



Dear Parents/Carers and Children

We hope that this finds our families well, knowing you are in our thoughts as we continue the term in our online classrooms.

As you will have heard on the news, the First Minister for Scotland has asked us to remain at home but increased outdoor exercise to twice a day *“As of today, we have removed the once-a-day limit on exercise. It means that - if you want to go for a walk more often - or to go for a run and also a walk - then you can now do so.”* We thought this might be a useful time to focus on the importance of physical health - the benefits of which are closely-related to mental health.

### **Benefits of Exercise**

We might feel at this moment that our children are not getting enough exercise as they may be prevented from exercising in their usual way eg sports activities and team sports clubs are cancelled and perhaps garden space is limited. However, NHS guidance advises that children aged between 5 and 18 should aim for 60 minutes of exercise a day and that this should be used to break up the amount of time sitting or lying down. Two types of activity are recommended: aerobic exercise (which raises the heart rate) and strengthening exercises (which help develop bones and muscle). Have a chat as a family and list the ways you are exercising to raise your heart rates and which are strengthening your muscles. Some ideas are at the foot of the newsletter. Who is the most active in the household?

Exercise benefits are not only felt in the body but also in the brain. It is well documented that exercise can help lift our mood and feel better due to endorphins released but did you know exercise is helping developing brains in other ways too?

- Improves long-term memory
- Boosts decision-making skills
- Lengthens attention span
- Reduces depression risk
- Boosts creativity

### **Sleep**

Exercise, sleep and mental health and inter-linked and power of sleep upon the body is not to be underestimated! You may find at the moment that sleep patterns are irregular; some in the house may be sleeping longer while others are having more broken sleep. We mentioned in the last Connects that a regular bedtime routine can reinforce healthy sleep patterns. The amount of sleep children require reduces by 15 minutes each year with children aged 5 requiring 11 hours and children aged 12 requiring 9 hours 15 as an average. However, please remember: you're the expert in your child and will know their usual sleep pattern best.

## Diet

Our Health programme in school covers food and nutrition and an easy way of explaining this to children is through the Eatwell Plate which is promoted by the Scottish Government and NHS. A link to the plate is here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Documents/The-Eatwell-Guide-2016.pdf>

You could show it to your child to talk about together eg:

- Is there anything surprising about it?
- Did you expect to see more or less of a food item?
- How does your daily fruit and vegetable intake compare?

P4 have been finding out about the Eatwell plate and Lucy (P4B/B) is happy for us to share her learning to inspire some discussion! Thank you!



As we continue in our new ways of living, working and playing, we know we are all making new sleep, diet and exercise choices. The main function of these is to ensure our children are remaining happy and positive as we know this is at the heart of family life. Your child's happiness is as important to us as their learning and, we know from our surveys, that you feel the same. So, with that in mind, remember there are no learning emergencies - our staff will work with you and your child on learning when classes return. Our main focus is on making sure families feel supported but working within ways which keep our children physically and mentally well. This has to come first - so please do not put pressure on yourselves. You are all doing great!

The Mauricewood Team

Aerobic exercises (to raise the heart rate):

Walking, playing on a scooter, skateboarding, cycling, rollerblading, dancing, chasing, hopping, marching, running, sprinting

Strengthening exercises:

Skipping, swinging on ropes and bars, gymnastics, climbing, situps, press ups, basketball, dance, football, martial arts