

Welcome to our  
**Mayfield SEND  
 & Well-Being** NEWSLETTER!



Hello and welcome to the first newsletter of the Summer Term!

Since our last edition, we have welcomed longer days following the changing of the clocks, a new King has been coronated, and we are now on our final stretch of the school year towards summer – which means exam season. We wish the very best of luck to our wonderful Year 6 students and our fantastic Year 11s, all of whom have worked extremely hard across this academic year. A big well done to the staff also, for supporting them through it!

In this edition of the newsletter, you'll find an article about Hollywood actor, Matthew McConaughey and how he has become a leading voice in wellbeing and grabbing life by its proverbial horns. You'll also find some information about possible links between hay fever, anxiety and depression in adolescents, and what to do about it.

Our SEND spotlight falls on 2 areas in this half-term's newsletter: firstly, the city's Neurodiversity team, which we have covered before but which bears repeating (please do contact them if you wish – they are a wonderful service for families!). Secondly, we shine our spotlight on Tourette Syndrome (TS) with some information and also some ideas of the support that we put in place at Mayfield for students with TS.

Finally, there is also an article about 'relational practice' – something that you may hear mentioned in school but not necessarily know a lot about.

Thank you for reading and enjoy!



**Matthew McConaughey**  
 – And What's He Got to Do  
 with Wellbeing??



When we think of wellbeing and people who speak out about it, giving life advice and making suggestions on how we can best make our way through this topsy-turvy journey that we all embark upon from the moment of birth, then 'Matthew McConaughey' is unlikely to be one of the first names that we think of. But, there's a chance we might be missing a trick here, because it turns out that Matthew has a fair bit to say, to the extent that his book, Green Lights, sold more than 3 million copies and remained a bestseller for over a year. That's not to be sniffed at. So, what does Matthew have to tell us?

Well, such is his popularity in this field, that he has recently completed a Youtube livestream that was attended by nearly ½ a million people – some of whom paid for a more VIP view of things, whereby they'd get the 'camera-on' experience and be seen by Matthew himself. During the 4-hour stream (I jest not – 4 hours!), he gave life advice to the keen listeners and observers, and that advice included these 4 highlights:

1. Decide exactly what we want from life – to get a better job, to be a better parent, to keep growing as a person.
2. Don't live in an 'echo chamber' – because surrounding yourself by people who only have the same as opinions as you, doesn't allow you to grow.
3. Don't keep making the same mistakes – take enough time to realise why things went wrong so that you get it right the next time.

So, there we go, the in-a-nutshell version of Mr McConaughey's life advice.

On reflection, it all sounds pretty similar to our Mayfield 6 Rs to us, so here's a reminder of what we all strive for every day in school! -



## SEND Spotlight – The City's Neurodiversity Team

If you have a child who is neurodivergent, then you may have already heard of the city's ND team. In Portsmouth last July, the CAMHS service for assessing whether young people have ND needs (such as autism or ADHD) was closed, except for children who were already on that pathway for an ND assessment and possible diagnosis of needs.

Instead, the city has become what is known as 'needs-led'. This means that, in school, we offer the same support to students who present as though they have ND needs, as we offer to students who have a diagnosis of ND needs. We have been trained to complete what is known as a Neurodiversity Profile, working out which area of need/s a child has (for example, 'attention and impulse'), and then putting appropriate support in place, such as, staff adapting their teaching accordingly so that the young person can better access learning.

If you have a child who you believe may be neurodivergent, or who has a diagnosis, then the city have also set up a special team to support families and young people. You can ring them for support if you'd like to speak to a professional:

**Website:**  
[www.solent-family-assist.custhelp.com](http://www.solent-family-assist.custhelp.com)

**Email address:**  
[Neurodiversity0-19Enquiries@portsmouthcc.gov.uk](mailto:Neurodiversity0-19Enquiries@portsmouthcc.gov.uk)

**Telephone Number: 02392 606051**



## What is Tourette Syndrome?

Tourette Syndrome is something that many of us have heard of and may know bits and bobs about, but not necessarily in enough depth to lead to any real understanding. A simplistic explanation of TS is that given by the Mayo Clinic, but in terms of how it may affect a young person or adult, and their family, friends, and education, is far-reaching. We often have preconceptions about people with TS, including that they always swear. This isn't necessarily the case, and tics can take different forms being vocal or motor (movement) related. According to the Mayo Clinic:

"Tourette (too-RET) syndrome is a disorder that involves repetitive movements or unwanted sounds (tics) that can't be easily controlled. For instance, you might repeatedly blink your eyes, shrug your shoulders or blurt out unusual sounds or offensive words. Tics typically show up between ages 2 and 15, with the average being around 6 years of age. Males are about three to four times more likely than females to develop Tourette syndrome. Although there's no cure for Tourette syndrome, treatments are available. Many people with Tourette syndrome don't need treatment when symptoms aren't troublesome. Tics often lessen or become controlled after the teen years."

At Mayfield, we implement various strategies to support our students with TS. These may take the form of, for example:

- **Tourette's Passport and/or lanyard.** This allows other staff or students who may not know the child as well as others to gain some immediate insight and understanding.
- **A designated safe space in which to release tics.** It can be exhausting for a young person with TS to hold it all in and so the offer of a place where they are comfortable to tic is very important.
- Finding out what **triggers** the student's tics.
- **Training for other students in class.** This can be given so that others in the class are able to support and understand their friend, so that they feel comfortable and understood.
- **Massed practice.** This is when a student can literally 'practice' their tics at home to expel them before coming into school or any other social situation that may heighten, for example, stress or excitement. This can provide a natural break from the tic and support habit reversal.
- **Careful use of language.** Focus on 'please do' as opposed to 'please don't'. Compulsive behaviour can lead to someone feeling compelled to do something when they are told not to.

If you have any questions or concerns about Tourette Syndrome, please do not hesitate to contact us.

## Hay Fever – and How it Affects Teenagers

Hay fever can make life uncomfortable during the summer months, although it often starts long before what we usually think of as being hay fever season. Certain pollens that begin to be released in February – such as tree pollens – have plenty of us reaching for the antihistamines long before 'spring' truly gets underway.

However, going way beyond the standard physical affects of hay fever, is an emerging area of research that suggests a link between the allergy and depression. According to a 2018 study, there is a raised risk for adolescents between hay fever, anxiety, depression, and acting impulsively, with less resilience.

For those of us who do not suffer with hay fever, there is a possible tendency to think it's just a bit of itchy eyes, scratchy nose, and some sneezing, whereas for those who do experience it, it can cause misery – and a wish to raise a sceptical eyebrow at anyone who suggests that you just 'eat some local honey' (as well-meaning as this suggestion can be!)

For adolescents in particular, according to the study, hay fever can cause emotional upset. This is linked specifically to their being between the stage of child and adult. Therefore, sleep is more crucial to particular essential functions, such as: memory, embedding new memories, and creativity. According to Dr Michael Blaiss:

*“Lack of sleep or poor sleep are both huge issues for adolescents, and it can be made worse by the symptoms of hay fever with or without eye allergies. Poor sleep can have a negative impact on school attendance, performance, and academic achievement.”*



The fact that this comes just as we build up to GCSEs, and throughout the exam period, means it's even more important that we try to ease the suffering of our teens during the hay fever season and see what works best for them – whether it's antihistamines, anti-allergy wipes for eyes and noses, eye drops, nasal sprays and keeping windows shut at home during peak pollen times (morning and evening). It may also be helpful to ensure bedding and clothing is not dried outside during the worst periods, thereby ensuring pollen isn't inadvertently stuck to pillows and so on.

## What Is 'Relational Practice'?



In some school documents, or during meetings and conversations, you may hear the term 'relational' practice, or you may read that Mayfield is a 'relational school'. If you do not know exactly what this refers to, then read on!

Relational practice is an evidence-based approach and is one that Portsmouth, as a city, has promoted within its schools for some years now. As the name suggests, it all comes down to relationships – the most important thing in our lives, after all, everything starts with relationships! It goes beyond asking how someone's day has gone, or if they won their football match (although good manners such as this are always an excellent starting place), and, instead, relational practice refers to building trust with students, building mutual respect, and working within a model of High Challenge & High Support.

High Challenge & High Support means that young people are challenged during their day at school – whether academically or, for example, in response to particular behaviours – but they are also fully supported to be the best that they can be. Any additional needs will be supported, any gaps in learning will be addressed and supported, and better behaviours can be taught and therefore valued by students. Relational practice does not use words like 'punishment' when referring to behaviour but, instead, meaningful, thoughtful consequences are put in place – ones that will help young people to recognise themselves what an appropriate response or reaction is – thereby helping them to become thoughtful, considerate, future-ready members of society.

In essence, relational practice is about building a culture and ethos that embodies our Mayfield 6 Rs and that enables young people to leave our school future-ready, with high expectations for life and all that it can bring.

### For any SEND queries:

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