

# Oughton Health

Oughton Primary School Health & Well-Being Newsletter

Edition 7 Autumn Term 2021

Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter, Oughton Health, our very own newsletter with a focus on promoting good health, both physical and mental, as well as general good well-being. In this edition, we focus on the importance of talk on our well-being.

With half term nearly upon us, it is a good chance to get out and about. Autumn is a wonderful time of year to really use nature to promote the development of children. Whilst this may seem like an odd statement to make as the wet and dreary weather kicks in, the days grow shorter and everything seems some what muddier and duller, it doesn't take away from the wealth of learning that appears at this time of the year.

Not only can we spark interest with children discovering more about the world around them as they spot the changes, kick leaves, notice natural objects such as pine cones and acorns, notice cobwebs, spot squirrels burying nuts etc. etc. and generally become more in tune with wildlife but we can also reap the benefits.

Being out and about is not just good for our children's development and understanding of the world, it is good for us adults too. Walking allows us to discover peaceful places, where we can take a moment to listen to the birds, feel the breeze on our face or watch the sun filtering through the trees. According to the Nature and Mental Health report produced by the mental health charity Mind, spending time in nature can reduce anxiety and depression. It also states that being outside in natural light can lift a person's mood, especially during the winter.

Being outdoors, taking a walk or bike ride in our local woods or commons has so many other benefits:

- Helps develop creativity
- Improves muscle strength
- Improves body oxygenation;
- Increases respiratory capacity;
- Increases in cardiovascular functions;
- Improves heart rate and blood pressure regulation;
- Increases the ability to concentrate;
- Reduces the levels of stress or fatigue;
- Improves of mood and self-perception;
- Helps to prevent and to reduce depression.

With so many benefits, it is likely we will all be donning our warm coats and wellies and heading out to the Common this half term. After all, it is on our doorstep, does not cost a penny and will wear the children out! We look forward to seeing you there...see if you can spot us in a den!



## IN THIS ISSUE:

- The importance of being outdoors

## Watch out for our next issue:

- The importance of good dental hygiene



451 years ago, even Shakespeare was well aware of the benefits of walking for his health:

"...a turn or two I'll walk,  
To still my beating mind."  
Prospero, The Tempest.





You may have heard of Shinrin-Yoku therapy (or you may know it better as Forest Bathing). This practice was developed in Japan in the 1980s and was then promoted by the government after realising the positive impact this practice had on people. It has even been reported to be in effect *a preventive medicine*. Since then, the principles of Forest Bathing has spread around the world.

Forest Bathing/ Nature Therapy consists of spending time immersed in clean air, in greenery, and in the coolness of trees and plants that provide both physical, mental, and emotional benefits.

A calm, relaxed, and contemplatively immersion in nature, allows us to experience deep contact with nature and to enjoy ourselves whilst enjoying the beneficial effects a natural environment has on the body. Simply, Forest Bathing allows us to reconnect with nature.

So, why not try a spot of Forest Bathing this half term? Rather than just taking a stroll in a wood, try walking consciously, for at least a couple of hours, enjoying the sensations around you— the sounds and smells, and appreciate the calm of your surroundings. By do so, you will be freeing your mind and relaxing your body.

If you are not able to get out and about, how about trying a spot of Forest Bathing with your children from home? For more information, click on:

<https://www.forestryengland.uk/resource/forest-bathing-home-activity-sheets>



## ***Ideas for children to do in the great outdoors (you are sure to have many more!):***

- Leaf/pine cone etc. sorting – according to colour, size or shape.
- Build a hedgehog hotel out of natural resources.
- Scavenger hunts – take a list of things to look out for, make journey sticks or bands where any items of interest found can be stuck.
- Collect natural resources to make pictures with autumn colours e.g. hedgehog pictures, leaf men, wreaths etc.
- Conker or stone painting.
- Create bird feeders to give birds an extra hand over the cold winter months.
- Building dens.

### ***Game ideas:***

#### Capture-the-flag tag

You'll need four or more players. Divide into two teams and find an item like a scarf to be your 'flag', then place it on the ground. The aim is to try to get the other team's flag first. You can 'tag' opposing players. If you're tagged you have to freeze, but you can be unfrozen if a teammate taps you on the shoulder.

#### The tiptoe game

You might know this game by another name—it has many! Cover someone's eyes with a scarf. The others stand at least 20 paces away and try to sneak up on them. If they hear a noise, they point to where they think it came from. If they are right, that person must go back to the start. Be the first to tap the person whose eyes are covered without being caught.

#### Target practice

Find some pine cones. Draw a circle in the earth with a stick, and a smaller circle inside. Move 10 steps back. Take turns to throw cones into the circles. Score 10 if yours lands in the small circle and five for the outer one. Who gets the most points in three rounds?

