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10th May 2021

Dear Parents/Carers and Families,

Mental Health Awareness week
10th -16th May 2021

This week is Mental Health Awareness week, hosted by the Mental Health Foundation, <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/campaigns/mental-health-awareness-week>

The need to maintain good mental health has been a well discussed topic in educational settings for some years now and even more so for all ages during the last 14 months whilst we have managed our way through the pandemic.

We must continue to ensure that mental health is discussed and understood in the same way we have focused on physical health for so long and we understand the link between the two. Mental health awareness week aims to raise awareness, focus on prevention of poor mental health provide information to help us all understand the subject better.

This year, the focus for Mental Health Awareness Week is on **Connecting to the Nature**. Nature is so central to our psychological and emotional health, that it is almost impossible to realise good mental health for all without a greater connection to the natural world. Being in nature is one of the most supportive things we can do to support our own mental health. Whether being out on the bike, running, walking the dog, or playing outside with the kids, no matter the length of time, being outside makes us feel better. For the last 12 months we have been restricted to being indoors much more. Whilst we are still cautiously coming out of lockdown, we need to find ways to get outside and

embrace the power of connecting to nature. It is something we can all do and is proven to have a positive impact on mental health.

We must also continue to work on talking openly about our mental health. I am immensely proud that the culture we continue to develop at Norcot allows our children, parents, families and staff to talk openly about their mental health. We are always here to provide support or signpost to specialist support if necessary. One of the ways we are working to help prevent mental health problems is to develop therapeutic thinking and promote positive attitude. There is a growing body of research around these, and we see them as helping all our community as we develop in the years ahead.

As quoted by the Duchess of Cambridge, Kate Middleton, “A child’s mental health is just as important as their physical health and deserves the same quality of support. No one would feel embarrassed about seeking help if they broke their arm and we really should be equally ready to support a child coping with difficulties.”

The past 14 months has been especially challenging for us all- children, parents, families and staff. We have all been affected by the pandemic in different ways. Please remember that we are always here to support you. We can help you if you are struggling and provide guidance as well as signpost you to useful resources, tips and advice or just offer a listening ear. We can help you to spot the signs that children may be struggling with their mental health and show you how to support them. If you would like any support please contact Helen Walsh our Centre Development Manager and Safeguarding and Welfare Lead on 07494870992 or email hwalsh@norcot.reading.sch.uk

Yours sincerely,



Mrs. Katarina Bingham
Head of Centre