St Robert Southwell Catholic Primary School

Aiming for Excellence - Being the Best We Can Be

Mental Health and Wellbeing Newsletter

Autumn 2026

Back to School, Back to Routine

As we settle into a new school year, we know that getting back into the rhythm of school life can take a little time. The return to earlier mornings, busy school days, homework, clubs and activities can be an adjustment for children and families alike. Even when children are excited to be back, they may feel tired, overwhelmed or a little unsettled as they get used to new routines and expectations.

At this time of year, small things can make a big difference to wellbeing. Establishing predictable routines, making time for rest and family connection, and finding a healthy balance between schoolwork, activities and free time can help children feel secure and ready to learn.

In this newsletter, we share some simple ideas to support your child's wellbeing at home.

Finding the Balance at Home

After a busy school day, children need a balance of **responsibility, activity, relaxation and connection**.

It can be tempting to fill children's afternoons and evenings with homework, clubs and activities, but having time to simply relax and be themselves is just as important.

Try to create a balance between:

Homework and reading

Encourage children to have a regular time and, where possible, a quiet place for completing homework. Try to build in breaks and avoid allowing homework to take over the whole evening.

Try to make time for reading each day, whether that is reading independently, sharing a book together or listening to a story. Reading does not always have to feel like "schoolwork", choosing a book, magazine or topic that interests your child can help make reading an enjoyable part of their routine.

For younger children, sharing a story together can be a lovely opportunity to slow down and connect at the end of the day. For older children, encourage them to find time to read something they genuinely enjoy. Even a short amount of regular reading can become a positive and relaxing habit.

Following Jesus' footsteps and inspired by St. Robert Southwell we work hard, aim high and treat everyone with honesty and gentleness.

⚽ **Clubs and activities**
Extra-curricular activities can be a wonderful way for children to develop interests, friendships and confidence. However, children do not need to do everything! Consider whether their weekly schedule leaves enough time for rest.

🎮 **Free time and play**
Unstructured time gives children an opportunity to play, be creative, use their imagination and simply switch off.

👪 **Family time**
Even small moments of connection can make a difference, eating together, talking about the day, playing a game or going for a walk.

😴 **Rest and sleep**
A good night's sleep is one of the foundations of children's physical and emotional wellbeing.

A helpful question to ask:

"Does my child's week have a healthy balance of things they have to do, things they enjoy and time to simply relax?"

Establishing Routines

Children often feel more secure when they know what to expect. A predictable routine can also help reduce the number of decisions and reminders needed throughout the day.

You could try:

- Preparing school bags and uniform the night before.
- Having a consistent bedtime and wake-up routine.
- Setting aside a regular time for homework.
- Building in some downtime after school.
- Having regular mealtimes where possible.
- Allowing children to take increasing responsibility for their own routines.

Remember: routines do not have to be perfect! Finding a routine that works for your family and sticking with it most of the time is more important than getting everything right.

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After School: Time to Decompress

Sometimes children come home from school and seem tired, irritable or emotional.

This does not necessarily mean that something is wrong. A school day involves concentrating, learning, socialising, following expectations and managing many emotions.

For some children, the transition from school to home can be a particularly important part of their day.

A snack, a drink, some fresh air, quiet time or a chat can help children to **reset before moving on to homework or other activities**.

Sometimes, the best thing after a busy school day is simply some time to relax.

Checking In With Your Child

"How was school today?"

"Fine."

Sound familiar?

Sometimes changing the question can open up a much better conversation.

Instead, try asking:

- *What was the best thing about your day?*
- *Did anything make you laugh today?*
- *What was the trickiest part of your day?*
- *Who did you enjoy spending time with?*
- *Is there anything you're looking forward to tomorrow?*

You do not always need to solve a problem. Sometimes **listening and giving your child your full attention is enough**.

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Our everyday habits can have a big impact on how we feel.

Encourage children to:

- Drink plenty of water
- Eat regular, balanced meals
- Get enough sleep
- Spend time outdoors
- Be physically active
- Have regular breaks from screens
- Spend time connecting with family and friends

These simple things provide the foundations for good physical and emotional wellbeing.

Small Things Make a Big Difference

Every child and every family is different. Some children settle into a new routine quickly, while others need a little longer. There may be days when everything goes smoothly and other days when it does not!

There is no such thing as a perfect routine or a perfect parent. What matters is creating a home environment where children feel **safe, supported, listened to and loved**.

As we begin the new school year, let us focus on the small things that help our children, and ourselves feel happy, healthy and ready for the weeks ahead.

Small steps. Healthy routines. Happy children.

If you have any concerns about your child's wellbeing, please do not hesitate to speak to a member of staff.