



# The Dales Newsletter

## February

### Ofsted Visit

We would like to say a big thank you to all of the children at the Dales for welcoming our visitors to school. They were truly wonderful and we were all very proud of them. They demonstrated our school values of kindness, honesty, respect, teamwork, resilience and responsibility. We will share with you the outcome when we gain our final report in the next few weeks.



# SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

## 10 Conversation Starters for Parents

Talking about mental health to children is sometimes hard. To the point that we can put off raising the subject, not wanting to unearth problems or raise overwhelming subjects that we perceive our child is too young or not ready for. But rather than keeping children in the dark, this guide is designed to help you confidently talk about mental health, so they feel comfortable talking about their own worries and end any stigma before it begins.



### 1 LISTEN

This sounds obvious, but it is not something we are always great at. Active listening is where we listen without interrupting or making judgements and shows interest in what is being said. If your child feels listened to in the 'smallest of problems' they will become confident that you will listen when the 'biggest of problems' arise.

### 2 ASK TWICE

The campaign from time to change is great. <https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/support/ask-twice-campaign>. Be tenacious about your child's wellbeing. Children instinctively know when your questions and support come from a place of wanting to help and care.



### 3 THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A STUPID QUESTION

This advice also relates to the first point. If your child can ask you any questions about the smallest of things and you listen and answer without shaming or belittling, then they will have more confidence to ask the biggest of questions.



### 4 BE OPEN AND HONEST

Children appreciate honesty, particularly if you are having to share information or talk about a difficult subject. For example, you may be talking about death or loss: 'It's very sad that Nana has died' or 'I feel sad that Nana has died'. How you talk about a subject will differ depending on their age and developmental maturity. Talking about death to a younger child for example will be different to that of an older teen, as their experience and understanding of death is different.

### 5 KNOW WHEN TO SEEK HELP

Assess the severity of the mental health difficulty you are noticing. Is the difficulty making it hard for your child to function regularly throughout everyday life? How frequently is your child affected, how long does it last and how persistent is it? Are they having problems controlling the difficulty? Talk to your child about your concerns and that it is likely they will need further support beyond family and friends.



### 6 TALK ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH NATURALLY

Speak about mental health as part of everyday life, so that talking about our feelings and those of others is normalised. If the usual 'are you ok?' is not creating an opportunity for dialogue then say something like 'I know when something like that has happened to me I felt like this... is that how you are feeling or are you feeling something else?'

### 7 EMPATHISE

'It makes sense that you would feel this way, it is understandable'. Children often worry about things that we, as adults, might see as trivial or silly. However, for them at their age and stage it is a big concern and they need our kindness and care when they show their vulnerability and share their worries.



### 8 HELP YOUR CHILD FEEL SAFE

Teens particularly feel that by talking about their worries or concerns that this will make things worse. Reassure your child that you will discuss a plan of action together and what may or may not need to happen next. If they are a younger child, it is likely you will need to lead the conversation and explain next steps.



### 9 MIND YOUR LANGUAGE

Be mindful of the language you use at home to describe and talk about mental health. Stigma often arises from misconceptions and a choice of language which is harmful. Using the word 'mental', 'man-up' or other such words in a derogatory way won't encourage your child to talk about their mental health for fear of being belittled.



### 10 IT IS OK TO SAY 'I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO NEXT'

Adults do not have all the answers but often children think they do. It is ok to acknowledge that what your child is experiencing is not something you have come across before or know anything about, but that you will work it out together and seek help together.



## Meet our expert

This guide has been written by Anna Bateman. Anna is passionate about placing prevention at the heart of every school. Integrating mental wellbeing within the curriculum, school culture and systems. She is also a member of the advisory group for the Department of Education, advising them on their mental health green paper.



## Sources of Information and Support

Your GP  
Young Minds <https://youngminds.org.uk/>  
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/>  
<https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/news-and-blogs/parenting-tips/2016/november/a-simple-guide-to-active-listening-for-parents/>  
<https://www.themix.org.uk/mental-health>



[www.nationalonlinesafety.com](http://www.nationalonlinesafety.com) Twitter - @natonlinesafety Facebook - /NationalOnlineSafety

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## Northumberland C.A.R.E project



### CARE Project Next Steps:

Look out for information on workshops around behaviour, zones of regulation and wellbeing. We will also be offering the youth Mental Health First Aid two day workshop in the Summer term and Trauma Informed workshops.

Feedback showed that sometimes it can feel isolating. We looked into setting up a WhatsApp group and after listening to advice we have decided that the best way to do this is to encourage you all to share contact details at school events. Going forward, we will suggest this at our events so that you can all stay in touch with one another, offer each other support and keep in touch with upcoming dates and events.



Our next focus group event will be at the end of next half term. We will be in touch soon with the dates.

### Attendance Matters



“Being in school is important to your child’s achievement, wellbeing, and wider development.” Department of Education





## Therapy team family support groups

A huge thanks to all the parents who attended the recent ***Exploring Behaviour*** workshop at Blythdale. We look forward to seeing more of you at Ashdale this week.

In response to the feedback so far, we will be offering a series of follow up workshops linked to understanding and supporting behaviour. Please find details in the table below.

Each session will be open to parents/carers from both sites.

**NB: Places are limited due to space availability within school. Therefore, we will need confirmed numbers in advance so please respond as soon as possible to secure your place.**

Blythdale (01670) 352 556

Ashdale: (01670) 336906

**Email**

[admin@thedaes.northumberland.sch.uk](mailto:admin@thedaes.northumberland.sch.uk)

Topic	Blythdale	Ashdale
Exploring Behaviour	Monday 5th February 9:30-11am	Thursday 15th February 9:30-11am
Sensory differences	Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> March February 9:30-11:30am	Thursday 7th March 9:30-11am
Exploring links between brain science & behaviour.	Monday 11th March 9:30-11.30am	Thursday 21st March 9:30-11am
Communication and relationships	Monday 25th March 9:30-11.30am	Thursday 28th March 9.30-11am
Zones of Regulation	Monday 15th March 9:30-11.30am	Date to be confirmed
Parent/Carer wellbeing	Date to be confirmed	Date to be confirmed

Look forward to seeing you soon

Kind Regards

Deborah Hill and Jeni Mosley  
(OT and Speech and Language Therapist)



We are hosting a Youth Mental Health First Aid Course. This course is accredited and the certificate will last for a number of years (similar to that of a physical first aid course).

The course is across two days:

**Day 1 - Tuesday 14th May 9am-3pm**

**Day 2 - Tuesday 21st May 9am-3pm**

If you would like to attend, or would like further information, please contact

[amy.taylor@thedaless.northumberland.sch.uk](mailto:amy.taylor@thedaless.northumberland.sch.uk)

## Safeguarding update

The Dales School is committed to keeping all children safe. Our staff regularly participate in safeguarding training and are fully aware of how to keep our pupils safe and what signs to look out for. Our pupils know they can share any concerns and we have robust policies and procedures in place which underpin safeguarding all up to date policies can be found on our website. It is our paramount priority to keep all children healthy and safe. Our Designated Safeguarding Leads are:

Sally Collins



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### Deputy Safeguarding Staff

#### Ashdale

Kim  
Lamb



Team 1, 2 & 3

Rachel  
Straker



Team 4 & 5

Demi  
Stroughton



Teams 6, 7 & Family  
Partnership

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#### Blythdale

Ashley  
Ferguson



Team 1

Glynis  
Burn



Team 2

Tracy  
Henderson



Team 2

Liz  
Sanderson



Team 3

Amy  
Taylor



Team 4



Safeguarding Governor  
Katie Murray

## Are you worried about online sexual abuse or the way someone has been communicating online?



On our website we now have the link to CEOP to offer advice and support on Internet Safety



## Our School Rules



## Talking Camera's Project



B11 are currently taking part in a Photography project called 'Talking Cameras.'

They are exploring how to use cameras in a variety of ways, taking close-ups, changing the light and the mood, taking portrait pictures and having fun using their own images in mini worlds.

They also visited The Great North Museum to explore the Ice Age and use the cameras to enhance their learning make the experience more exciting and enable them to have visual references on return.





# **The Dales School**

## **Your Family Partnership Team**

**Blythdale:** Glynis Burn and Tracy Henderson

**Ashdale:** Suzanne Pinkney

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### **How We Can Help You!**

- By being a contact in school to offer advice/ information, or to help you to access other services who may be able to help.
- By supporting you to liaise with other professionals and services.
- By providing workshops or events to enhance adult learning.
- Being available for 1:1 sessions to support you with any issues you are experiencing, including completing forms (e.g DLA), applying for funding, or accessing other services.
- Helping you build relationships with other parents and carers of children with similar needs.

And much more... Please contact us for a chat.

### **Parent Open Days**

Thank you to everyone who came along to your 'Open Day' Appointment. Our aim is to increase communication with parents/carers and we hope that this was beneficial.

### **Proposed Training (After Half Term)**

We are hoping to run the 'Steps' programme after half term. Unfortunately this was cancelled before Christmas due to the lack of response. Information will be sent out as soon as we arrange a venue to run the programme

***'The Steps Programme is designed to promote self-esteem and confidence, which will give you the confidence to step out of your comfort zone and set new goals'***

On behalf of the Family Team we would like to wish you an enjoyable and safe half term.

## Kids Clothing Café



To remind all parents/carers that we have a lovely selection of Children's pre-loved clothing (free), in our Clothing Café at Blythdale

We also have a selection of pre-loved School Uniform.

If you would like to pop in for a coffee and browse, please contact us. Alternatively, please let us know sizes etc. and we can send home some items (*Don't forget siblings as well!!*)

**Contact Glynis or Tracy on 01670 352556  
Or Suzanne on 01670 336906**

**The Family Partnership Team**



## Dates for your diary

Return to school	Monday 26 <sup>th</sup> February
World Book Day	7 <sup>th</sup> March

