

# Self-Care and Personal Wellness Recommendations from your School Counsellors

Dear Students and Families,

I want to start by saying that I miss you all very much and I understand that this is surely not how we all planned to be spending our last months of the school year. As a community, we are all dealing with a lot of changes and increased stress in our lives right now. The Covid-19 Pandemic has dramatically changed our regular daily lives; kids are not attending school and parents might not be going to their workplaces which means that we are spending a lot more time together in our homes and with our immediate families. When this first happened you might have been feeling excited about the possibility of an extended March Break, more free time and sleeping in which are all great things for a while...but as this period of change continues we might start to notice that our Mental Health is being negatively impacted and it is time to start taking more responsibility and control over our daily habits and routines in order to begin creating more balance, wellness and comfort in our homes. I have a few recommendations of how you can begin, and some priorities to start focusing on. We promise that if you practice some of these healthy personal habits you will start to feel more positive emotions and have better relationships with your family members.



## Sleep:

Did you know that kids need between 9-11 hours of sleep each night? Think back to last night, did you get enough sleep? Sleep has such a big impact on our capacity for learning, our emotional regulation and our creative potential. It is literally the single most important thing we can do for our health and well-being everyday. If you've ever woken up feeling extra tired and cranky because you didn't get enough sleep then you know what we are talking about!

I have been hearing lots of stories about kids enjoying some longer sleep-ins these past few weeks, and I actually think it's totally OKAY for you to sleep-in a little longer than you normally would if you had to be at school by 8:30am! BUT, it is important to be careful that you are not staying up so late that you are sleeping for most of the day. We recommend sticking to the same bedtime and wake up time each day. Bedtime should fall between 8-10PM and wake up times between 7-9AM.

When it comes to bedtime, it is also important to recognize the impact of technology on our sleep. Technology and screen time activate the part of our brain that makes us feel alert, which makes it harder to fall asleep. We should avoid screen time for 1 hour before our planned bedtime. Many families use a *Technology Cut-Off Time*; this means that there is a specific time

in the evening when phones, computers and TVs are turned off in preparation for a good night's sleep.

## **Routine:**

When school's not in session, it's easy for our regular routines to go out the window. This is a wonderful thing during school breaks like Christmas Holidays and March Break. But if this goes on for too long then the days and weeks start to blur and everyone begins feeling a little lost which will often lead to more complaints of boredom and family fights. I am recommending that you establish a family routine that will give some structure to your day. Let's be clear that I am NOT talking about a detailed schedule that feels exactly like a school day. Instead I am suggesting that you think about your household routine as a roadmap to outline your day to help you know what's coming and how you will use your time.



Creating a daily routine or structure will help to alleviate uncertainty which is something we already feel a lot of right now. When we start to take back control over our daily activities then we can feel less anxious, confused and bored which will make us feel much better overall.

I have attached a few examples of Daily Planners that you could use. These are meant to be flexible and adjusted to what works in your household. No two families' daily routine will look the same right now and that's okay, but what is important is that you create something that will work for you and your family. If you want more suggestions or guidance about how to create a routine or structure that will work for you, please reach out and I would be happy to help you!



## **Movement:**

It is pretty easy to become sedentary when we aren't leaving our homes very much, but now is the time that we NEED to move our bodies every single day. Movement and exercise fuels our brain with oxygen, but also activates natural neurotransmitters called Endorphins that help our brains think, make decisions and stay focused. Exercise really does grow a better brain! It's the reason we have daily PE classes at school, and it's the same reason that we need to make sure that we are all still moving our bodies, getting outside and staying active during the Pandemic.

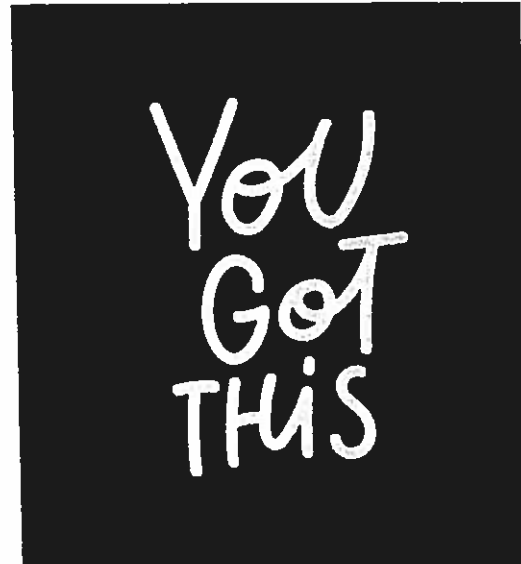
I recommend making specific plans around how you will get your daily dose of exercise and also breaking it up throughout the day. Maybe a morning stretch session, followed by an afternoon walk and an evening dance party or Wii game. Choose activities that you already like, and are easy to do in or around your home.

### **Taking Action, starts with YOU!**

Now is the time to start being proactive about your choices and begin to take more responsibility for your own self-care. We can change our thinking to consider this whole experience as a unique opportunity to develop some new healthy habits and a stronger sense of personal responsibility that will help you now and in the future. Start with some small changes, and practice doing them everyday. Focus on things you can control, and be proud of the little things you do.

As always, I am here if you need help, just **REACH OUT!**

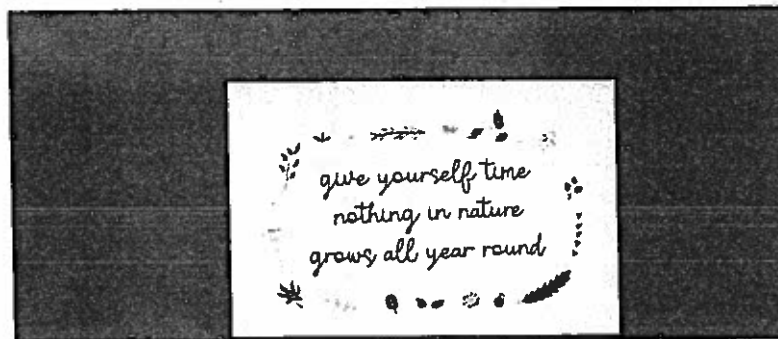
Ms. Wood  
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Also, check out the new School Counselling website that we have just launched. It can be accessed through the Jack Hulland School website. I will be posting new videos each week under the section "Intermediate Students" that will focus on Mental Wellness and Resilience. There are also a bunch of student activities, tips and resources just for you. **Check it out!**

## **SCHOOL COUNSELLING**

HOME CONTACT US FOR STUDENTS FOR PARENTS COMMUNITY RESOURCES



<http://jhesschoolcounsellors.weebly.com/>

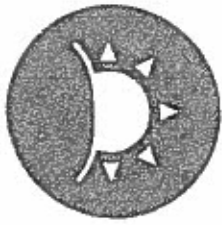


# What will my day look like today?

★ MUST DO ★

♥ WANT TO DO ♥

? COULD DO ?



MORNING



AFTERNOON



EVENING

A large grid area for planning the day, divided into four quadrants by dashed lines. The quadrants correspond to the time periods: Morning (top-left), Afternoon (top-right), Evening (bottom-left), and a fourth quadrant (bottom-right) which is not explicitly labeled but likely represents the end of the day or a continuation of the evening.


What will I do for...

 my body

 my brain

 my family

 my home

 fun

## Ideas for Today

<b>BREAKFAST</b>
<b>Morning Activity #1</b>
<b>Morning Activity #2</b>
<b>LUNCH</b>
<b>Afternoon Activity #3</b>
<b>Afternoon Activity #4</b>
<b>DINNER</b>