

An important message for Essex schools from our Public Health and Healthy Schools Team

Subject: Mental Health and Internet Safety
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Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service (ECFWS) supports children, families, schools and communities to address current physical health, social, emotional and financial issues that may affect the healthy development and future outcomes of young people.

Each month, we promote and support specific local, national and international campaigns by providing information and resources to schools, communities and organisations that can improve health and wellbeing for all. Our campaigns can be interactive with real-life practical learning examples, including web links to resources, which can be used in the classroom or at home.

This month, we are focusing our campaign on **Mental Health and Internet Safety**.

The charity Place2Be has evidence to suggest that one in eight children and young people have a diagnosable mental health problem, and many continue to have these problems into adulthood. Over half of all mental ill health starts before the age of 14 so it is vital that they receive support at an early age. [Children's Mental Health Week](#) (3-9 February 2020) provides an opportunity for us to understand, raise awareness and support the children and young people that we work with. This year the theme is 'Find Your Brave', the aim is to encourage children to take small brave steps every day. Bravery could be about sharing worries and asking for help when you need it, trying something new or making the right choices.

In addition to this, we also want to raise awareness of [Safer Internet Day](#) on 11th February. The year's campaign aims to promote safe, responsible and positive use of digital technology for children and young people, which will always contribute to a healthy body and mind.

Family Wellbeing

The theme of this year's Children's Mental Health Week is 'Find your Brave' and it takes place from 3-9 February. Bravery isn't about coping alone or holding things in; it's about finding positive ways to deal with things that might be difficult, overcoming physical and mental challenges and looking after yourself. As parents and carers, you have a hugely important role in helping them to develop their ability to cope with life's challenges as they grow. Encourage your child to share their worries, ask for help and try something new. Click [here](#) for top tips on how to help your child 'Find their Brave' and get involved in Children's Mental Health Week

Worried about your child's mental health?

Here are a few simple ways you can encourage them to look after both their mind and body:

- Chat with your child about what you do to look after your body and mind, from walking the dog to turning your phone off before bed.
- Praise your child for what they do to look after their body and mind – even if it's small.
- Remind them that there's no such thing as a perfect body or mind – and no one is perfectly healthy!
- Cooking a meal, sitting down for a family dinner, or going for a walk together can be a great way to stay connected and have fun.

If you think your child is unhappy or if you are worried about their behaviour, it's easy to be hard on yourself and think you aren't doing a good job. The charity Young Minds provides a helpful [Parents Survival Guide](#) that includes helpful tips to support your child if you are worried about their mental health.

Safer Internet Day

The best tool to support your child in leading a happy and safe life online is open conversation. Childnet International have produced a [Parent's and Carers Guide: Let's Talk about Life Online](#) to help you begin discussions.

The UK Safer Internet Centre also provides a pack of downloadable [resources](#) to help you talk to your child about the issue of online identity in a digital age in a safe, responsible and respectful way. The resources include a film, how to make an online safety plan, conversation starters and fun things to do as a family.

References

Please use these references to further your reading and find out more information on Children's Mental Health and Safer Internet use:

1. Children Mental Health Week (2020) <https://www.childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk/schools>
2. UK Safer Internet Centre (2020) Online Safety Tips, Advice and Resources. Available at <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/safer-internet-day/2020>
3. Place2Be (2020) <https://www.childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk/schools-and-youth-groups/>
4. Mentally Healthy Schools (2020) <https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/about/>
5. The Power Project (2019) [https://schools.essex.gov.uk/pupils/Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Information Portal for Schools/Documents/POWER%20Project%20LeafletV3.pdf](https://schools.essex.gov.uk/pupils/Emotional_Wellbeing_and_Mental_Health_Information_Portal_for_Schools/Documents/POWER%20Project%20LeafletV3.pdf)
6. Childline (2019). Provides information and support on mental health. Available at: www.childline.org.uk/
7. YoungMinds (2019) Parents Survival Guide. Available at www.youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/parents-survival-guide
8. UK Safer Internet Centre (2020) Resources for primary and secondary schools. Available at: <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/safer-internet-day/safer-internet-day-2020/i-am-educator>
9. Childnet International (2020) Parent's and Carer's Guide: Let's Talk about Life Online. Available at: <https://www.childnet.com/resources/lets-talk-about-life-online>
10. UK Safer Internet Centre(2020) Resources for parents <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/safer-internet-day/safer-internet-day-2020/i-am-parent-or-carer>

To find out more information about us and the wide range of services we offer, please visit www.essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk

We are always looking for ways to improve and provide you with information that is beneficial and relevant to you. We value your opinion and would love to hear your feedback on our briefings.

Please send your reply to Essex.Communications@virginicare.co.uk

