

Summer Holidays information and ideas

As the end of another academic year is in sight there will be some of you who love and look forward to the long break, but for many this time can also be a struggle (for lots of different reason.) With this in mind, here are a few ideas and suggestions of things that you can do NOW, which could help you over the 6 week break:

- Try to **plan summer in advance** in order to help maintain some structure and routine for the children. *(See templates attached.)*
- Get the **children involved in the planning of their summer break**. What activities would they like to do? Try to ensure children do not spend 6 weeks on their computer all day and have some breaks with plenty of time outside and doing things away from a computer/phone screen. *(See bucket list template and wellbeing handout attached.)*
- Make a list of **things you can do at home** (for rainy days) – it's easier than thinking on the spot when the children say 'I'm bored.' *(Also see Summer Boredom challenge for ideas, attached.)*
- Try to decide in advance what the **new rules and routines** will look like over the summer. These may be slightly different than during term time but still need to be in place so that the children can easily get back into their normal routine in September. This includes morning and bedtime routines i.e. still having set bedtimes (although these may be slightly later than during term time) and a morning routine whereby the children get up and dressed by an agreed time.
- Think about activities you can do that are **cheap or free** – visits to the park, walks, picnics, visits to the library, the local farm etc. These types of activities could be scheduled in each week to help give some structure to the 6 weeks holidays and give you something to look forward to.
- For **FREE library activities** - <https://beta.southglos.gov.uk/holiday-activities/>.
- **5 FREE places to explore** in South Glos
 1. Willsbridge Mill
 2. Bristol and Bath Railway Path / Cycle track
 3. Grimsbury Community Farm
 4. Mundy Playing Fields (and splash park)
 5. Kingsgate Park, Yate
- If you are **worried about money**, please see South Glos cost of living help - <https://beta.southglos.gov.uk/community-and-living/cost-of-living-help/>
- Share information about **holiday clubs or local events** happening with each other. Also see – [School holiday activities and food programme | South Gloucestershire \(southglos.gov.uk\)](https://beta.southglos.gov.uk/community-and-living/cost-of-living-help/)
- Identify your **support networks** and who you can call on if you need practical and emotional support, (even just a cuppa together.) This includes family, friends, neighbours, colleagues etc.
- Think about any contact details you may need for support or what services are available should you need it. *(See below for some information.)*

As the saying goes, **failing to plan, is planning to fail!**

Families who have thought ahead and have some plans and structure to the school holidays may find their children easier to manage. Children thrive on structure and routine so will benefit from knowing what's happening each day/week and having some pattern and regularity to their timetable.

Wishing you all a lovely summer and we look forward to seeing you in September.

Best wishes

Emma.

Family Link Worker. Blackhorse Primary School.

Support services

Financial support/offers

- Information on different ways of getting support with the cost of living rising [Cost of living help | BETA - South Gloucestershire Council \(southglos.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Household support fund | BETA - South Gloucestershire Council \(southglos.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Places Kids Eat Free in the Summer Holidays 2024 \(moneysavingcentral.co.uk\)](#) is a website that tells families restaurants where kids eat free throughout the holidays.
- [Financial support and wellbeing | BETA - South Gloucestershire Council \(southglos.gov.uk\)](#)

Family/parenting support

- **Solihull** – online parenting resources for parents, carers, grandparents and teenagers in South Glos. This is **free** lifetime access to a range of e-learning and online resources which span from pregnancy to 19 years. These courses can be worked through at a pace which suits the individual, with the aim of increasing parental knowledge and confidence around child development through all stages of the parenting journey. The courses aim to nurture emotional health and wellbeing so that our children can thrive as kind, sociable and emotionally aware people throughout their lives. [inourplace | Solihull Approach – South Gloucestershire | inourplace](#)
- **NHS website:** Advice for parents on a range of parenting issues, including talking to teenagers, fussy eating and teenage aggression. Website: [Live Well - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)
- **Parent Buddies** is a confidential, universal, one-to-one listening service offering short-term support depending on family need. Volunteers are trained to provide parents/carers with listening, and signposting to specialist services. [HOME | My Site \(parentbuddies.co.uk\)](#)
- **CCP – Caring for Communities and People** – Offer outreach support for families at an early help level. Families can self-refer. [Home \(ccp.org.uk\)](#)

Support for families who have children with additional needs

- **SEND and You - SAY:** Local SEN and disability information service (SENDIAS) - Information and support around Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, for children, young people and families. (previously Supportive Parents)
Tel: 0117 9897725 Mon-Fri 9.30 - 4.30 (answerphone at other times),
Email: support@sendandyou.org.uk
Website: [Home - SEND and You](#)
- **South Glos Parents and Carers:** Information and groups for parents who have children with a disability and/or additional needs. Offers a weekly drop in for parents and carers, support groups, workshops, counselling and events. They also run the Parent Carer forum in South Gloucestershire to collect feedback and views from families with disabled children.
Website: [South Glos Parent Carers \(sgpc.org.uk\)](#) Email: team@sglospc.org.uk
- **JIGSAW Thornbury** Support families who have children who are 0-25 years and have any additional needs or disability. This can be anything from learning needs such as dyslexia to complex disabilities or medical problems. Many children who come have no diagnosis. Weekly support group for parents, carers and children + training courses on a range of topics. Telephone: 01454 416381 Website: [JIGSAW Thornbury | For Children with Additional Needs and Disabilities - SEN Lending Library, Events, Meetings, Bristol Area and the South West.](#)
- **Gympanzees:** 'pop-up' Leisure Centre - dedicated centre for children and young people with disabilities and their families. They currently run an easter and summer pop up session. Website [Pop Ups - Gympanzees](#)

Young people's mental health

- **Off The Record:** Free, self-referral counselling service for young people age 11-15, who are experiencing low mood, depression, anxiety, phobias, self-harm, eating problems and/or anger. Young people can call, email or text, and services operate in Patchway, Kingswood and Yate. Also offer parent support groups and sessions. Can also see [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) for more information and up to date groups and activities.
Tel: 0808 808 9120. Text: 07896 880011. Website: [Home - OTR \(otrbristol.org.uk\)](#) Email: hello@otrbristol.org.uk
- **Kooth:** Free, safe and anonymous online support for young people 11-18. Monday – Friday 12pm – 10pm, Saturday – Sunday 6pm – 10pm. On Kooth you can: Chat to our friendly counsellors; Read articles written by young people; Get support from the Kooth community; Write in a daily journal. Website: <https://kooth.com/> [Home - Kooth](#)
- **Childline:** Free counselling via online webchat, and free support/advice available 24/7 via confidential helpline, and emails via the website. Tel: 0800 11 11.
Website: www.childline.org.uk [Childline | Childline](#)
- **Young Minds** national charity offers confidential online and telephone information and support for anyone worried about the emotional, behaviour, or mental health of a child/young person up to 25 years of age, including ADHD, Autism and Aspergers. **Parents Helpline:** 0808 802 5544 Website: [YoungMinds | Mental Health Charity For Children And Young People | YoungMinds](#)
- **Young Minds Crisis Messenger Service** for free 24/7 support across the UK if you are experiencing a mental health crisis. Text YM to 85258.

Adult mental health

- **South Gloucestershire Talking Therapies - Vitamins:** Therapeutic interventions including counselling and group courses, in line with people's differing needs, age 16+. Self-referral via the website: wellaware.org.uk Tel - [0333 200 1893](tel:03332001893) [NHS Talking Therapies - North Somerset & South Gloucestershire \(vitahealthgroup.co.uk\)](#)
- **Samaritans:** Free, confidential emotional support for those experiencing despair, distress, self-harm or suicidal feelings.
Tel: 116 123 (free, from any phone, 24/7). Website: www.samaritans.org [Samaritans | Every life lost to suicide is a tragedy | Here to listen](#) Email: jo@samaritans.org

OTHER

- **Worried about the safety or wellbeing of a child,** (including Early Help support needs) Access and Response Team, South Gloucestershire Council - 01454 866000.
- **Police** – 101 for all NON URGENT issues or 999 if urgent.
- **Domestic Abuse** (for Women) – Nexlink Mon-Fri 0800 4700 280.
- **National Domestic Violence Helpline** (24 hours) – 0808 2000 247
- **Domestic Abuse** (for Men) 0808 801 0327
- **Food Banks and help to get food** for families in South Glos - <https://oneyou.southglos.gov.uk/for-your-body/eat-well/food-poverty-support/>
- Food Banks for families in South Glos & Bristol - <https://www.trusselltrust.org/>

Tips for parents to support pupil wellbeing over school holidays

Six weeks or 42 days... the summer holidays can sound like a long time! How can you keep children feeling fit and well in this time? Here are some tips for parents.

Look at the Five Ways to Wellbeing guidance

The Five Ways to Wellbeing is a set of evidence-based actions aimed at improving personal wellbeing and mental health. You can try just one, a few or all of them and see how you feel afterward. As with most things to do with feeling good, it can take a bit of time to notice the difference, so keep trying them!

The five ways to wellbeing are:

1. Connect: this is about the fundamental human need for feeling close to and valued by other people. It can have a positive effect on mental health. Some simple ways to connect more could be to:

- join a physical activity outside (an impromptu game in the park)
- encourage children to talk to someone instead of sending a text or email
- go for a walk and chat with someone.

You might like to encourage children to talk about what they can see, hear or smell on the walk and ask how children feel so that they and you can become more aware of their emotions at different times of the day.

2. Be active: this is a well-known way of improving wellbeing. There is a lot of research to say that being active can help you feel better physically and mentally as you are active and afterward too. Here are some ideas:

- Walk up the stairs rather than take the lift.
- Dance while the TV adverts are on.
- Get off the bus one stop earlier and walk the rest of the way.
- Cycle or walk to the shops.
- Play some energetic indoor games like musical statues.

3. Take notice: research shows that being aware of what is happening in the present moment directly enhances your wellbeing. Take some time to enjoy being 'in the moment' and notice the environment around you. You could encourage children to find and smell flowers; accompany them to visit somewhere new; go outside and listen for birds; notice the weather and embrace all the possibilities that it brings, or just stop and look at things in more detail.

4. Keep learning: lifelong learning can have a positive effect on self-esteem and self-worth, and setting goals has a strong association with better mental health and wellbeing. It doesn't have to be academic learning – it can be anything you didn't know before. Here are some examples:

- Learn to play or understand a new sport that you didn't know about before.
- Learn new skills that will be useful for now and the future (perhaps cooking or growing food.)
- Do a puzzle, crossword or quiz.
- Research something you're curious about – whether online or in a library.
- Learn a new word or phrase, or if you're feeling adventurous, start to learn some words or phrases in another language.

It's all about keeping your mind active.

5. Giving: this is about giving your time, not money. Did you know that people who report an increased interest in helping others are more likely to rate themselves as happy? Committing an act of kindness once a week over a six-week period is associated with an increase in wellbeing. Perhaps you could support children to offer their help to a friend or relative with a task; children could volunteer with a local charity and give their time; children could do a favour for a neighbour or friend (without expecting anything in return!).

Ensure children have enough rest and sleep

While it might be tempting to ensure children have something exciting to do every single day of the holidays, it is also vital to help children to rest and sleep properly. The daily act of attending school, with all the disruptions and changes over the past couple of years, can take its toll on children, who 'tell' or communicate to adults through their behaviour. How many times have you seen a distressed or agitated child and noticed that their behaviour was trying to tell adults that they are tired and need to rest?

There's a close relationship between sleep and wellbeing and a lack of sleep can also negatively impact our mental health and wellbeing. There isn't a magical cure for improving sleep but noticing what works better for children can help them enjoy better sleep and feel like they and you are more in control.

Top tips for rest and sleep for children (and adults!)

- Try to go to bed at the same time each night and get up at the same time each morning. If you can, avoid sleeping in – try to maintain a routine.
- Spend time outside during the day to get as much exposure to natural light as possible.
- Avoid screens before bed – the 'blue' light emitted from devices interferes with your ability to sleep.
- Take time to relax before bed: have a warm bath, read or have a story read to you, listen to relaxing music or meditation, do some simple stretches, write down or draw your thoughts...
- Ensure your bedroom is cool, dark and quiet.
- Make sure you have eaten and drunk enough during the day so that hunger and thirst don't wake you up at night.
- Try some deep breathing exercises to help calm your body and make it ready for sleep: breathe in for the count of four and out for the count of seven.
- Be physically active during the day so that your body is tired and ready to rest fully.

Overall, keep the holidays a simple time for children. Allow them to find what they enjoy rather than provide adult-led stimulation for them all the time. Teach them to nurture their wellbeing by showing them how you nurture yours and allow them to share their ideas with you so you can learn from them too.