



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Subject spotlight
Wellbeing Resources
PSHE and Social
Learning updates
Important dates
Useful resources
Activities at OTS

A MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

Zoe Ramshaw

“Shoot for the moon.
Even if you miss, you'll
land among the stars.”

- Les Brown

April has come and gone very quickly but we have managed to pack in lots of learning and activities once again.

The Geography field trip to QE Olympic park went very well and the students and staff I spoke to all said they had a really good day, despite the cold weather.

I have been really impressed walking around the school this month. Students have all been really working hard to be in school and to be in class as much as they can. The year 10 students are all working towards our first ever Number and Measure exam and the year 11s are working hard on preparing for their GCSE's which start very soon.

We know that exams are going to be a difficult time for most students, but everyone here will support along the way. Any students not taking exams this year will support by being quiet in the corridors when exams are happening.

Let's hope the sunshine starts shining in May.

SUBJECT SPOTLIGHT: GEOGRAPHY

On March 27th students went on a Geography field trip to visit Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in Stratford. Here they were given a tour of the area by two excellent local guides, who taught the students about the history of the area, its use during the Games of 2012 and how it was transformed into parklands with wildlife, biodiversity and sustainability.

Despite it being a cold and cloudy day, the students very much enjoyed the trip, and finished the day by getting warm with a hot chocolate and lunch inside the Velodrome.



WELLBEING RESOURCES

5 ways to Take care of yourself during exams

EAT WELL & STAY HYDRATED
It is essential that you provide your body with necessary vitamins and minerals. So be sure to eat a variety of nutritious foods and drink plenty of water.
Some exam superfoods are: berries, nuts and dark chocolate for a treat!

GET REGULAR EXERCISE
Just 10-30 minutes of exercise every day, such as walking or yoga can help boost your mood and improve your health through mindfulness practice. For example, deep breathing exercises.

GET ENOUGH SLEEP
Aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep each night. Sleep is essential for your body's recovery and mental health.
Helpful sleep aids are: brown noise, lavender essential oil, chamomile tea.

MAKE TIME FOR HOBBIES
It may seem impossible when you're constantly studying, but try to make time for activities you love as this will help regulate your mood and leave you feeling more refreshed before your next revision session.

TALK ABOUT YOUR FEELINGS
Whether you're feeling anxious, low or even excited about your upcoming exams, it's always helpful to talk to someone about it, or use journaling as an outlet.

Good Job!!

Remember, self-care is essential for maintaining your physical and mental well-being, and it's important to prioritise taking care of yourself during this time.

Balance Activity

This activity is helpful for children to identify things they can do to release the pressures of revision and exams.

- Using the wings template, ask children to fill out one side of the butterfly with what needs to get done in their school work (and possible worries).
- Then ask them to think about all the things they do (or could do) to get a good balance in the run up to tests or exams, e.g. playing sport, going out with a friend, reading a good book, watching their favourite programme.
- Some children may not be able to think of many positive activities to do with their time, so it might be good to do this in pairs or small groups.
- Explain the importance of having a good mix to help them relax, de-stress and recharge. And encourage them to put these positive activities into their revision timetable too.
- You could revisit this by asking the children what de-stressing activities they are enjoying and finding helpful each week.



Additional resources

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/professional/resources/staying-mentally-healthy-during-exams/>

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/coping-with-life/exam-stress/>

Lunchtime Clubs

Monday
Crochet Club

Tuesday
Fishkeeping Club

Wednesday
Gardening Club

Thursday
Art Club

Friday
Touch-typing Club

Activities
Every Day
13:25 - 13:55

PSHE AND SOCIAL LEARNING UPDATES

PSHE

This half term our Yr 8 and 9's theme is Celebrating Diversity & Equality where they are exploring discrimination, equality and disabilities.

The Year 10s are exploring the theme of Relationships and Sex Education including the laws of sexual harassment and consent and our Year 11s are thinking about online gaming, gambling and screen addiction.

Please find below a selection link to great websites to support this topic.

SPECIFIC FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS TOPIC CAN BE FOUND HERE:

- <https://www.internetmatters.org>
- <https://gamequitters.com/video-game-addiction-test-for-gamers/>
- <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/young-people/resources-11-19s>
- To find support and advice for young people about a range of issues (0800 1111) www.childline.org.uk
- For advice and a way to anonymously report crime www.fearless.org
- National Cyber Security Center <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/collection/top-tips-for-staying-secure-online>
- A guide to friends for young people <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/coping-with-life/friends/>
- VISIT lgbt.foundation (advice, support and information)
- Equality Advisory Support Services <http://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com>



Parents & guardians, get signed up!



Scan this QR code or go to www.unifrog.org/student and click 'Sign in for the first time' You'll be asked for some details and a Sign up Code. This is what you need:
EMOTparents
After signing up, log into Unifrog using your email address and password via the student sign-in page!



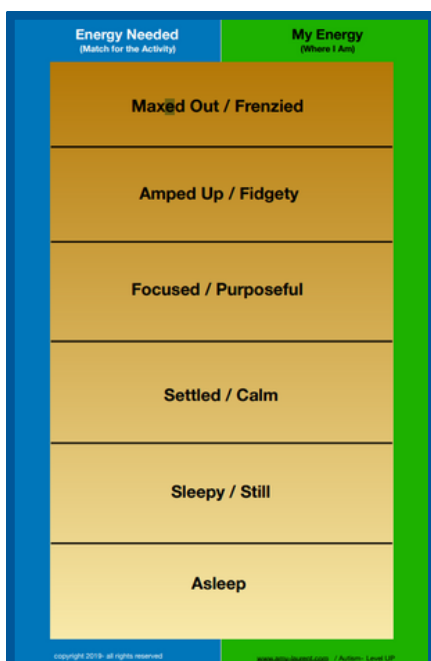
CAREERS

We are excited to see more and more of our students logging into UNIFROG at home and in school.

Unifrog is a fantastic platform to explore careers and next steps after school and we hope you found it useful.

Please do pick up a parent pack at reception or use the information below.

Any problems or questions please do get in touch with Vicki (vicki.marer@orangetreeschool.org).



SOCIAL LEARNING

In social learning this half term our year 8 and 9 students are working towards planning some events in school. We have had some lovely ideas including a tuck shop, selling popcorn, making and selling bathbombs and friendship bracelets. Students will be using their communication skills and working together to design the advertising, buy materials, manage the budget and run the event.

Our Year 10s are planning a trip to the café and achieving their own personal goals they have set for this. Keep an eye out for photos of what our students come up with in our next newsletter.

We are also looking at ways to identifying our energy levels and the times when we need to boost or reduce energy. Students have been using the Leveling Up energy meter approach to do this (see link below).

Zoe, our OT is also looking at interoception and personal care in sessions.

<https://www.autismlevelup.com/#tools>

More Social Learning tools:

Sleep Strategies: https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/communication/communication-tools/social-stories-and-comic-strip-conversations#H2_9

Autism friendly tips for organising and prioritising daily activities:

<https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/behaviour/organising-and-prioritising/all-audiences>

IMPORTANT DATES

7th May 2024

Year 10's Number Measure Exam

8th May 2024

Fishkeeping Club Trip

9th May 2024

Therapy Dog Visiting OTS! (Pets As Therapy)

10th May 2024

First GCSE Exam (Biology)

22nd May

Therapy Coffee Afternoon

27th to 31st May 2024

Half Term

Orange Tree School's Safeguarding Team

If you have any concerns about a child or want to talk to a designated or deputy safeguarding lead, please speak to one of the following:

DSL: Zoe Ramshaw

DDSL KS4: Melanie Nichols

DDSL KS3: Keziah Arthur

ORANGE TREE VALUES

Optimistic

Ready to Learn

Achievement

Nice and kind

Good listening

Effort

Team work

Respectful

Engagement

Empathy and Acceptance

YoungMinds 360 - Staying well during exams

1. Always take a moment just to breathe, whether in the exam, before or after.
2. Remember that school does offer support, just reach out and ask!
3. Keep your work balanced. Spend time revising, but socialise and relax too.
4. Keep a self-care routine so that your revision is the most productive it can be whilst you feel as good as possible.
5. Break up revision with food and exercise to make sure you stay energised.
6. Remember that results do not define you.
7. Find a revision space and style that works for you: silence, background chatter, music with or without lyrics.
8. Work to your own pace – everyone is different in how they work.
9. If you feel nervous about the time pressure of an exam, practice timing yourself when you revise, or try some test papers.
10. Plan in some treats to reward yourself, and celebrate when it's all over!



5 things you can see.



4 things you can hear.



3 things you can touch.



2 things you can smell.



1 thing you can taste.

USEFUL RESOURCES

Authetically Emily Blog

https://www.autheticallyemily.uk/blog/tag/Autism#google_vignette

Blog by a young woman with Autism who writes about mental health, school avoidance, anxiety, tools that have helped her, Autism and the work place and loads more.

Young minds OCD blog

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/blog/how-i-learnt-to-live-with-ocd/>

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

ENCOURAGING OPEN CONVERSATIONS AT HOME

With tricky topics and occasional clashes of opinion, it can be challenging to maintain an environment where children feel able to talk candidly and honestly. However, encouraging such conversations helps to develop trust – making it easier to unpack even sensitive subjects as children get older. Here are our top tips for promoting open conversations at home.

1 CREATE A SAFE SPACE

Criticism, blaming or shaming can all prevent children from feeling emotionally safe – while showing affection, positive attention and an interest in what a child has to say builds their sense of security. These formative years are when children's opinions and values begin to take shape, so it's important to provide a non-judgmental environment in which to discuss them – especially if their opinions differ from your own.

2 CONSIDER OTHER OUTLETS

Some children may find it easier to talk while they're participating in another activity such as drawing, writing, walking or sport. If it's possible, taking part in these activities together presents you with an opportunity to communicate while doing something side by side. A child may feel less pressure that way and can be more inclined to open up of their own accord.

3 NORMALISE CHATS ABOUT FEELINGS

Incorporate mental health and emotional wellbeing into everyday conversations, using age-appropriate language and examples to help children understand their emotions. Ask questions like "How are you feeling today?", "What was the best and worst part of your day?", "If you could start today again, what would you do differently?" and "Is there anything you want to talk about?"

4 LISTEN ACTIVELY

When children express themselves, make it obvious that you're listening closely and giving them your full attention. Maintain eye contact and validate their feelings without immediately trying to solve the problem. It's not helpful to dismiss their issues as childish or 'teenage angst' – or to assume that they'll simply 'get over' whatever they're feeling. Children don't have your life experience; their resilience is still developing as they learn to push through difficulties and handle problems.

5 ASK OPEN QUESTIONS

Encourage children to share their thoughts by asking open questions about their feelings and experiences. Closed questions (such as "Did you enjoy school today?") are more likely to elicit a simple "yes" or "no" response. Instead, you could ask things like "Who did you spend time with at break?" or "Who did you sit with at lunchtime?"

6 RESPECT THEIR BOUNDARIES

If a child isn't ready to talk to about something yet, respect their boundaries: this reinforces that their feelings are important and worthy of consideration. Ideally, you're aiming to let them know you care without smothering them, so just make it clear that you're there for them whenever they're ready to chat. Gentle, regular check-ins can sometimes be the best form of progress.

7 LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Model open, honest and healthy communication in front of children and young people. Try to demonstrate kindness when talking about others and yourself, because if children hear adults being overly harsh, critical or judgmental, or see them having unrealistic expectations of themselves, it makes them more likely to adopt and repeat this behaviour themselves as they grow.

8 HAVE REGULAR CHECK-INS

Check in with children periodically to discuss how they're feeling and what's going on in their lives. This could be a weekly or monthly conversation, where the child has an opportunity to share whatever's on their mind. For parents and carers, getting away from the house and other distractions might be productive here: you could consider regular trips to a coffee shop or a café, or just a weekly walk.

9 PROVIDE RESOURCES

It's often beneficial to let children know about other support that's available to them if they're struggling to talk to you specifically. Encourage them to talk to school counsellors, trusted adults or even a therapist, if necessary – while normalising this route and dispelling the harmful stigma around asking for help. Older children could engage with resources such as Kooth or YoungMinds.

10 CELEBRATE EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION

It's beneficial to praise children for expressing their feelings honestly – emphasising how important it is to talk about their emotions and how proud you are of them for doing so. This can be especially pivotal for boys, who often experience more of a stigma around talking frankly about their feelings and their mental health – a barrier that can be overcome, with enough love and support.

Meet Our Expert

With 30 years' experience as a teacher, trainer, consultant and interim executive board member, Anna Bateman has a superb understanding of what works in pedagogy, school improvement and leadership. She has also advised the Department for Education on their mental health green paper.



The National College

ACTIVITIES

Weekly Wellness and Health tips

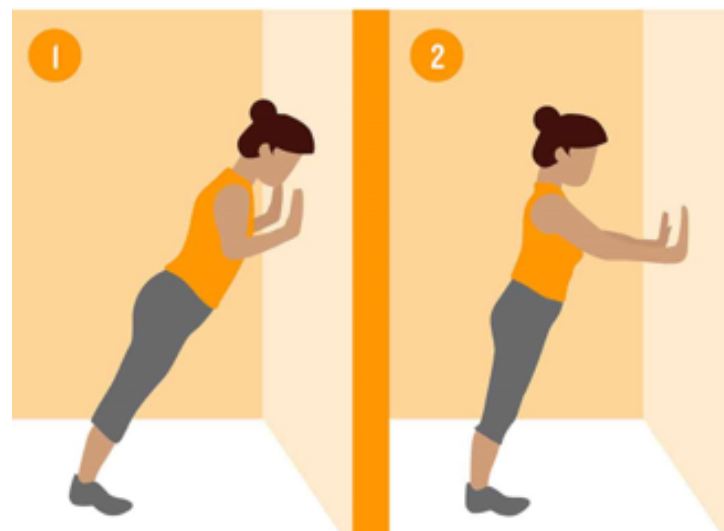
If you want to maintain good overall health, it is important to follow these weekly tips.

- Drink at least 8 glasses of water** each day to stay hydrated and flush toxins out of your body.
- Get at least a half an hour of cardiovascular exercise each day** whether it is biking, jogging, walking, swimming, or something else entirely.
- Take out all of the junk food** in your cupboards at home and replace them with healthy snacks like nuts, fruits, and vegetables.
- Find healthy ways to manage your stress** such as meditation, yoga, listening to music, or exercising.
- Try cooking nutritious meals** for yourself and your family at least 5 times a week. Eating out is okay, but only occasionally.
- Plan out your meals for the week** ahead of time so you don't have to do a lot of last minute work.
- Do yoga and/or tai chi** at least once a week to keep your joints flexible and your muscles strong.
- Make sure to focus on strengthening your core muscles** by lifting weights so you can stay healthy and make performing everyday activities like lifting heavy objects easier on your back.

Try out Wall push ups

1. Face the wall.
2. Place your palms on the wall in front of you with arms outstretched (use the handprints).
3. Press feet into the floor.
4. Your feet and knees should be shoulder width apart.
5. Hands should be shoulder width apart.
6. Breath in.
7. Bend elbows and bring nose towards the wall, keep back straight.
8. Hold for up to 10 seconds.
9. Straighten elbows and breath out.































INCLINE WALL PUSH-UP



ACTIVITIES

Daily Activities

Starting from week commencing 6th May 24. We will be offering a range of outdoor activities.

Day	8:50- 9:05		10:55-11:15		13:25 – 13:55	
	Hall	Outside	Hall	Outside	Club	Outside
Monday	Breakfast club 	Activity Box 	Board games 	Activity Box 	Arts & crafts 	Football 
Tuesday	Breakfast club 	Activity Box 	Board games 	Activity Box 	Fishkeeping 	Basketball 
Wednesday	Breakfast club 	Activity Box 	Board games 	Activity Box 	Gardening 	Volleyball 
Thursday	Breakfast club 	Activity Box 	Board games 	Activity Box 	Art 	Badminton 
Friday	Breakfast club 	Activity Box 	Board games 	Activity Box 	Touch typing 	Football 

Activities club takes place every day in the morning **(8:50-9:05)** and afternoon **(1:25-1:55)**.

The students can engage in various physical activities, including running and playing football!

