

Heads Up for Wellbeing – Sleeping Well



Why is sleep so important?

• Sleep is vital to your wellbeing. It is as important as eating healthily and exercising. Good sleep helps us to thrive by contributing to a healthy immune system. In a deep sleep your blood pressure drops, your breathing slows, your muscles become relaxed, tissue growth and repair occurs, hormones are released and your energy is restored. A minimum of 8 to 9 hours sleep is recommended for teenagers on school nights.

Causes of Poor Sleep

The causes of poor sleep fall into 3 categories.

- **Psychological**
e.g. exam stress, bereavement, difficulties at home, depression, anxiety
- **Lifestyle**
e.g. drinking too much alcohol, exercising too little or too much, drinking too much caffeine, working shifts, taking naps
- **Physical**
The NHS advises if you have been feeling constantly tired for more than 4 weeks, it's a good idea to see your GP so they can confirm or rule out a medical condition that could be causing your tiredness.

There are quite a few things you can try to help:-

Healthy Sleep Habits

- Try to create a good sleeping environment. Ideally a room that is dark, cool, comfortable and quiet. Consider black out blinds or curtains.
- It is important to relax before bedtime, for example have a bath or read a book.
- Think about cutting back on food and drinks containing sugar and caffeine in the hours just before bed.
- Try to limit your screen time before bed. Turning your phone to silent will also help. Be aware the light from screens interferes with sleep.
- Long weekend lie-ins, late nights and taking naps will play havoc with your body clock. Try to have a regular sleeping pattern and bedtime routine.
- Being active can help with sleep. Exercising and being outside will help to encourage healthy sleep patterns.
- It can be a good idea to keep a sleep diary. It might uncover lifestyle habits or daily activities that contribute to your tiredness.

Coping With Worries



Having something on your mind can make it difficult to fall asleep.

- If there is a worry troubling you try writing it down.
- List things that make you feel happy.
- Picture yourself in your favourite place or somewhere you want to be. Imagine yourself happy and relaxed.
- Concentrate on your breathing – take slow deep, calm breaths.
- Listen to calming music or white noise.
- Write a to-do list to help organise your thoughts.
- Speak or email your Pastoral Teacher. They can offer advice and support as well as helping you to manage your school work.

Sleeping Well – useful contacts – where to get help

www.nhs.uk/livewell/sleep-and-tiredness

- provides information and advice
- check out the NHS Apps library for apps designed to help with sleep
- take a look at some relaxation exercises and yoga stretches

www.childline.org.uk

- if you're under 19 you can confidentially call, email or chat online about any problem big or small
- freephone 24h helpline: 0800 1111
- [sign up for a childline account](#) on the website to be able to message a counsellor anytime without using your email address
- chat 1:1 with an [online advisor](#)

www.sleepcouncil.org.uk

- interesting blog posts on sleeping habits and sleep hygiene
- sleep tools
- follow the latest news and tips on Facebook, Twitter or Youtube