

Supporting Children and Young People's Wellbeing

Information and Support for Parents and Carers

Dear Parent or Carer,

Oxfordshire County Council's Public Health Team is working closely with schools, health services, voluntary sector organisations and community partners to support the emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people across Oxfordshire.

On behalf of this partnership, we are sharing information, advice and resources to help parents and carers support their children to thrive, build resilience, maintain positive mental wellbeing and access support when needed.

What Do We Mean by Positive Mental Wellbeing?

Mental wellbeing is more than the absence of illness. It is about helping children and young people to:

- Feel connected to others.
- Build confidence and self-esteem.
- Develop healthy coping skills.
- Feel safe, valued and supported.
- Enjoy friendships, learning and activities.
- Manage life's challenges and setbacks.
- Develop a sense of purpose, hope and belonging.

All children and young people will experience ups and downs. Having caring relationships, opportunities to talk, healthy routines and access to support when needed can help them flourish.

Supporting Your Child's Wellbeing

Parents and carers play one of the most important roles in promoting wellbeing. Simple things can make a big difference:

- Spending regular time together.
- Encouraging hobbies, interests and physical activity.
- Supporting healthy sleep habits.
- Helping children build positive relationships.
- Celebrating achievements and strengths.
- Encouraging balanced use of social media and technology.
- Creating opportunities to talk openly about feelings and experiences.

You do not need to have all the answers. Often, listening, staying curious and letting your child know you are there for them is what matters most.

Talking About Mental Health

Talking openly about mental health helps reduce stigma and encourages help-seeking. You may wish to:

- Check in regularly and ask how your child is doing.

- Listen without judgement.
- Validate feelings even when you do not fully understand them.
- Let them know it is okay to ask for help.
- Reassure them that difficult feelings can improve and support is available.



When Might Additional Support Be Helpful?

Sometimes children and young people may experience difficulties that would benefit from additional support. You may wish to seek advice if you notice:

- Persistent changes in mood.
- Withdrawal from friends, family or activities they usually enjoy.
- Changes in sleep, eating or concentration.
- Increased distress, anxiety or irritability.
- Significant changes in behaviour.
- Expressions of hopelessness or feeling unable to cope.

Many of these experiences are common and can occur for a range of reasons, but seeking support early can often help prevent problems from becoming more difficult.

If You Are Concerned About Self-Harm or Suicide

If a child or young person talks about self-harm or suicide:

- Take what they say seriously.
- Remain calm and listen.
- Reassure them that support is available.
- Encourage them to speak with a trusted adult or professional.
- Seek support as soon as possible.

Talking openly and sensitively about suicide does not increase risk and can help young people feel understood and supported.

Support Available in Oxfordshire

Support to Thrive

School support

Schools can provide pastoral, wellbeing and safeguarding support and help identify appropriate services.

Oxfordshire Family Information Service

Information on local services, activities and support for children, young people and families.

[Visit the Oxfordshire Family Information Service website](#)

YoungMinds

Information and guidance for young people, parents and carers.

[Visit the YoungMinds website](#)

Support When Things Feel Difficult

Tellmi

A moderated, anonymous peer-support community with access to additional support when needed.

[Visit the Tellmi website](#)

GP

Your GP can discuss concerns about emotional wellbeing and help identify further support where needed.



Oxfordshire Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

If anyone is worried about a young person's mental health it is important to share concerns with them and appropriate safe adults. This might be at school or it might be with a health professional such as a GP or school nurse. CAMHS (Children's Mental Health Services) are available to consult and consider what might be helpful or if a CAMSH service is indicated. Their telephone number is 01865 902515 and there is further information including how to refer available at [Make a referral | Oxford Health CAMHS](#)..

Oxfordshire Safe Haven

A non-clinical crisis support service for Oxfordshire residents aged 18 and over. This may be helpful for parents and carers who need support themselves.

[Visit the Oxfordshire Safe Haven website](#)

Bereavement and Specialist Support

SeeSaw

Bereavement support for children, young people and families in Oxfordshire.

[Visit the SeeSaw website](#)

Amparo

Free and confidential emotional and practical support for anyone affected by suicide.

[Visit the Amparo website](#)

Urgent Help

If you believe a child or young person is at immediate risk of serious harm:

- Call 999 in an emergency.
- Attend your nearest Emergency Department.
- Contact NHS 111 and select the mental health option.
- Contact Oxford Health Crisis Mental Health Text Service 07312263127 – the team aims to respond within one hour.

Working Together to Support Young People

Supporting children and young people's wellbeing is a shared responsibility. By working together as families, schools, health services, community organisations and local partners, we can help create environments where young people feel safe, connected, valued and able to thrive.

If you are concerned about your child, please speak to your child's school, GP or one of the services listed above.

Kind regards,

Oxfordshire County Council Public Health Team