



Nemo sibi nascitur:

*Our values of **community**, **aspiration** and **opportunity** enable every individual to grow and flourish*

Supporting Student Wellbeing

June 2026

At Parmiter's, we are incredibly proud of our Sixth Formers. In the last newsletter, you were introduced to our Youth Ambassadors. In this edition, you will find an article they have written on the subject of mental health and how parents and carers can support their children.

As our children navigate the often-turbulent years of adolescence, **resilience** becomes one of the most valuable tools in their kit. Resilience isn't just about 'toughing it out'; it's your teen's ability to bounce back from setbacks, manage stress, and navigate the complexities of growing up. By helping them build these skills now, we are preparing them for the challenges of adulthood and therefore it's one of our key Parmiter's Learner Traits.

Summer is almost here so we have included a list of low-cost, high impact activities for you and your family which could have a transformative effect on wellbeing.



What We Wish Our Parents Knew

During difficult times, support from parents and carers is vital. Often we might feel as if parents do not understand our feelings, and so we might not try to explain them at all. The reality is, times have changed: perceptions about mental health and resources for support have changed hugely over the last half decade. Because of this, parents often have different views of mental health than young people do, making it daunting to approach a parent to ask for emotional support. But by acknowledging your child's feelings, listening without judgement and providing them with useful resources, you can easily help to create a safe space for your child, allowing them to open up and improve their emotional wellbeing.

One of the most important things you can do for your children is to really listen to them. Young people do not always need immediate solutions or advice - often, they simply need to feel heard and understood. When parents take the time to recognise and validate their child's emotions, whether they are feeling stressed, disappointed, excited, or overwhelmed, it helps young people feel supported, respected, and valued. Active listening means giving your full attention when they talk, not interrupting, and showing that what they say matters. Many young people may struggle to express worries, so feeling heard can greatly improve their confidence and wellbeing. Simple actions like making eye contact, removing distractions, and asking gentle follow-up questions show genuine interest. It is also important not to rush into giving advice, as sometimes children just need to feel understood and listened to. When you listen in this way, it creates a safe, supportive space where children feel valued and comfortable sharing their thoughts and feelings.

When your child comes to you with a concern or difficult emotion, try to avoid dismissing, minimising, or comparing their feelings to those of others. Comments such as "it's not a big deal," "you'll be fine," or "other people have it worse" may be intended to reassure, but they can leave young people feeling unheard or misunderstood. You should also avoid rushing to solve the problem before fully listening to what your child is trying to express. Instead, take time to acknowledge their feelings, ask questions, and show genuine interest in their perspective. Even if you do not fully understand or agree with how they feel, showing empathy and patience can help build trust and encourage open communication.

Secondary school is a scary time for anyone, and it's important as parents to listen first. The feeling of being listened to as students is more important than anything, and can help a child to open up. Simply asking them how their day is and asking about what they've done allows a child to open up slowly, but it is important for you to remain neutral and calm. Speaking gently to them firstly helps your child feel safe to speak out and also gives them the comfort that they can speak without judgment. Another thing a parent can do to help their child is by simply taking them out. Going to the town centre or even out with friends and family allows them to be more social and encourages

them to go outside. With many kids staying inside all the time, this can further heighten one's mental health and a gentle push to go out removes the risk of a child developing low mood.

However, it's important not to push your child too much, as it could lead them to shut down fully, so it's crucial to approach your child slowly and calmly. On the whole, being calm gives your child the comfort to speak out and know that they can trust you to speak out.

Supporting your child through the stress of teenage years does not mean having all the answers. The most important thing is creating a judgement-free zone, where you can make your child feel safe, understood and heard. It may seem too simple to be effective, but these actions can actually make a huge difference in strengthening trust and encouraging open communication, helping young people to develop healthy coping skills and feel more confident in seeking support when they need it. Ultimately, this makes a lasting difference in your child's wellbeing and mental health.

by Parmiter's Year 12 Youth Ambassadors

INFORMATION AND ADVICE ABOUT EMOTIONALLY BASED SCHOOL NON-ATTENDANCE (EBSNA) FOR FAMILIES

EBSNA can affect children and young people of any school age. It can happen as a result of a wide range of different factors - home, wider family, community, school, friendships - often a combination of some or all of these.

WHY COULD MY CHILD BE ANXIOUS?

Anxieties can stem from a number of things such as:

- An unmet special educational need such as autism, ADHD, dyslexia or dyspraxia
- Friendship issues, not 'fitting in', or bullying
- Finding schoolwork confusing and overwhelming
- Separation anxiety
- Trauma
- Bereavement
- Low self-esteem
- The environment itself - especially for those who are autistic and/or neurodivergent

A child might become anxious about school at any stage. It can occur when children start school or transition into secondary school, or it might be related to puberty or hormonal changes. Read more on the [Local Offer website](#).

WHAT ARE THE WARNING SIGNS

- ❓ Can you spot patterns in your child's absence from school, e.g. certain days/activities?
- ❓ Does your child regularly say they don't want to go to school, or reluctant/delaying going to school?
- ❓ Does your child struggle with changes to environment, routine or stimulus?
- ❓ Are there physical symptoms on school days e.g. tummy aches, feeling sick, headaches?

(NB please always check with a GP to rule out any medical cause or illness).

WHAT TO DO

- 👍 Ask for a meeting with your child's school involving someone who knows your child e.g. class teacher, pastoral lead, SENCo. Be prepared by taking along any notes about the things your child finds difficult.
- 👍 Work together with school to build a child centred plan that understands the underlying problems which are making your child feel anxious about going to school. This could include adjustments to help your child access their education. There are tools which can help such as [Hertfordshire's EBSNA Framework](#)
- 👍 Include your child's voice in any plan as they are more likely to be able to stick to it. Check in after a while and review it with your school to see what is working well and what is not.
- 👍 Do advocate for your child's needs but also understand the limitations as to what your school might be able to do.
- 👍 If the agreed strategies are not working, speak again with your school to identify other services and professionals that might be able to support your child. The [Herts Hub](#) has a wealth of mental health signposting and ideas for early help.

STRATEGIES TO TRY AT HOME

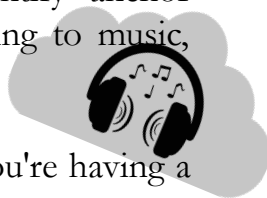
- ✓ Develop a plan for the evenings, which can include calming activities before bedtime e.g. gentle music, bath, story or reading.
- ✓ Also plan for the morning, and where possible get things ready for the next day the night before (school bag, lunch box etc).
- ✓ Make a diary which includes your child's worries and also identifies positives and what works well.
- ✓ Respond with empathy whilst encouraging small, manageable steps.
- ✓ Visual timetables at home and school might also help.

Supporting Your Teen's Resilience

Here are some practical ways you can support your teenager's emotional strength:

1. Foster Self-Regulation & Self-Compassion

Teens face intense pressure—socially, academically, and personally. Help them identify 'anchor activities' that help them reset when they feel overwhelmed, whether that's listening to music, hitting the gym, or simply decompressing.



Validate their feelings: When they are irritable or down, acknowledge it: 'I can see you're having a tough day, and that makes sense.'

The 'Kindness Inward' rule: We often teach teens to be kind to friends: remind them to extend that same grace to themselves. Self-criticism usually hinders resilience, while self-compassion fuels it.

2. Build Authentic Confidence

Confidence grows when a teen feels capable. While praise is important, earned confidence through independence is even more powerful.

Step back to let them step up: Allow them to navigate minor conflicts or academic hurdles on their own first. Overcoming a challenge independently builds a sense of 'I can handle this.' Praise the process and the persistence rather than just the final grade or win.

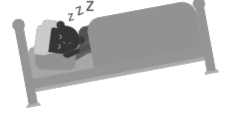
3. Maintain a United Support Network

Teenagers thrive when they know they have a 'village.' Keeping a positive, open line of communication with their teachers, coaches, or mentors sends a powerful message: they are supported from all angles. When the adults in their life work together, it creates a safety net that allows the teen to take healthy risks and reach their full potential.

4. Prioritise the 'Sleep Shield'

It's no secret that everything feels harder on four hours of sleep. For a teenager, lack of sleep directly impacts the brain's ability to regulate emotions and solve problems.

Encourage a consistent wind-down routine. A well-rested brain is a resilient brain; challenges that seem insurmountable at 11 PM often feel manageable after a good night's rest.



5. 'Healthy Struggle' (Delayed Gratification)

In a world of instant downloads and next-day delivery, learning to wait or lose is a superpower.

Normalise setbacks: Whether they didn't make the team or a project failed, use these as 'low-stakes' opportunities to practise recovery. Help them see that 'not yet' doesn't mean 'never.'

6. Model Openness & Healthy Coping

Your teen is watching how you handle stress. You don't have to be perfect, but you can be a role model.

Create a Safe Harbour: When they vent, try to listen without jumping straight into 'fix-it' mode or lecturing. Being a non-judgemental sounding board encourages them to keep coming to you.

Show your 'work!': Let them see you handle a mistake or a stressful day with a positive outlook. If you're stressed, narrate your coping strategy: 'I'm feeling really overwhelmed with work, so I'm going to take a walk to clear my head.'



Summer Holiday Activities

- Enjoy Local Green Spaces

Encourage your child to explore local parks, gardens or nature reserves. These spaces often offer a peaceful environment for independent play, exercise or time with friends.

- Discover Community Resources

Leisure centres, youth clubs and local recreation grounds may host free or low-cost events during the holidays. Look out for 'free swim' sessions or community fun days organised by the local council.

- Visit the Library

Local libraries can be a great resource. Check opening times and available services, such as free computer access, reading clubs or summer programmes for young people.

- Volunteer Locally

Getting involved in community or youth groups as a volunteer can be an excellent way for young people to build confidence, meet new friends and develop new skills.

- Get Creative: Write a Book or Magazine

Encourage your child to write and illustrate their own story or magazine. This can be a fun and imaginative way to use simple materials like paper, pens and pencils while developing literacy and creativity.

- Take on a Personal Challenge

Summer can be a great time to learn a new skill. Some ideas include:

- Learning to ride a bike or swim
- Trying out roller skating or skateboarding
- Exploring a new language using library books or free apps.

- Stay Connected

Help your child find ways to stay in touch with friends and classmates. Consider suggesting regular meet-ups at local parks or shopping centres to maintain social connections.

- Watch a Film

Check if local cinemas offer discounted or free screenings for young people during the holidays.

- Learn Through Local Museums and Galleries

Many museums and galleries offer free entry and can provide both educational and enjoyable experiences. Look online to find ones nearby and explore their summer events.

- Become a Photographer

Encourage your child to take photos of their surroundings using a phone or camera.

Sources of Support

Who to talk to at school:

Your child's form tutor would normally be the first point of contact, however, we recognise that students develop strong working relationships with various trusted adults across the staff body. Our school matron and pastoral support base team are available too. Aside from offering 1:1 support, Mrs Craigie (School Matron) is available for those students who have been bereaved. Bespoke Group Work is sensitively undertaken as the need arises and numbers allow. Please contact Mrs Craigie directly if you would like more information about this.

Additionally, there are many local, external sources of support that you and your child can access:

- Children's Wellbeing Practitioner Workshops - Teenagers and parents and carers of children aged 5 to 19 can book on to the free online workshops supporting adolescents' and children's emotional wellbeing and mental health. Topics include managing anxiety, improving sleep, supporting self-esteem, and building emotional resilience. The workshops are delivered by Children's Wellbeing Practitioners. Find out more and book at: [Children's Wellbeing Practitioners](#)
- Hertfordshire's My Teen Brain - [Parents and Family Support](#) Advice and tips for parents of teenagers
- Hertfordshire Directory - [Parenting Courses](#) Details of free courses available for Hertfordshire parents/carers to help them support their children with a number of issues, including anger, sleep, anxiety, transitions and more
- Just Talk Herts - [Advice for Parents and Carers](#) Online emotional wellbeing resources for parents and carers and signposting
- Neurodiversity Support - [Signposting to Support](#) Learn more about available support in Hertfordshire.
- Sandbox Podcast - [The Talkbox](#) - Podcasts for parents, carers, and professionals about young people's mental health
- WithYouth Digital Wellbeing Service - [Support for Parents](#)

National Resources

- Beat Eating Disorders - [Information for parents and carers](#)
- Royal College of Psychiatrists - [Information for parents and carers](#)
- This May Help - [Practical advice that may help](#)
- Young Minds - [Support for parents](#)