

SEND Newsletter

Spring 1 (23-24)



RIDGEWOOD
HIGH SCHOOL



Year 9 Options

Over the coming weeks Year 9 will start to think about the GCSE choices they would like to study in KS4. Faculties will be briefing students on what certain subjects consist of and providing them with opportunities to ask any questions they may have.

Students with SEN will have additional opportunities to discuss their choices with their Key Workers to ensure they make informed decisions as they move onto the next milestone of the educational career.

Should you have any questions in relation to your child and their option choices, please do not hesitate to contact school and seek advice.

Welcome

As we approach the end of this half term, we find ourselves already halfway through the academic year! Whilst many of our students (and staff) feel that despite it being a 'short' half term, it has felt extremely long! Bring on the lighter mornings and evenings and some spring sunshine.

We are in the process of working on a way of best sharing your child's termly targets and their progress towards them with you. We want you to know what areas we are working on in school and feel reassured by the action we are taking to support your child. Look out for an update on this in the foreseeable future.

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Children's Mental Health Week

In school this week, pupils have had assemblies on Children's Mental Health to raise awareness and ensure that children and young people across the UK feel listened to, and know that they're not alone. This year's Children's Mental Health Week theme is **'My Voice Matters'**.

Did you know?

1 in 6 children and young people now have a diagnosable mental health condition.

Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. As adults, we should empower children and young people, and provide them with time, space, and opportunities to express themselves. We must also ensure they have opportunities to influence aspects of their worlds that directly - or indirectly - affect their wellbeing.

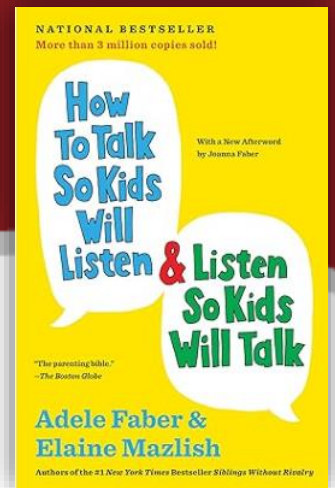
Empowering children and young people can have a positive impact on their health and wellbeing. For example, children and young people who feel that their voices are heard - and that what they say makes a difference - have higher levels of self-efficacy and self-esteem. They also have a greater sense of community - and as people become empowered, they can work together to create positive changes for themselves and for others.

Tips for families when talking to your child about Mental health:

- A short chat is often enough (sometimes a chat on a journey or at bedtime is more than ample).
- Hear what your child says without interrupting them or trying to make it better. Some situations don't always need fixing, your child just needs to know you are there for them.
- Listen carefully and acknowledge feelings - it might seem silly to you but what they are going through is important to them. Listening is often enough; children don't always need answers (or lectures!).
- Sometimes talking without a distraction is hard - bouncing a ball or stroking the cat may help.
- Don't compare childhood experiences - times have changed a lot since parents were children!
- If you are open with your child about your feelings, this can help them to be more open about theirs.
- Sometimes children don't want to talk. Trust that they will come to you (or another grown-up or someone their own age) when they're ready. Sometimes it's easier for them to talk to someone nearer their own age - my siblings, cousins, friends, younger teachers at school - because they 'get it'
- Sometimes a hug is all it takes to make them feel supported.



Children don't need to have their feelings agreed with; they need to have them acknowledged.



Listening

"How to Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk" by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish is a classic parenting book that provides practical communication strategies for building positive relationships with children. These lessons from "How to Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk" provide a foundation for effective and respectful communication between parents and children. Applying these principles can contribute to building positive relationships and fostering a supportive family environment.

Here are 10 lessons from the book:

1. Acknowledge Feelings:

Encourage open communication by acknowledging and validating your child's feelings. When children feel heard and understood, it creates a foundation for positive interaction.

2. Avoid Denial of Feelings:

Instead of dismissing a child's emotions, the book advises acknowledging and accepting their feelings. Denying feelings can lead to frustration and communication breakdowns.

3. Give Information in Manageable Parts:

Break down information into manageable parts to help children better understand and process. This approach can make instructions or explanations more accessible and effective.

4. Use Alternatives to Punishment:

The book advocates for using alternatives to punishment, such as acknowledging feelings, offering choices, and problem-solving together. This helps children learn from their experiences without feeling punitive.

5. Offer Choices:

Providing children with choices empowers them and encourages a sense of autonomy. It also helps prevent power struggles and fosters cooperation.

6. Describe, Don't Label:

Instead of labelling a child with negative terms, describe their behaviour or actions. This approach helps avoid a defensive reaction and encourages positive change.

7. Use "I" Statements:

Express your own feelings and needs using "I" statements. This helps prevent blaming and fosters a collaborative atmosphere where both parent and child can share their perspectives.

8. Encourage Autonomy:

Support your child's growing independence by giving them opportunities to make decisions and solve problems. This builds their confidence and decision-making skills.

9. Engage in Active Listening:

Practice active listening by fully focusing on what your child is saying without interrupting. This demonstrates respect and encourages children to share their thoughts and feelings more openly.

10. Problem-Solve Together:

Instead of imposing solutions, involve children in the problem-solving process. Collaborative problem-solving teaches valuable skills and helps children feel more in control of their lives.