEP DOES YOUR CHILD NEED?

Experts recommend the following sleep durations for primary-aged children:
Ages 6–12: 9–12 hours per night
To determine an appropriate bedtime for your child, start by considering the time they need to wake up in the morning and work backward.
For instance, if your child needs to wake up at 7:00 AM to get ready for school, aim for a bedtime between 7:00 PM and 8:00 PM to ensure they get the recommended amount of sleep for their age.