

PHSG STUDENT COUNCIL SUMMER HOLIDAY NEWSLETTER

Week 1 - Thursday 23rd July

Hello, my name is Zoe and I am one of the Deputy Head Students at Plymouth High.

I am delighted to be running Student Council this year. The team is very keen to improve the school experience for all students at Plymouth High.

Although we made a great start with successful meetings on Mayflower 400 and with Mrs Banks; as with many things unfortunately our projects have been put on hold.

We are experiencing very strange times and the team would like you all to know that we are still here for you. With that in mind, we have decided to send you a weekly newsletter over the summer holidays to keep in touch with you all and offer some suggestions of things to do at home during the holidays!

Although things are beginning to become more 'normal' now, it is still very difficult for everyone and we would like to help you in any way we can. Everyone has good and bad days and I hope these weekly newsletters will be a positive part of your week during the holidays and something you can look forward to receiving.

I must also say a huge thank you to the Student Council members who have got involved in this project and to Mrs Banks for her support and ideas for this newsletter.

Please support this initiative if you can. We would like to reach as many students as possible over the summer holiday so please let your friends know to check their PHSG email every Thursday!

The topic for this week is Mindfulness

Mindfulness is something that we all take part in through our Wellbeing lessons in year 7, but we can sometimes forget the value and benefit of Mindfulness to our overall well being and mental health. I remember enjoying the 'Mindful Minute' in year 7, being able to reflect on your day and your week and collect your thoughts. This is something we could all try to do over the holidays! Mindfulness is also a great way to adapt from home learning to the school holidays.

Here are some mindful activities that we can all try to incorporate into our week and on pages 4 and 5 there are some printable mindful colouring pages!



1. Mindful breathing for one minute

Lower your eyes and notice where you feel your breath. It could be the air going in and out of your nostrils or the rise and fall of your chest or stomach. If you can't feel anything, place your hand on your stomach and notice how your hand gently rises and falls with your breath. If you like, you can lengthen the in breath and the out breath.

Focus on your breath. When your mind wanders bring your attention back to your breath. You might like to say 'thinking' when you notice your thoughts wander and then gently bring your attention back to your breath.

You can do this for longer than one minute but even for one minute it will allow you to pause and be in the moment. Or you might just like to breathe out *stress* on the out breath and breathe in *peace* on the in breath.

2. STOP

Stand up and breathe. Feel your connection to the earth.

Tune in to your body. Lower your gaze. Scan your body and notice physical sensations or emotions. Discharge any unpleasant sensations, emotions or feelings on the out breath. Notice pleasant ones and take them in on the in breath.

Observe. Lift your eyes and take in your surroundings. Observe something in your environment that is pleasant and be grateful for it and its beauty.

Possibility. Ask yourself what is possible or what is new or what is a step forward.

If you find yourself being reactive, try the following steps:

- Pause and take one to three big breaths
- Say "step back" (You don't have to physically step back, you can just do it in your mind)
- Say "clear head" and "calm body"
- Breathe again. Say "relax," "melt" or "ease"



3. Mindful Jar

You could make a mindful jar! A mindful jar is a powerful visual metaphor of your feelings and behaviours. You can shake the jar and watch the glitter move around before it gradually settles. As the glitter settles to the bottom of the jar, you can relate that to your mind settling too.

So how can you make one? First, get a clear jar and fill it almost all the way to the top with water. Add a big spoonful of glitter glue or glue and dry glitter to the jar. Place the lid back on the jar and shake it to make the glitter swirl.

4. Gratitude List

When you wake up in the morning or before you go to bed at night you could write a gratitude list. A gratitude list is a record of five to ten things in your life that you're grateful for.

By reflecting on what you are grateful for, research has found that levels of gratitude increase and people feel significantly happier. Gratitude lists help you to focus on the positives and what is working.

You could try to make the list specific to your summer holiday and say exactly what you are grateful for and give an example.

Here are some benefits that mindfulness can bring to you:

1. Reduce worries, anxiety and distress
2. Create a sense of calm
3. Relax and better manage your emotions
4. Improve concentration and increase productivity
5. Develop compassion and connectedness
6. Fall asleep faster and sleep better



DISCLAIMER: This newsletter was prepared and written by the students of Plymouth High School. All information in this newsletter was gathered by students of the PHSG Student Council. Any opinions expressed in this newsletter are from the students.



