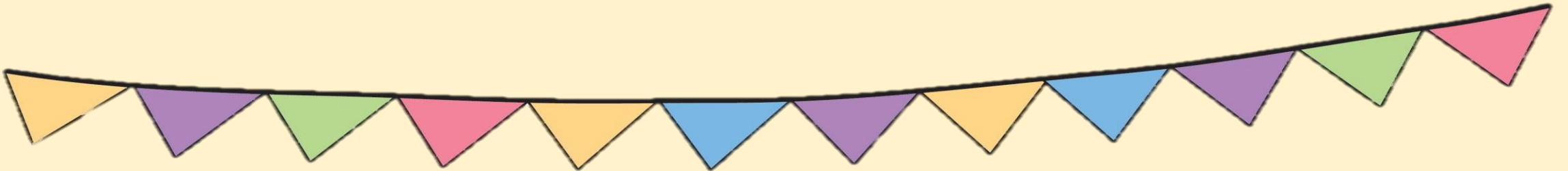


# Parents Coffee Morning

Please help yourself to a drink and biscuit!



*Welcome*

*Glad you're here!*










# AGENDA

- Discussion around sleep.
- Resources/ places to contact for support.
- Opportunity for you to ask any questions and speak to other parents within our community- **you are welcome to leave at this point or stay and chat.**
- Tea/coffee and biscuits will be provided.- **if you haven't got one already, please do!**

# Sleep... why is it so important?

- Maintaining mental health.
- Growth and brain development
- Cognition and learning
- General health and ability to fight infection.

AGE		RECOMMENDED
<b>NEWBORNS</b> 0-3 Months		<b>14 to 17 hours</b>
<b>INFANTS</b> 4-11 months		<b>12 to 15 hours</b>
<b>TODDLERS</b> 1-2 years		<b>11 to 14 hours</b>
<b>PRESCHOOLERS</b> 3-5 years		<b>10 to 13 hours</b>
<b>SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN</b> 6-13 years		<b>9 to 11 hours</b>
<b>TEENAGERS</b> 14-17 years		<b>8 to 10 hours</b>
<b>YOUNG ADULTS</b> 18-25 years		<b>7 to 9 hours</b>

# However...

- For some children, getting to sleep is easy and they settle quickly into their night time routine. For some children and families, night can be a worrying time as sleep is a challenging area.
- Children's sleep can be affected by:
  1. ASD/ ADHD
  2. Nightmares/ emotional wellbeing- anxiety
  3. Unregulated night time routine (doesn't mean you are not doing something right, could be down to other factors e.g. new baby or nearby building works).
  4. Bed-wetting/ sleep walking or other night time activity. The next few slides offer suggestions for supporting with sleep. **These will not work for all children.**



# Setting a bed time routine.

- Specific bedtimes- Choose a manageable bedtime and be as rigid as possible with it. Our bodies get into a sleep rhythm and we will begin to feel tired if sleep routine is set.
- Relaxing activities before bed- bath time, warm milk, cuddle and story time, aromas (lavender).
- Stick to routine e.g. if they know it is bath, teeth, story, bed- keep this the same every night.
- Use timers to say when it will be time to start bedtime routine- lots of children struggle with the concept of time.
- Blue lights need removing at least an hour before bed as can disrupt sleep- iPad, Tv's, laptops, mobiles.
- No sugary snacks before bed- sugar gives us an energy spike and can make it tricky to sleep.
- Cut out all caffeine from child's diet- Unlikely to be drinking coffee and tea but remember Coke and other soft drinks can contain caffeine.

## 2) Throughout the day, bear in mind

Daytime habits also affect sleep. You can promote restful slumber in your children by following basic [sleep hygiene rules](#):

- Arranging a balanced schedule with interspersed periods of rest and play
- Keeping a regular bedtime
- Making the bedroom, and especially the [mattress](#), a no-screen zone, even during the day [Trusted Source National Library of Medicine, Biotech Information](#) The National Center for Biotechnology Information advances science and health by providing access to biomedical and genomic information. [View Source](#)
- Providing a [healthy diet](#)
- Setting the thermostat to a slightly [cooler temperature](#)
- Using dark curtains to block out light, or a nightlight if they're scared of the dark
- Keeping the bedroom quiet, or using a white noise machine to mask outside sounds
- Avoiding caffeine, large meals, and sugary treats before bedtime, opting for a healthy bedtime snack if necessary
- (taken from Sleep Foundation).

# ASD and sleep

- **80% of young people with ASD have trouble falling asleep or staying asleep and their sleep cycles can change sporadically.**
- Difficulty sleeping can be caused by:
  - having difficulty settling, winding down and going to sleep
  - waking repeatedly during the night, or having difficulty getting back to sleep after waking up to go to the toilet
  - increased anxiety or an inability to relax causing insomnia
  - social cueing problems, where an autistic person doesn't make the connection between others in the house going to bed and their own need to sleep
  - irregular secretion of the sleep hormone melatonin, which regulates sleep patterns, or having atypical circadian rhythms (body clock)
  - neurological conditions such as epilepsy
  - sensory differences, such as increased sensitivity to blue light from smart phones, laptops and other screens, or sensitivity to certain sounds or white noise, which may be upsetting or distracting and keep them awake
  - problems caused by food allergies, which could cause gastrointestinal issues and discomfort, or increased sensitivity to caffeine or other stimulants, which can disturb sleep
  - hypersomnia - sleeping too much. Increased exhaustion could be caused by the additional stress autistic people experience in social situations.
- (Autism Charity Website)

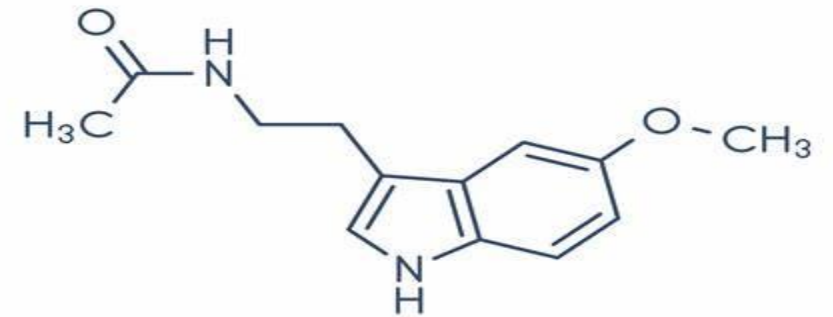
# Advice for ASD and sleep

- Explain sleep using social stories or flow charts.
- Sleep diary- monitor trends, share information with doctors- please inform school of changes in sleep as it can have big impact on mood and behaviour.
- Set routine and reduce screen time before sleep
- block out light using dark curtains or black-out blinds
- reduce noise using thick carpet, shutting doors fully, turning off appliances, and moving your child's bed away from a wall with activity going on on the other side
- block out noises by letting your child use ear plugs or listen to music through headphones
- remove labels from bedding and night clothes, or try bedding and nightclothes made from other materials
- reduce smells coming into the room by closing the door fully, or by using scented oils that your child finds relaxing
- remove distractions, such as electronic devices near the bed and pictures on the wall (unless the person finds these relaxing), and consider a different colour on the walls
- use relaxation techniques such as having a bath, massage, quiet time or gentle exercise such as yoga, to help your child wind down before bedtime.



# Medication- has to be prescribed by a doctor

- Melatonin is a hormone we produce naturally that helps us go to sleep.
- Synthetic melatonin can be prescribed for children who struggle with sleep. This has to be prescribed by a doctor and is usually used as a last resort.
- More common for children with ASD/ADHD to receive but discussions with doctor are important.



melatonin

# Nightmares

- Though unpleasant, it is normal for children to have some nightmares, just like we can do as adults.
- Repetitive and frequent nightmares can disrupt sleep routine and prevent children from going to sleep out of fear.
- Common causes:  
Medications- speak to doctor if concerned.
- Something that has scared them- check devices and keep parental controls on- talk to child, if something is happening it is important they know.
- Irregular bedtime routine
- Diet
- PTSD

If you are worried about nightmares, please keep a log and share with school and doctor. Emotional health support may be appropriate.

Never shame children for having nightmares. It is out of their control and it can feel very isolating and scary, even when they wake up. Remain calm, keep notes and give them a time to talk about it, It could get worse if they feel they have to keep it to themselves.



# Bed-wetting

- Occasional accidents are to be expected in young children and can even happen as children get older. However, repetitive accidents need addressing as can be uncomfortable, embarrassing and impact sleep. Some things to rule out:
- Water infections and other medical conditions- If start all of a sudden when child is fully toileted, contact doctor as it can be a sign of infection- keep a log and contact the doctor.
- Toileting- consider how they get to the toilet (scared of dark, worried will be in trouble). Practice during the day. Once in KS1, we would expect all children fully toileted- contact doctor- request support from continence team.
- Talk about why they think it might be happening.
- Nightmares
- Never shame a child for bed-wetting- it will not improve the situation but can make it worse. Any concerns, talk to your doctor for support.



# Getting some sleep yourself

- Getting a proper night's sleep is hugely important.
- It may have been suggested that you sleep when your child sleeps, but this won't necessarily be convenient, especially if you have other people to care for and it can also be difficult to 'switch off' on demand. By the time you have got your child to sleep, particularly if they needed calming down, you may feel too wound up to sleep yourself.
- Safety proof your child's room so you can relax knowing that they cannot harm themselves while you are asleep.
- Find out more about [community care](#) and respite services. All parents of children with disabilities are entitled to be assessed to see if they're eligible.
- If you are struggling with long-term lack of sleep, implementing strategies such as those above can be impractical. Seek support outside the family such as your GP, social worker or your child's school, for help and advice.



# Resources to help:

- NHS website- [Sleep problems in young children - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)
- National Autistic society- [Parents and families \(autism.org.uk\)](https://autism.org.uk)
- The Sleep Charity- National Sleep Hotline- 03303 530 541

We are here if you need to talk. Limited sleep as an adult can impact your emotional wellbeing and sometimes it can help just to have someone to listen. Please know you are always welcome in school.  
**Although you are amazing parents, you are also human.**

If I don't see you before, I hope you and your family have a lovely summer holiday.

