

St Leonard's SEND and Inclusion Newsletter

Summer Term 2024

Our SEND [Special Educational Needs and Disability] and Inclusion Newsletter will be issued every half term and will include useful articles relating to SEND, links to a wide range of services and useful tips for parents/carers whose child has a special need.

What can I do if I think my child has SEND?

Mrs Claire Callaghan is the school SENDCo [Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Co-ordinator] and Inclusion Lead. If you have any concerns regarding your child, and would like to speak to Mrs Callaghan, please do not hesitate to contact me at ccallaghan@st-leonards-stafford.staffs.sch.uk or via the school office.



Special educational needs, often referred to as 'SEN' or 'SEND' (Special educational needs and disabilities), is a term used to describe learning difficulties or disabilities that make it harder for a child to learn compared to children of the same age.

All children may experience challenges with their learning at some point and for most children, these difficulties overcome with support from teachers and home. However, children with SEND are likely to need extra or different help to be able to learn.

How do you know if a child has SEND?

A child or young person has SEN if:

- They have significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of other children and young people the same age
- They have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 provisions

A child or young person has a disability if:

- They have a physical and mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out day-to-day activities.

What types of difficulties are SEND?

Children may have difficulties in one or more of these areas:

Cognition and Learning - A child may find all learning difficult or have difficulties with specific activities such as reading or spelling. A child may have trouble understanding instructions and carrying out tasks. A child may have memory difficulties.

Communication and Interaction – A child may have difficulty in talking to others or understanding what others are saying to them. A child may have difficulty with interactions with others, such as not being able to take turns. A child who has speech and language needs will be classed as having communication and interaction needs.

Physical and Sensory – A child may have hearing or vision loss. A child may have difficulty with sensory processing, being under or over-sensitive. A child may have a medical condition which affects them physically.

Social, Emotional and Mental Health - A child may display behaviours such as having very low self-esteem or being very anxious. A child may display challenging, disruptive or distressing behaviours. A child may have underlying conditions which affect their mental health.

You can find further information about SEND on our school website

<https://www.stleonardsstafford.co.uk/page/?title=SEND&pid=37>

<https://www.stleonardsstafford.co.uk/page/?title=SEND+AND+INCLUSION&pid=22>

Don't forget to visit 'Staffordshire Connects' website: a one stop shop for children and young people who have SEND in Staffordshire.



<https://www.staffordshireconnects.info/kb5/staffordshire/directory/home.page>



For confidential impartial advice, regarding the law relating to special educational needs and disability, then please contact SENDIASS on:

Phone: 01785 356 921

Email: sfps@staffordshire.gov.uk



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Calling all Community Groups!

Action for Children can help with a number of low-level emotional health and wellbeing needs including preparing for transitions and school exams. Maintaining positive emotional wellbeing and learning some simple strategies to manage anxieties early can prevent difficulties escalating.

As part of our prevention offer we have several workshops that we are happy to deliver to children, young people and families across Staffordshire either via school or community groups such as Brownies, Guides, Gym, football clubs, faith groups for example.

These workshops include:

- **The Decider Skills for young people** - Helping young people build their own skills to use in life.
- **Keeping our wellbeing on track** - Looking after our own wellbeing is so important.
- **Understanding our emotions** - Helping younger children understand their own emotions.
- **Supporting my Teen with anxiety** - Helping parents and carers gain a better understanding of teenage brain development.
- **Communicating with my child** - strategies, tips and ways that you can best communicate with your child when they're anxious



If you would like to know more, please contact us or visit our website on [Staffordshire Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service \(actionforchildren.org.uk\)](http://Staffordshire Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service (actionforchildren.org.uk)) to gain access to further tools, techniques and referral information.

The following videos may be useful:

- • Fight, Flight or Freeze: <https://youtu.be/HRpzaKpBuoA>
- • Flipping Your Lid: <https://youtu.be/tMa8PWhVPKQ>
- • Grounding Techniques for Young People: <https://youtu.be/xCc-mpPCM6E>
- • Silver Cloud: <https://actionforchildren.silvercloudhealth.com/signup/>
- • Parent Talk: <https://parents.actionforchildren.org.uk/>

New! Interactive Worry Videos

In addition we are pleased to be able to launch our NEW interactive worry video's. There are two videos per age group; 5-10yrs are Cosmo and the worry Monster and age 10+ are Time to Shine videos. These videos give children and young people the strategies they need to manage low level worries. The videos are accompanied by a workbook to complete alongside. Take a look at the clip Time to Shine Fight Flight Freeze (youtube.com)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HRpzaKpBuoA>

Worried about your child moving up to 'big school'?

Timid to Tiger is a parenting-based approach to managing anxiety in children and can be particularly helpful for children who are experiencing separation anxiety. The course for parents of children aged 8-11yrs has been written by clinical psychologists and aims to teach parents and carers Cognitive Behavioural Techniques (CBT) to help them to help their child to manage their worries and fears. The course uses attachment-based play and gentle disciplinary techniques to help build and strengthen the parent-child bond. It teaches tools to help manage children's fears and worries.

One parent told us 'being in a group with other people has helped, knowing you're not alone. I think it is great how it is acknowledged that not all things suggested will work for your child but with support you can try to see what works.'

Wait times

Our wait times can differ depending on the young person's pathway. Wait times for a group workshop are minimal enabling children and young people to receive support quickly so please encourage children and young people to access this support.

Wait times for one-to-one sessions are longer and we are working hard to reduce this. While we understand some children and young people prefer this type of support we would encourage them to try a group workshop. This can be a great way to see that others have similar emotions and difficulties and therefore reduce their feelings of isolation.

Our overall average wait times are currently:-

Referral to assessment - February - 5 days

Assessment to intervention - February - 1 day

To contact us, check progress of a referral or get some information, advice and guidance email staffordshirewb@actionforchildren.org.uk

Our website: Staffordshire Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service (actionforchildren.org.uk)

Mental Health Support Teams in Schools

Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) are continually fully funded by the NHS and are designed to support schools to embed a positive culture towards mental health and help meet the mental health needs of children and young people from 5 to 18 years old in an education setting.

In Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent we are fortunate to have MHSTs established in each area within the ICB and there will be further expansion of MHST coverage in January 2025 with an additional MHST being established in North Staffordshire and in Stoke on Trent itself.

MHSTs have three core functions:

- To deliver evidence-based interventions for mild to moderate mental health issues;
- To support the senior mental health lead in each school or college to introduce or develop their whole school or college approach;
- To give timely advice to school and college staff and liaise with external specialist services to help children and young people get the right support

MHSTs can offer 1:1 support to pupils with an identified mental health issue, examples being low mood, anxiety or behavioural difficulties.

What MHSTs Would Expect From Schools:

MHSTs would expect a confidential space for therapeutic sessions and staff engagement with our Education Mental Health Practitioners

Finally it's important to note that access to an MHST does not replace a school's access to other services; MHSTs are designed to work alongside other services and not replace them.

MHSTs in **North Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent** are provided by **North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust**. To see a list of schools in those areas with an MHST working in them please follow this link; [Our Services \(combinedwellbeing.org.uk\)](https://www.combinedwellbeing.org.uk)

MHSTs in **South and East Staffordshire** are provided by **Midlands Partnership University Foundation NHS Trust**. To check whether your school is covered by an MHST please use the following e-mail address; referralsMHST@mpft.nhs.uk

Making a referral for children and young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing support in Staffordshire

Support and guidance are provided through the single points of access for north and south, they will triage information provided to understand the needs of the child, young person, and their families. Simplifying the way children, young people, their families or carers seek care, support and guidance, also how professionals and others can make a referral.

South Staffordshire:

- Child and adolescent mental health services are accessed via the **Children and Families Single Point of Access (CaFSPA)**, bringing together children and young people's mental health services including school nursing and Action for Children.
- The **CaFSPA** can take telephone calls / referral forms from self-referral or from professionals.
- Referrals are screened and triaged by the CaFSPA.

Telephone: 0808 178 0611

Email referrals to: CaFSPA@mpft.nhs.uk

Please visit website for more information:

<https://www.mpft.nhs.uk/about-us/latest-news/children-and-families-single-point-access>



TRANSITIONS

Transitions: how I can help my child

Transitions whether they are between Year Groups, Key Stages or Schools can be a stressful time for children as they get use to new routines, new adults, new friends and new surroundings.

This is the case for all children and for children with additional needs, the changes can be even more unsettling.

As a parent or carer you can help!

Starting **conversations** with your child and finding out **how they feel** about the transition is a great start.

Asking them what they are looking forward to, what they will miss about their old school and class.

Thinking about what they **enjoy doing** and what they find difficult.

These are all ways of helping your child get ready and make the best possible transition.

Below are some **different resources** that you might like to use if you want further guidance on supporting your child. If you have **concerns** about the changes coming please don't hesitate to **get in touch with the school**.

These resource packs/links may help to manage transitions



<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/media/151j4yqc/pupil-resource.pdf>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nCrjev3-Js>

[Moving up! The transition to secondary school | Anna Freud](#)

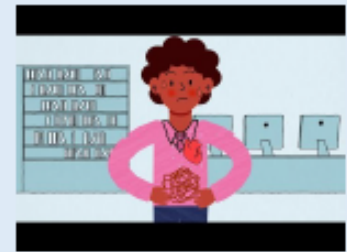
[Transitioning to secondary school - BBC Teach](#)

[Supporting school transitions | Resources | YoungMinds](#)

Let's talk about anxiety

Anxiety is a normal emotion - it's one of our body's natural reactions to stress. It's important that young people have the tools to manage feelings of anxiety and can tell the difference between what are normal emotions and what is more severe anxiety which is interfering with their everyday life. Resources and an animation are available from **Anna Freud** for school staff to help 11-13-year-olds understand and manage anxious feelings. [Let's talk about anxiety: animation and teacher toolkit](#)

[| Anna Freud](#)



<https://www.annafreud.org/resources/schools-and-colleges/lets-talk-about-anxiety-animation-and-teacher-toolkit/>

Change is a normal part of life; transitions can happen through school years and can be small or big changes. Some changes can be exciting - but others can be stressful, worrying and upsetting. Young Minds have a guide for parents and carers: [Transitions and change | Mental Health Parent Guide | YoungMinds](#)



Action for Children also have a guide to help support children in **transitions:** [My child is anxious about school transitions or changes - Support for Parents from Action For Children](#)



Many autistic children and young people find the change of starting or moving to a new school difficult. Advice about strategies and support that can help during key life transitions - starting or changing school, leaving school, and starting or leaving college or university can be accessed here: [transitions england \(autism.org.uk\)](#) .



have resources to help pupils, schools, parents and carers to cope with the changes and transitions they experience during their time at school. [Supporting school transitions | Resources | YoungMinds](#)

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-a-z-mental-health-guide/transitions-and-times-of-change/#Whydochildrenandyoungpeoplefindsomechangesdifficult>

<https://parents.actionforchildren.org.uk/school-life/school-behaviour-wellbeing/school-anxiety-transitions-changes/>

<https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/transitions/england>

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/professional/resources/supporting-school-transitions/>



Check out the Summer reading challenge, create a profile and get rewards, play games and earn badges. For more details: Summer Reading Challenge

Libraries have lots of activities as well as books for children and young people, to find out what's happening near you: Libraries and arts - Staffordshire County Council

Reading Well for teens suggests recommended reading and digital resources to help young people understand their feelings and boost their confidence. Teens and health and wellbeing experts have chosen the books to help young people manage their emotions and cope with difficult times. Teens | Reading Well booklists this booklist is targeted at **teenagers (13- 18)**. Look for the **Reading Well for teens** books in your local library - they're **free to borrow**.

Reading well for children provides quality-assured information, stories and advice to support children's mental health and wellbeing. Books have been chosen and recommended by leading health professionals and co-produced with children and families. Children | Reading Well booklists this booklist is targeted at children in **Key Stage 2 (aged 7-11)**, but includes titles aimed at a wide range of reading levels to support less confident readers, and to encourage children to read together with their siblings and carers. Look for the **Reading Well for children's** books in your local library - they're **free to borrow**.



fighting for young people's mental health


have resources for **self-care support over the summer holidays**, check out the pages which explain what self-care is, real stories from young people and **finding out what self-care works for you**: Self-Care | Young People's Mental Health Watch on YouTube: What does self-care really mean?

https://www.youtube.com/embed/lp_2q_MhyKA?start=5&feature=oembed



There are also **teaching resources with tips and practical tools to help pupils look after their mental health over the summer** and feel positive about the upcoming holidays. 10 ways to celebrate the year, celebrating achievements lesson plan and preparing pupils for summer holidays. Self-care support in the summer holidays teaching resources.

◀◀ **RESOURCES** ▶▶



Nip in the Bud® works with mental health professionals to produce FREE short evidence-based films, fact sheets, blogs and podcasts to help parents/carers, teachers and professionals working with children to recognise potential mental health conditions. Resources and videos about Child mental health conditions, neurodivergent conditions, wellbeing. [Nip in the Bud | Child Mental Health Resources for Parents and Teachers](#)

<https://nipinthebud.org/>

Need urgent help? If you need urgent support, feel unable to cope, are worried about your own mental health or someone you care for, help is available.



Call your **local NHS urgent mental health helpline 24 hours a day, 7 days a week:**

North Staffordshire (Stoke-on-Trent, Newcastle, Staffs Moorlands) on **0800 0 328 728 (option 1)**. If you have a hearing impairment or are unable to use the telephone, you can text the All Age Access Team on **07739 775202** and the team will respond as soon as possible (please note: this text service is charged at your network provider's rate).

South Staffordshire (Stafford, Stone, Rugeley, Cannock, South Staffs, Lichfield, Burton, Uttoxeter, Tamworth) on **0808 196 3002**. If you have a hearing impairment or are unable to use the telephone, you can email the All Age Access Team mhsi.staffordshire@mpft.nhs.uk and the team will respond as soon as possible.

Samaritans - confidential crisis support helpline, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year - **116 123**. [Contact Us | Samaritans](#) they have email service and self help app

Is it an emergency? If someone's life is at risk because they have seriously injured themselves or taken on overdose call **999**. If you do not feel you can keep yourself, or someone else safe from immediate risk of harm, call **999**.