



The 10 Habits Wellbeing Programme

Parents' Guide



10 Habits to help you live a big, long, happy and healthy life



Healthy Mind-Set



Healthy Relationships



Healthy Body

Dear Parents,

The Ten Habits Wellbeing Project is part of a school-wide initiative to help our girls develop 10 habits to keep them healthy throughout their lives.

The aim of the guide is to explain how we promote wellbeing at TGGs and to suggest some actions you may wish to try to help your child steer their way through an increasingly unhealthy world. You will already have your own views on how best to do this, so use it as you see fit; respond as much or as little as time, belief and energy allow.

The advice is mainly based on information from 3 books:

The Blue Zones by Dan Buettner

The 4 Pillar Plan by Dr Rangan Chatterjee

Mindless Eating by Brian Wansink

This parent booklet gives you some extended background and suggestions as to how at TGGs we create a habitat that would support your child in developing these habits.

Background Information

Doctors have realised that many common illnesses can be influenced simply by the way we live our lives - the habits we develop. In many cases, changing these lifestyle habits can be more effective than taking medicines.

In an effort to seek out the habits that keep us healthy, researchers have studied the 5 places in the world where people live the longest and have low levels of chronic disease. These are found in Okinawa Japan, a cluster of mountain villages in Sardinia, the Greek island of Ikaria, the Nicoya region of Costa Rica and in Loma Linda California. They are known as Blue Zones. The researchers were surprised to discover that, although these long-lived communities were many miles apart, they had many habits in common.

Using this information TGGs has developed 10 habits that we think will be accessible for our students. We cannot all move to a Blue Zone, however we could adopt some of their habits. because, not only might it help our children live longer, but there is evidence that it could make them happier as well.

It is more important that your child achieves a balance between each of these habits rather than putting all their energy into one or two. For example, it is not helpful for them to be an amazing sleeper who eats lots of unhealthy food, or fantastically fit but permanently stressed.

The changes suggested are small, but hopefully they will become lifelong. They are all entirely voluntary.

Feeding



It is important to try to establish healthy eating habits early on. As parents, you are likely to do the food shopping, the cooking, order takeaways and determine family meals out so you have a number of opportunities to influence your daughter's eating.

Nowadays, however, knowing what foods to eat is really hard. Not only is the advice confusing, but it keeps changing; eat carbs, don't eat carbs; fat was bad, now not so bad. The Blue Zone communities do not eat too much and they do not go on diets. They eat moderate amounts of food that is fresh, unprocessed, local and made mainly of plants.

Essentially, they avoid food that is old, has been messed about with or has travelled long distances. They do eat sugary treats, but only on special occasions like birthdays or Christmas. They like sitting down to eat their meals with their family and their last meal of the day is often the smallest and is eaten quite early.

Using this information and the most recent thinking on diet, below are four simple actions you could take. If your daughter chooses any feeding actions then she needs to agree these with you to ensure they are right ones for her and that she does not eat too much or too little.

Narrow your feeding window

Try to establish a healthy feeding routine that limits the total window of time in the day during which you will eat. For example, if you eat your breakfast at seven in the morning and eat your last meal at seven in the evening then your body gets 12 hours free from food, something known as a microfast. Your body uses the time you are not eating for repair and maintenance of your cells, as well as for burning up unwanted fat. You will extend your eating window and lose this benefit if you eat or snack late into the evening. Micro fasting may help prevent or control type 2 diabetes and eating fewer calories late at night has been shown to combat obesity.

Suggestions to try at home

- Eat breakfast as late as practical
- Where possible have your last meal early in the evening
- Breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince and dine like a pauper i.e. eat fewer calories in the evening
- Avoid snacking after your evening meal or before you go to bed

Avoid foods with lots of ingredients

Much of the food we eat is processed by food companies to make it more attractive. It is mechanically altered and chemicals are added to make it sweeter, last longer and

look more appealing. These highly refined foods are regarded by some experts as low quality food and may cause a number of inflammatory diseases. One rule of thumb is to favour foods that have fewer ingredients in them, i.e. ones that closely resemble their original state. So chicken should look like chicken and potato like potato. The least altered foods will be those that are fresh and the locally produced.

Suggestions to try at home

- Eat less processed food and more food that has not been changed very much (fewer than 5 ingredients)
- Teach your child how to cook some staple meals using basic ingredients
- Use local produce where possible

Drink lots of water

Almost two thirds of our bodies are made of water so it is not surprising that if your child loses too much water and becomes dehydrated, their body will not work as well. This may cause headaches, tiredness and dry skin. It is best to try to get them to drink at least a litre of water a day. They could drink it before meals, after meals or during the day, whenever they prefer. They can tell if they are well hydrated because their urine will be light yellow to clear in colour!

Suggestions to try at home

- Give your daughter a one litre drink bottle
- Have a jug of water and glasses at the meal table
- Keep a jug of cold water in the fridge

Eat less sugar

Sugar is highly addictive: the more we eat, the more we will crave. Signs of overreliance include feeling the need to eat every 2 hours, an afternoon slump and irritability between meals.

In the past when we were hunter gatherers, the desire to eat sugary foods helped us to store energy. Now we are constantly surrounded by sugary foods this craving makes us consume too much, and is leading to health issues like obesity and diabetes. Sugar is hiding everywhere and many foods contain more sugar than you would think, for example low-fat yogurt, ketchup and fruit juice.

Try some of the suggestions below as over time small changes make a big difference.

Suggestions to try at home.

- Reserve biscuits, cakes and sweets for special occasions
- Replace refined sugar based snacks with nuts, fruit or olives
- Read food labels and avoid items with a high sugar content
- Hide the sugary snacks so they are not constantly on view

- Do not add sugar to coffee, tea or cereal etc
- Favour reduced sugar items

Our food policies ensure all of our canteen food complies with government standards for school food. A three year plan is in place to improve our catering provision and Ten Habits choices. Energy drinks are prohibited from the school and rewards in class are focussed around house points and the house system rather than sugary rewards. Water taps are situated around the school. Food and nutrition education is delivered within PHSE, PE, Biology, Food Technology and the Food Preparation and Nutrition GCSE.

Planting

The Blue Zone communities eat a diet that is 95% plant based. Although they are not all strict vegetarians, they do not consume very much meat. Typically, they eat a small serving of meat about five times per month.



Studies have shown that avoiding meat can reduce the risk of developing several diseases such as heart disease and cancer. It might therefore be beneficial to favour plant based foods such as:

- Vegetables
- Legumes (e.g. beans, peas, lentils & chickpeas)
- Whole grains
- Nuts

Vegetables have particular health benefits as they are rich in fibre, vitamins and minerals and they help keep the gut healthy. There is a whole range of coloured vegetables: green, red, orange, yellow, blue, purple and beige. It is thought that eating a wide range of different coloured vegetables encourages a variety of gut bacteria to flourish and these play a major part in protecting us against disease.

Many Blue Zone communities grow their own vegetables. This is a winning formula because not only does it provide fresh, unprocessed local vegetables, but it also provides the opportunity for movement and relaxation.

Suggestions to try at home

- Have a meat free day each week
- Reduce your meat portions
- Learn to cook some vegetarian meals together

- Help your child grow some vegetables
- Increase the number of different coloured vegetables you give them over a week
- Try to give them at least two types of vegetables a day
- Use nuts, carrots, cherry tomatoes, sugar snap peas etc. as snacks
- Try some non-meat substitutes like Quorn nuggets

Over the last two years we have developed an extensive fruit and vegetable garden with an ever-growing orchard. We have a gardening club and growing club with the produce being used in food technology. In the canteen there are always fresh fruit and vegetables and a salad bar. At various points in the year there are a range of competitions from pumpkin growing to bake offs.

Moving

Whilst it is common knowledge that exercise has a whole range of health benefits we now move around much less than we did in the past.



We use cars for the shortest of journeys, many jobs are sedentary and our most popular forms of entertainment involve sitting down in front of a screen. In addition, we have cleverly invented a range of machines to reduce the need for manual effort, like leaf blowers so we don't have to sweep or food processors so we don't have to stir. It certainly makes life easier, but it means we have massively reduced our daily physical effort compared with our grandparents. It is not unusual for many people to go all week without breaking into a sweat from physical activity.

To counter this, many people schedule in sessions of intense exercise like a gym workout or a run. Once done, they feel that their quota of physical exercise is complete and go back to sedentary ways for the rest of the week. The problem is that, just like diets, it is hard to keep these sessions going and often they are not frequent or prolonged enough for the weight loss people hope for. On the other hand, overdoing it can cause injury or exhaustion which results in no physical activity at all!

The Blue Zone people do not go to the gym or run marathons, their exercise comes from the movement involved in their daily lives. They will walk to most places and they use the stairs. They will do household chores by hand and they will dig, hoe, weed and harvest their gardens. Many of them have jobs that require physical effort like farming or labouring. They do not sit down for very long.

If your child is not involved in regular physical activity encourage some of the following

- Get them to use the stairs instead of lifts or elevators
- Encourage them to walk to school if possible (with a friend if possible)
- Encourage them to walk/cycle/swim several times a week
- If you have a dog, get them to take it for a walk
- Encourage them to help in the garden
- Break up sessions of screen based inactivity with something physical.

During tutor time activities like yoga, Just Dance and Tai-Chi are encouraged, with many classes being seen walking around our designated walking circuit. At lunch-time TGGGS offer a plethora of activities, such as one of the many sports clubs run by our PE Staff: Netball, Hockey, Dance, Gymnastics, Badminton, Handball, Trampolining, Athletics, Rounders and Tennis. When the evenings are lighter there are additional clubs such as TGGGS Surf Club. Older students have free access to the fitness suite before school, lunchtime and after school. This is fully equipped with cardiovascular and strengthening equipment. From Year 9 students can take part in D of E Expeditions and once they are in Year 10 can get involved in the Ten Tors event on Dartmoor.

Snoozing

We are designed to spend about a third of our lives asleep because it enables our bodies to rest, recover, repair and grow. However, in today's 24 hour world, many of us are not getting enough sleep and it has been estimated that teenagers get between one and two hours' less sleep a night than their grandparents. Over a 70 year life this is equal to about 51,000 hours less sleep. No wonder then, that many of them experience symptoms of being sleep deprived: tiredness, irritability, lack of concentration. Over time they can build up a sleep debt that will not be repaid with just an extra hour here or there.



It is difficult to say how much sleep each of us needs (probably between 8 and 10 hours for teenagers) but if we wake up feeling refreshed, wake up at roughly the same time without an alarm and fall asleep within 30 minutes of going to bed, we are probably getting enough.

It will not surprise you to discover that people in Blue Zones get sufficient sleep. They also often take daytime naps of up to 30 minutes. They do not have to go to sleep, wake up or go to work at set hours. They just sleep as much as their body tells them to.

Most of us do not have this luxury but there are plenty of things we can do to improve sleep. The first thing to do is create a sleep-friendly bedroom that blocks out as much light and sound as possible, from heavy blackout curtains to covering up small LED lights.

Phones, tablets and computer screens make noises and give out the same light as the morning sun which tricks your brain into thinking it is time to get up. You can get devices or software that reduce these emissions but not using them in the period leading up to bed is a more effective solution, whilst the radical solution is to ban them from the bedroom.

Establishing a relaxing bedtime routine, perhaps by getting your daughter to have a bath, listen to some music, turn off her electronic devices and avoid as far as possible activities that will make her tense, like an emotive film or video game. As far as possible try to get her to go to bed and get up at the same time as this helps her body to establish its rhythm.

Suggestions to try at home

- Block all light and, where possible, sound from the bedroom
- Stop screen use an hour before bedtime
- Make sure they have a comfortable bed
- Encourage a bedtime routine
- Get your child to go to bed and get up at roughly the same time each day

We cover sleep hygiene training in KS3 PHSE. Top tips are covered in assemblies and tutor times where mentoring encourages honest discussion about good/bad habits.

Loving

For Blue Zone communities, family is the number one priority and they build their lives around this core. Elderly relatives live with their families (or nearby) and are involved in the lives of the younger generations. They eat meals together, celebrate birthdays and anniversaries and generally support each other. This has been shown to make them healthier, have lower stress levels, and reduces accidents and maintains their mental and social skills.



Parents invest time and love in their children, who in time are more likely to care for them when they get older.

Suggestions to try at home

This habit is dependent on your family set up and dynamics but where possible:

- Eat family meals together
- Encourage your child to spend time with elderly relatives
- Encourage them to help/play with siblings or younger relatives

- Spend dedicated time with them doing something fun and/or relaxing.
- Get them to participate in family celebrations
- Get them to plot the family tree

At TGGs we encourage our students to understand the importance of families. We actively encourage parents to be involved in awards ceremonies, concerts, shows, parents' evenings, information evenings and consultations. We also welcome parents in to share their professional experiences with students at events like the Y9 Careers speed dating, and online conferences. At Parent evenings, we provide talks, advice and materials to help your parents support you with the ten habits.

Belonging

Blue Zones are typically religious communities. A number of studies have shown that being religious is associated with a lower risk of death, which may in part be due to the strong support network these communities provide along with a more optimistic outlook on life.



If your family is not part of a religious community then there are benefits to be had from belonging to other types of groups such as clubs and societies, the neighbourhood community, Form, Year or House groups.

Suggestions to try at home

- Encourage your child to embrace her faith and be involved in its activities
- Encourage them to become involved in community activities
- Encourage them to join an club, society or group
- Encourage them involved in voluntary work
- Encourage them to embrace House and school activities

At TGGs we are incredibly proud of our house culture and the sense of community it promotes within school. There are Inter-house sports competitions from swimming to netball, gymnastics, dance and everything in between culminating in Sports Day; the walking circuit which generates a massive amounts of house points while keeping fit and healthy; house competitions which run throughout the year such as Bake off competitions, House Shout, the Year 7 Concert and House Music competitions; and the 500 word English competition. Annual events also bring a sense of belonging, such as Charity Week, the Sponsored Walk, Science Week quiz, Christmas card competition, and Christmas door competition. To accompany these events, students can earn extra house...

...points for a range of things: volunteering at open evenings; showing continual focus and effort in class and representing the school in external competitions. Your child can choose to have an even bigger role within the house and leadership teams, volunteering to be KS3 Leaders, Year 12 Heads of house, join the lower or upper school head girl team, or being form captain, form sports captain or form school council representative, subject prefect or peer mentor. Sixth Form HUB leaders voluntarily support younger students with their academic studies. We also encourage belonging to our whole school community through events and trips focusing on belonging and team building.

Choosing



Blue Zone people hang out with Blue Zone people. Sometimes this is because they are in isolated communities but if they have a choice, they choose to surround themselves with people with Blue Zone values. This makes it so much easier for them to continue their good habits. Studies show that smoking, obesity, happiness, and even loneliness are contagious, so having social networks of healthy people can actually help keep you healthy.

Get your child to spend more time with friends who exhibit good habits like healthy eating, relaxing or movement.

Suggestions to try at home

- Encourage your child to develop blue zone habits with a friend
- Encourage them to spend more time with friends who have healthy habits
- Encourage them to engage in activities like walking, singing, dancing and volunteering with friends
- Get them to support her friends by listening, laughing with them, praising and encouraging them

Through PSHE, unhealthy behaviours such as drugs, smoking, alcohol, extremist beliefs, etc. are discussed and students are encouraged to reflect and seek out social circles that will benefit health. We work with students to improve their self-esteem, stress management, revision techniques, mindfulness and physical health. Staff encourage discussion around what is a 'healthy person' and identify positive attributes. This is reinforced via the assemblies and challenge days. In Year 9 Thinking & Reasoning Skills teach assertiveness via reasoning. Tutors will check in regularly with your child during tutor time and encourage open dialogue.

Living



The people who live in Blue Zones have a strong sense of purpose. They know why they wake up in the morning because they tend to have goal in life, something they are working towards. It does not have to be anything earth shattering, it can be something as simple as seeing their grandchildren happy and successful, but by having this sense of purpose, they may lower their stress levels and reduce the chances of having arthritis or a stroke.

Get them to consider what it is that they gets up in the morning for? What is it they loves doing? Get them to find her reason for getting up in the morning.

Suggestions to try at home

- Help your child identify some goals and review them with her regularly
- Support any actions they take towards achieving these goals
- Encourage their talents, skills and interests
- Encourage them to develop hobbies
- Encourage them to support a charity or cause

Through an inspirational careers and PSHE program, students look into the future, identifying the skills they already have and any potential barriers to their goals. Regular targets are set and there are a range of talks and careers events. Before exams, we support them with our STUDY+ programme, which allows students access to keynote speeches in all subject areas. This support is backed with weekly help clinics, intervention sessions and immersion days to help our students to consolidate their learning. Throughout the year, TGGs students have Challenge Days when they are off timetable to investigate the world around them, from pathology STEM days to health days or Art aquarium trips. Regular careers newsletters, tutorials and university visits occur alongside work experience placements. All students are mentored throughout the year with goals, progress reviews and action plans being set during 1:1 meetings with tutor and/or careers advisors. Our students also have the amazing opportunity to reflect, through talks from our alumnae, 'An Audience with' assemblies, careers lectures, debates and events like 'Operating Theatre live'. Throughout their time at TGGs students have the chance to get away from school and experience different cultures and situations, which can help clarify your own purpose. There are many trips and visits (over 100 available) such as Language Exchanges, Judaism London, Auschwitz/Krakow, CERN Geneva, Iceland, theatre visits, water sports and skiing trips, and residential. Finally students can take part in the Duke of Edinburgh Awards, where they have to undertake volunteering, learn a new skill and a participate in physical activity as well as in expeditions. This helps them develop a sense of purpose as well as developing many of the other 10 habits.

Chilling

The modern world can generate a good deal of unwanted stress: there are never enough hours in the day, relationships can be very demanding and social media requires our constant attention. Our bodies are not designed for this continuous stress, so we can become ill. Learning to switch-off can be an antidote.



The Blue Zone communities have routines that shed stress. They set aside time in the day where they can escape the commotion of life by focussing on themselves, for example by taking a nap, praying, or spending time remembering their ancestors.

Your child could do the same by scheduling a time in the day that is just for her, when she stops everything and has some 'me' time, free from distractions.

They could use the time for anything, as long as it does not involve your phone or a computer. They could try cooking, painting, meditation, singing, having a bath, playing an instrument, reading a book, dancing, yoga, gardening, colouring in, the list is endless. This relaxed time may help her feel less pressurised, lower her stress hormone levels and counter the long term effects of stress.

If they feel they don't have time for this, it is possible they need it the most!

Suggestions to try at home

- Help your child to create a space at home for quiet time
- Encourage them to set aside time in each day for mindfulness, meditation, prayer or relaxation
- Encourage them to take up yoga, Pilates or Tai chi
- Encourage screen free time in the week
- Encourage them to draw, paint, colour, sing, dance, make music or engage in a hobby
- Encourage reading, listening to music or relaxing in the bath

We encourage our students to relax and de-stress as part of our mental health policy. This happens before school, during lessons and during break times. Students experience Yoga and Tai-Chi within PE and PSHE lessons and can escape to the Reading Room at lunch for a quiet, device-free zone. The gardening club provides respite from academic study, there are many extra-curricular clubs alongside games and competitions. Before exam periods, students are encouraged to take time out from revision to practise mindfulness. The KS4 curriculum includes study periods and PSHE, which support student wellbeing.

Changing Your Carbon Footprint



Climate change is likely to be the defining issue of your daughter's generation. If we want them to live a long, happy and healthy life then they need a healthy planet. However, the planet is warming up fast faster than at any time in the Earth's history - and if this continues it has significant consequences for people and wildlife around the globe. Efforts are now focussed on keeping temperatures from increasing no more than 1.5 degrees, and everyone can play their part.

Global warming is caused through human activities like the burning of fossil fuels, farming and deforestation, all of which generate an excess of greenhouse gasses like carbon dioxide. Nearly everything a person does releases an amount of carbon into the atmosphere, their carbon footprint. By making the right choices they can reduce their footprint and help combat climate change.

We have suggested that students take the following actions which are in their control:

- Eat less meat and more local produce and use up leftovers
- Don't buy fast fashion, buy vintage or recycled clothing
- Switch lights off and unplug electric devices when not in use
- Walk or cycle or use public transport instead of they car
- Use reusable bags
- Have a shower instead of a bath

You might like to consider, if at all possible, helping them further by;

- Driving slower - walk or cycle where practical
- Using public transport
- Insulating your home
- Use energy saving light bulbs
- Using less water

As a school we will try to equip them to becoming the politicians, the scientists, the journalists and the policy makers of the future, and put themselves in a position to make an even bigger difference.

We expect all students and staff to take responsible individual action. At school we back this through education and events such as the SWISH clothing swap, Met Gala recycled fashion show and groups such as the eco-group, join the gardening club and rewilding. Nationally, our students have petitioned and met with senior politicians, contribute to the debate on climate change, and articulate their views through the Group for Advocacy and Pressure (GAP).

Getting the habit habit

So, eager to get going? Keen to establish new habits immediately?

Diet and fitness regimes often fail because they involve too much, too soon so aim for small changes that your daughter can sustain over a long period of time, a lifetime.

Your child will start in Year 7 by picking the habit that they think they will find the easiest and trying to develop it over the next 10 weeks. They will commit to these habits by choosing up to 3 actions to improve this habit.

It would be great if they teamed up with a friend or family member as doing this together increases the likelihood of success.

Research shows that it can take between 5-12 weeks to develop a habit but if you get past 10 weeks then your chances of relapse are much lower. If she slips up, encourage them not to quit, but to brush themselves down and keep going. Get them to avoid catastrophic thinking where if they slip up once they decide they might as well give up on that habit or worse still, give up on all of them. As they becomes successful with their initial habits they can gradually introduce some others.

Some activities can be multi-habit ones, for example if your child takes their grandma to a vegetarian cooking course with their best friend they will actual hit every habit (as long as they have a nap after eating the lovely food they have made.)

Finally, your child does not need to be healthy all the time. As the saying goes, 'Everything in moderation...including moderation.'



Pastoral Support

We teach our students coping strategies to deal with the challenges of day to day life but, in the instances where they cannot cope, we have developed excellent support services to help. In fact we have over 100 years' experience supporting young people through the common and less common trials and tribulations of life.

We have excellent Heads of Year who provide pastoral care for our students. and have both the time and skills to support those experiencing difficulties. Our staff receive safe-guarding and mental health training, and support equality, inclusion and diversity across the school.

Tutors also mentor students throughout their school journey, working closely with our Heads of Year.

We have school counsellors who are available 5 full days per week. We have a clear process for referrals to outside agencies and can access relevant help such as CAMHS and Educational Psychologists.

There has been a widely reported rise in the number of UK teenagers with mental health issues. We will continue to seek out strategies that counter this and welcome suggestions from students, parents and professionals.

