

ASPIRE's

Parent/Carer Wellbeing Newsletter



December 2023

Hi Everyone,

Welcome to this term's Wellbeing email, where we hope you'll find lots of useful resources, guidance and ideas for over the Christmas period, as well as looking ahead to 2024!

If you're new to our email - here's an outline of what it's all about...

We send out termly emails with advice, guidance, information and ideas all around Wellbeing, Mental Health and Resilience. The email is designed to offer support to all of our ASPIRE families - pupils, older siblings and our parents/carers. We hope there's something useful for everyone within each email. Particularly at this time of year, we understand it may not be the easiest of times for everyone, so we also have finance advice, self-care tips and free days out over the festive period.

Parent/Carer Resources

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/make-it-count-guide-for-parents-and-carers>

Mental Health.org has some really helpful advice and guidance on their website to support parents/carers to help their children with their wellbeing and mental health. It also highlights further links for resources and guidance. There is an array of publications, from sleeping better to ways to reduce stress, which may be of help to your and/or your family.

The Kent Resilience Hub - now incorporated by the Education People - have devised a toolkit to support parents/carers packaged which costs £20 to access. They are one to look out for, as they often have numerous support webinars and toolkits for parents and carers to access - which every now and then are free!

<https://kentresiliencehub.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Wellbeing-Toolkit-for-Parents-and-Carers-Webinar-Series.pdf>



Resources for older siblings

There are a number of apps, websites and links to advise and guide teenagers. Stem4 has some helpful advice and guidance free of charge, as well as some resources that you can pay for. But I have included it as the free resources are really useful, without having to reach for the debit card.

<https://stem4.org.uk/>

Mind is a well-known website which offers free support, advice and guidance for teenagers and parents/carers. It also offers support for those supporting someone else. They are a Bupa supported charity that you can get in contact with if you need further help or support.

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/for-children-and-young-people/>

Every Mind Matters by the NHS is a super initiative that offers advice and guidance, as well as an array of videos to help teenagers with their own wellbeing and mental health. The videos are linked below and may be of use to those who are worried and anxious, or are finding 'change' difficult.

<https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/mental-wellbeing-tips/youth-mental-health/#videos>

There's also support and guidance on there in finding ways to find what works for you with regard to mental health. There's lots of information on there, including an 'Urgent Support' tab.

<https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/>

Resources for you

We know how difficult it is to juggle the daily challenges and stresses... whether that's looking after your family, looking after other loved ones, all whilst going out to work. Life is hard sometimes. Below are some links to advice and guidance to help you look after yourself, whilst looking after everyone else; you're important too.

Anna Freud Centre for children and families is a fantastic resource, which offers an array of guidance and information regarding mental health and wellbeing. The link below takes you to the parent/carer self-care page, which highlights exactly what to do and why you should also take care of yourself.

<https://www.annafreud.org/parents-and-carers/self-care-for-parents-and-carers/>

The NHS in Gloucestershire have also published another useful pack about stopping the spread as part of their Every Mind Matters programme. The pdf has some helpful hints and tips of how to look after yourself if you're a busy parent/carer. Published back during the pandemic, it is still very useful with top tips.

<https://www.ghll.org.uk/Parent%20self%20care%20.pdf>

Finance help - the Kent Family hub at the NHS also has a lot of information for families who need support with finances and benefits. There is a list of resources on there, with a number to access the Kent Money Advice Hub. You can also find guidance for those parents and carers with children under 5 and those with school-aged children.

<https://family.kentcht.nhs.uk/support/your-family/family-finances-and-benefits/#:~:text=Visit%20kentmoneyadvicehub.com%20or%20call,tax%2C%20housing%20and%20debt%20advice.>

Southern Water Financial Hardship Fund has been set up to provide additional assistance to individuals who are experiencing financial difficulty. Through this fund, they offer three types of assistance:

- A one-off bill reduction (of up to 50%)
- A debt write-off (of up to £2,000)
- A grant towards specific home appliances & furniture (of up to £1,000)

To qualify, you must be able to demonstrate significant financial hardship, either long or short term, or challenging personal circumstances that have a financial impact. There is a short online form to complete and they will let you know the outcome within six weeks.

<https://www.southernwater.co.uk/water-for-life/community/customer-and-community-grants/customer-hardship-fund>

There is also funding and Support for Individuals

And a reminder that KCF has a list of alternative funders and support, [download here](#).

KCF Funding for Individuals - their funds are open for nominations all year round, more info and how to [apply here](#).

New Year, New Application Process

In the new year, the KCF application process will go online, rather than via a word document. This is part of their new system through which we process all applications and nominations for funding.

Further support:

We've also added the link for 'Free School Meal' application link.

We know Christmas holidays are just about to begin, but you may want to click the link for Free School Meals ready for January - you can check to see if you qualify with the eligibility tool. *Please always feel free to ask your school office if you need help with this.*

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/free-school-meals>

If you already have a child/ren who are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM), then there is a holiday club place for them from 18th December to 21st December 2023. See the flier below for details and the locations around Maidstone.



December 18-21 2023

Schools Out!

Holiday Club

If you receive free school meal (FSM) vouchers from Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF) you are eligible for a place at our Schools Out Holiday Club.

Schools Out Holiday Club provides children the opportunity to participate in a range of **sports & fitness** and **arts & craft** activities. The club is **FREE** and open to children aged between 4 - 12. Sessions run for **4 hours** between **10:00 - 14:00**.

Schools Out Holiday Club December 18-21 2023
At the following locations:

Location	Places Available
South Borough Primary School, Tovil, Maidstone	30 places
Tree Tops Primary Academy, Brighthelm Lane, Maidstone	40 places
Greenfields Community Primary School, Shepreth, Maidstone	40 places

Reserve your place today at: www.holidayactivities.com

stonesct.org.uk **STONES** in the community

Festive fun for the family

Visit Kent and Kent Attractions are websites which always have some wonderful ideas all year around - below is the link that showcases everything to do in Kent this festive season. We've even added Christmas trails.

<https://www.visitkent.co.uk/visit-kent-blog/christmas-trails/>

<https://kentattractions.co.uk/outing-ideas/christmas/>

With money not always in abundance, especially at this time of the year, the link below highlights some activities that cost very little, or don't cost a penny.

<https://seekent.co.uk/free-family-festive-events-in-kent/>

We've also included a list of Christmas markets in and around Kent, which you could just pop along to for a day out and browse!

Festive Markets across Kent:

<https://www.kentonline.co.uk/whats-on/news/times-and-dates-of-kent-farmer-s-markets-this-christmas-278565/>

Or if you'd rather be snuggled up indoors making, baking and crafting, then here's 30 Christmas activities that could be a lot of fun to do, as well as some tree decorations to make in the lead up to the big day.

<https://www.redbookmag.com/life/mom-kids/how-to/g3780/christmas-activities-kids/>

<https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/holidays/christmas-ideas/g34112389/christmas-crafts-for-kids/>

And these 12 days of Christmas activities are absolutely free!

<https://www.familyeducation.com/fun/christmas-activities-traditions/12-days-fun-cheap-christmas-activities-families>

And finally, these are all local events happening in and around our local villages:

Family Festive Fanfare

Saturday 16th December 2023

1:30-4:30pm (concert starts at 3pm)

Maidstone Grammar School for Girls, Buckland Road, Maidstone, ME16 0SF

Free parking on site

Book online and save up to £10 per family compared to on the day prices:

£12 for adults (£15 on the day)

£8 for seniors and children aged 5+ (£10 on the day)

£30 for a family of four (£40 on the day)

Under 5s get in FREE!

www.maidstonewindsymphony.org

What better way to celebrate
than by sending your Christmas
cards with us!

Post your Christmas cards for the Kingswood
Village in this postbox for a donation and the
Leeds and Kingswood Beavers/Cubs and Scouts
will deliver them over the next few weeks!
Final delivery is:
Saturday 23rd December 10am followed by
tea/coffee and mince pies in the Scout hut
afterwards!

Beavers/Cubs and Scouts will be raising money
for their next camp!

#SkillsForLife

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Scouts
Leeds and Kingswood

ST MARGARET'S CHURCH, BROOMFIELD

CAROLS AT BROOMFIELD

Sunday 10 December

at 3.30pm

Please come along and bring the children
Mulled wine and mince pies after the service

We hope we've covered a lot of useful information and guidance in this term's email.

Don't forget you can get in touch with your school regarding any support you may need via your school's office, or via our dedicated wellbeing email:

Kingswood - 01622 842674

Ulcombe - 01622 842903

Leeds & Broomfield - 01622 861398

Platts Heath - 01622 850316

Email:

wellbeing@aspire-kent.org.uk

We wish every one of our ASPIRE families a safe and Merry Christmas and here's to 2024!

Take care,
The ASPIRE WMH&R Team

