

# Theddlethorpe Academy

## Safeguarding Update

Term 5: 2023/24

### WHO TO CONTACT IF YOU HAVE A CONCERN ABOUT A CHILD.

If you are worried about a child's safety, please do not hesitate to contact any of the Designated Safeguarding Leads straight away.

The following members of staff are Designated Safeguarding Leads for Theddlethorpe Primary School:

- Mrs Cook (DSL)
- Mrs Bull

They can be contacted via the school office, or by telephone on 01507 353 458.

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For a copy of our school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures please visit the 'Key Policies' page on our [school website](#)

Dear Parents and Carers

May is Mental Health Awareness month and so this issue of the safeguarding newsletter will focus on mental health and anxiety in children and how we can work together to support them. Studies show that children and teens are more stressed today than ever before. This is particularly relevant when we consider that the Y6 SATs are almost upon us, end of year assessments will soon be happening throughout the school and all of the children will be moving on to new classes or schools in a few short weeks

Mrs Cook, Principal / Designated Safeguarding Lead

- The combined pressures of schoolwork, assessments, social-life, sports or other activities, plus lots of screen time have resulted in much higher levels of stress and anxiety among young people.
- We can never completely eliminate stress for our children; in fact shielding them from the difficulties of life won't do them any favours.
- It's far more powerful to raise a resilient child who can bounce back from challenges and maintain a positive mindset.

Since stress is a natural part of life, your goal is to teach your child healthy strategies for coping with it. Start by the following;

- Quiet Hugs: Help your child feel safe by reassuring them that you are there and willing to help.
- Words can sometimes exacerbate anxiety so sitting quietly with lots of cuddles and empathising can often work better.
- See your calm space: Remember a time when you were happy, calm and peaceful. See it in your mind with as much detail as possible. Always use the same calm place to enhance the effect.
- 5x5 Grounding: See 5 things, hear 4 things, touch 3 things, smell 2 things and taste 1 thing.
- Draw your anxiety: Draw a picture of what you are worried about.
- Blow bubbles: Blowing bubbles is a great way to get a child to blow deep breaths. Party blowers or a straw and balled up paper offer other ways to do the same.
- Pet a furry friend: Sitting for 10-15 minutes petting a furry friend is a wonderful way to relieve anxiety and bring some smiles to a child.
- Jumping Jacks: Asking your child to do an exercise forces them to take deep breaths that can reset the anxious feelings.
- Remember past success: Encourage your child to think about the last time they overcame their anxiety. Remind them that they can do this, even though it may be hard.
- Problem solve the fear: Help your child talk through what solutions could be used if their fear were to come to fruition. Knowing they can handle the worst, can help calm the fear.
- Destroy the worry: Have your child write their anxiety on a piece of paper, then tear it up and throw it away.

# What is Mental Health?

We all have mental health. Mental health is about our feelings, our thinking, our emotions and our moods. Looking after our mental health is important.

We all have 'small' feelings every day. These are sometimes strong and overwhelming, whether happy or sad, but they go away before too long. Sometimes we experience 'big' feelings which are strong and overwhelming for a longer period of time. They stop us doing what we want to in our lives.

How can I help my child's mental health?

1. Make conversations about mental health a part of normal life. Anywhere is a good place to talk: in the car, walking the dog or cooking dinner together. Model every day talk about this for example by talking about a TV or book character's feelings.
2. Give your full attention. We all know it's horrible to be half-listened to. Keep eye contact, focus on the child and ignore distractions.
3. Check your body language. Try to keep it open and relaxed and make sure you come down to the child's level.
4. Take it seriously. Don't downplay what the child is saying or tell them they're 'just being silly'. Resist the urge to reassure them that 'everything is/will be fine'.
5. Ask open questions. These will help extend the conversation.
6. Calmly stay with the feelings that arise. It can be our automatic reaction to steer away from difficult emotions.
7. Offer empathy rather than solutions. Show that you accept what they are telling you but don't try to solve every problem.
8. Remember we are all different. Respect and value the child's feelings, even though they may be different from yours.
9. Look for clues about feelings. Listen to the child's words, tone of voice and body language.
10. Some ways to start a conversation about feelings might be: "How are you feeling the moment?" "You don't seem your usual self. Do you want to talk about it?" "I'm happy to listen if you need a chat."

## STEP 1 REFRAME STRESS

Help your child shift from a "stress hurts" mindset to a "stress helps" mindset. Some level of stress is beneficial and presents opportunities for growth.



## STEP 2 SHIFT FROM A FIXED TO A GROWTH MINDSET

Help them look at the situation from a growth mindset perspective: It's not fixed, it can be improved, and they do have the power to influence the situation.



## STEP 3 STOP CATASTROPHIC THINKING

Do the **worst case scenario exercise**. Ask your child, "What's the worst thing that could happen?"

**Caution:** do not dismiss their worry!



## STEP 4 PRACTICE PROBLEM-SOLVING

**Brainstorm solutions**, doing more listening than talking. Think through the positive and negative consequences of each proposed idea, then choose one.



**Keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility**



## STEP 5 TRY STRESS-MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

Use techniques like deep breathing, stretching, listening to music, meditation, and practicing mindfulness.

