December 2025

SAFEGUARDING UPDATE

All About Sleep

Welcome to this term's wellbeing newsletter.

This term, we're focusing on the importance of healthy sleep routines and calm evenings at home. The period between home time and bedtime plays a crucial role in helping children feel secure, settled and ready to learn the next day. Establishing consistent routines and clear expectations around sleep can have a significant impact on children's emotional wellbeing, behaviour and concentration in school.

Supporting Healthy Sleep and Evening Routines

Good sleep is essential for children's wellbeing, behaviour and learning. **Research consistently shows that children who sleep well are better able to concentrate, manage their emotions and engage positively with school life.** However, sleep difficulties are extremely common in childhood and often change as children grow and develop.

This term, we are sharing guidance to support families in establishing calm, predictable evening routines and healthy sleep habits.

Why sleep matters

Sleep plays a vital role in children's physical growth, brain development and emotional regulation. A lack of sleep can affect:

- attention and memory
- mood and behaviour
- resilience and stress levels
- readiness to learn

Public Health England and the NHS both highlight sleep as a key protective factor for children's mental health and overall development.

How much sleep do children need?

Children's sleep needs change with age, but as a general guide:

- Young children typically need 10–12 hours of sleep per night
- Primary-age children usually need around 9–11 hours
- Teenagers still need 8–9 hours, despite often feeling more alert later in the evening

It is normal for children's sleep patterns to fluctuate during periods of growth, change or stress.

The importance of routines and boundaries

Clear, consistent routines help children understand what to expect and reduce anxiety around bedtime. Evidence shows that predictable routines support emotional security and self-regulation.

Helpful strategies include:

- keeping bedtime and wake-up times consistent, including weekends
- following the same calming routine each evening (for example: bath, pyjamas, story, bed)
- beginning to wind down at least an hour before bedtime

Sleep East emphasises that routines do not need to be complex — consistency is far more important than perfection.

Creating a sleep-friendly environment

A calm sleep environment supports better quality rest. This includes:

- a quiet, dark and comfortable bedroom
- limiting background noise such as televisions
- avoiding screens before bed, as blue light can interfere with melatonin production

The NHS recommends avoiding screens for at least one hour before bedtime, as devices stimulate the brain and make it harder for children to fall asleep.



Common sleep challenges

Many children experience bedtime resistance, night waking or fears at different stages of development. These difficulties are often temporary and linked to separation anxiety, worries, changes in routine or developmental milestones.

Sleep East advises calm reassurance, gentle consistency and avoiding lengthy discussions during the night. Quietly returning children to bed and keeping responses predictable can help reinforce sleep routines without increasing anxiety.

When to seek further support

If sleep difficulties are ongoing and significantly affect your child's mood, behaviour or learning, it may be helpful to seek advice from your GP, health visitor or school nursing team. Support is available, and sleep difficulties are a common reason families ask for help.

If you would like advice or signposting to further support, please speak to a member of the school team.



Top 5 Sleep Tips for Children

1. Keep bedtime consistent Aim for the same bedtime and wake-up time every day, including weekends. This helps regulate your child's body clock.
2. Create a calm bedtime routine Follow the same calming steps each night (for example: bath, pyjamas, story, bed). Predictable routines help children feel secure and ready for sleep.
3. Switch off screens before bed Try to avoid TV, tablets and phones for at least an hour before bedtime. Screens stimulate the brain and can delay sleep.
4. Make the bedroom sleep-friendly A quiet, dark, and slightly cool room supports better sleep. Use night lights only if needed and keep them dim.
5. Stay calm and consistent Night-time waking and bedtime resistance are common. Calm reassurance and consistency are more effective than long conversations or changing routines.

Further Reading and Resources

https://healthiernw.co.uk/directory/sleep-east-2/
https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/childrens-sleep/
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-wellbeing-jsna-toolkit
https://thesleepcharity.org.uk/information-support/children/



For any of your safeguarding concerns:

If you ever have a concern about a child or adult please speak to any member of staff who will support you, alternatively you can speak with our Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mr Amies.

We have updated the safeguarding page on our website. There are some helpful links to organisations that might be able to provide support for you, should you require, with such things as bereavement, benefits, debt, legal issues and more.

For more information, visit the safeguarding section of our website:

https://www.sheringhamprimary.norfolk.sch.uk/our-school/safeguarding/

We are able to offer support with many family issues, so please do contact Mr Amies, at the school, if you would like to discuss anything that we might be able to help with.

We also have trained Domestic Violence Champions for Change in school.

If anyone would like advice or information on this very sensitive area please contact Mrs Carter or Mr Amies.

Useful Links:

Our Safeguarding Policy

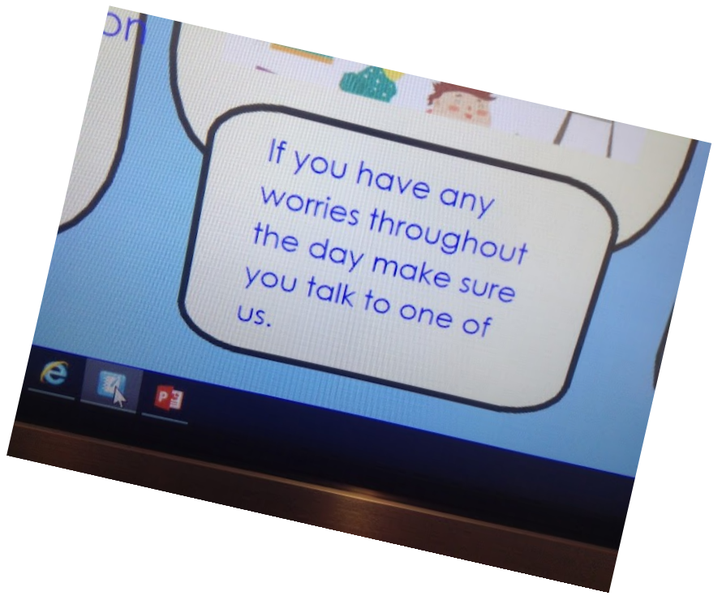
Our Anti-Bullying Policy

Our Behaviour Policy

Our Attendance Policy

Our Curriculum Policy

Our e-Safety Policy



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