

Mental Health Working Party Newsletter

Christmas 2025 Edition



With thanks to members of the MHP for their wonderful articles below!

The Mental Health Working Party (MHWP) is a group of students and staff that meet to identify and plan strategies to support students' mental health in our Loreto community. The MHWP is also keen to deepen links with the Mental Health Support Team (MHST) who not only work with identified individuals, but who have delivered workshops to whole year groups as well as providing training to staff.

If you would like to be involved in the MHWP or have any ideas for supporting student mental health, please contact Miss Craddock.



We hope you enjoy this Christmas edition of our newsletter, featuring how to create a more mindful Christmas routine, learning from past lessons, compassion fatigue, loneliness, setting new intentions and some Christmas activities!

"Health is of importance. Take care accordingly in yourself and others." Mary Ward



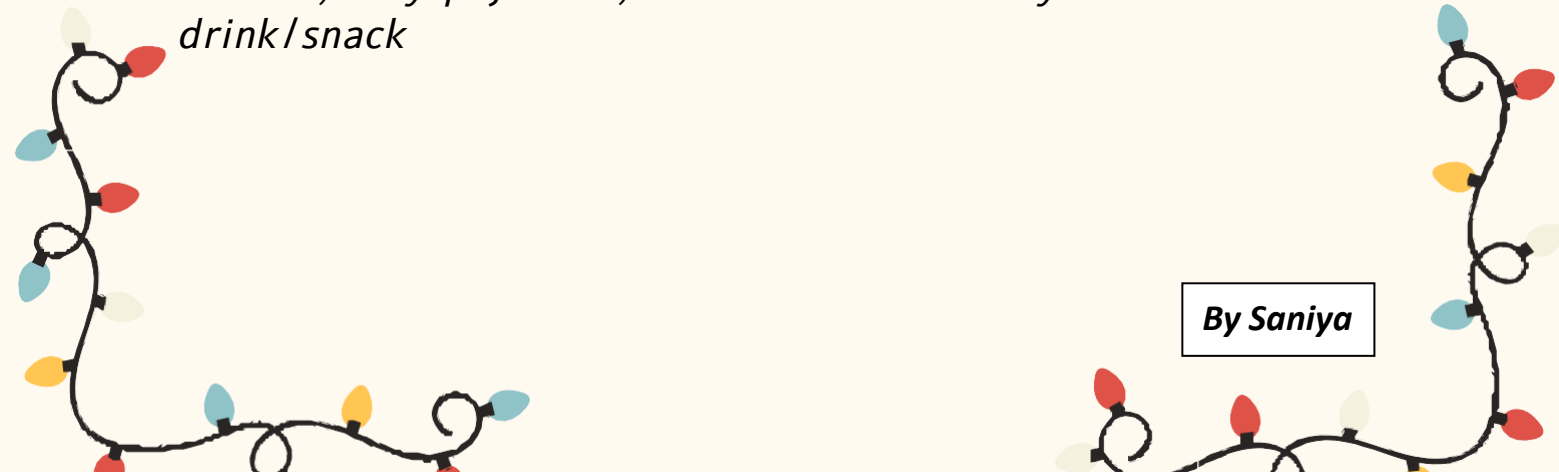
A Simple Christmas

Christmas doesn't always have to be about the presents, Christmas Markets or a big festive roast dinner. Often, the quieter moments are what makes the day feel special.



Christmas your way :

- **Make your own christmas decorations:** perhaps a paper snowflake or star:
<https://youtube.com/shorts/akFe5JLnSxU?si=kyEYloNX9S9C3tVz>
- **Have a cosy movie night with your favourite snacks or a warm hot chocolate with cream and marshmallows :** Movie ideas : Home alone, Love actually, A Christmas Story.
- **Create a Christmas playlist and have your own karaoke session:** Song ideas : Winter Wonderland, Last Christmas, Santa Can't you hear me
- **Try some baking :** Baking ideas : sugar cookies, microwave mug cake, banana bread
- **Prioritise self-care :** Pamper yourself with a warm bath or shower, cozy pajamas , a warm blanket and your favourite drink/snack



By Saniya

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Compassion fatigue:

While keeping up with the news and being informed about what's happening in the world is incredibly important, it can also feel overwhelming to constantly see bad news all the time and feel like nothing's changing and you can't do anything. Sometimes this can lead to compassion fatigue or burnout. Here are some tips to manage it if you are



Try to focus on just one problem a day or week and see what you can do to help. Charities and non-profits dedicated to helping solve this problem often have newsletters or articles on what people can do to help reduce the impacts of certain problems. For example, if you're concerned about human rights abuses around the world, it might be helpful to join amnesty international's newsletter, read articles or sign petitions on their website. When doing try not to neglect your health remember to get enough sleep and drink enough water.

It's also important to set clear boundaries and breaks with yourself so you aren't Soley consuming bad news. Maybe take some time to try and look at the good happening in the world or take a break from consuming the news and go for a walk outside or do something you enjoy doing.

Try to take time to do hobbies you enjoy or meet up with friends.

You could start a new hobby, learn a new skill or volunteer within your local community. This newsletter has some ideas to get you started!

Keeping up with the news is extremely important and your compassion is always a good thing but it's also important to remember to take care of yourself as well.



By Nikini

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Loneliness:

The lack of routine and being away from friends can be one of the many reasons for loneliness during Christmas. Here are some tips to help to manage it:

Try to stay connected with friends, see when they are free meet up with them in person. You don't need to go anywhere expensive! If that's not possible, messaging them is a nice way to stay in touch with them.



If possible, talk to someone about your feelings. It can be a loved one, a friend or someone you trust. If you are unsure who to talk to there are always charities and useful websites that allow you to talk to a professional (usually anonymously but this depends on the charity) about any problems that you may have and offer support. Even if there isn't a simple solution, just talking to someone will help you feel less alone.

Go for a walk outside or do something you love to do. If you're unsure about you can do over the holidays, maybe try a new hobby or join a club. Volunteering within your local community is a good way to meet new people, make friends and build some kind of routine during the holidays.

Even though it may be difficult, try not to compare yourself to how others are doing, both online and offline. Not only will this make you feel worse, but you can also never fully know what someone else is going through. That doesn't mean you can't see what other people are doing over the holidays, just that you should be mindful when you start to compare your life to theirs.

It's also very important to be kind to yourself, your feelings may not go away all at once but taking steps (no matter how small they are) to feel less lonely whenever you can, is going to help.

By Nikini

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Appreciate 2025, Learning from 2025, Moving Forward to 2026

As 2025 comes to an end, we naturally look back to key moments that shaped our 2025. Some memories we wish we could re-experience — the celebrations, the trips, the laughter. Others we hope not to repeat — the disappointment, the saddening news, the losses. However, no matter what happened, there must be at least one thing your 2025 January-self would be proud of.

Appreciate the Good

An easy way to appreciate 2025 is by revisiting moments that have brought you happiness. I'd like to invite you to open your phone gallery and choose a photo that means something to you — it might be with your friends, your favourite meal, or a peaceful landscape.

Now, take a moment to recall that day/ moment. How was the weather? Where were you? How did you feel? Why did you take the photo? You can write the details down or just close your eyes and imagine that day/moment again.

As you are reflecting, pay attention to emotion that stands out the most: excitement, satisfaction, relief, comfort. This is what you cherish the most in 2025 and perhaps, is the kind of moment you should look out for more in the year to come.



My cat, Zima, was sleeping on my bed while I was following my intensive GCSE revision schedule. I felt pleased to have such a cute and fluffy companion during this stressful period.

In 2026 I will spend more time with Zima and take moments to be as relaxed as he is.

Learn from the hard moments

As we appreciate the good, we will naturally remember the hard moments too.

What is the first challenge that comes to mind? It might be a cancelled plan, a grade that didn't reflect your effort, or the loss of someone you loved.

Now, take a moment to think about what could you have done to prevent it from happening? What would have helped you to feel more prepared for the situation?

Your answer reveals the lesson you have learnt from this moment. To make this lesson sticks, try to write it down as an allegory or simply a journal entry. Turning your experience to something meaningful.

One of my 2025 lessons

In February, a few months before my actual GCSE exams, I had my Chemistry mock. I was nervous. When I entered the hall, I found my seat, sat down, and reached into my blazer pocket to get my calculator. I couldn't find it... it wasn't there! It was too late. The exam began. I was disappointed in my test result, but at least I learned the lesson: *Always remember to bring your calculator to your exam.*

By Charmmy

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Setting intentions for the next half term in the New Year

The end of term is a perfect time to pause and reset and think about what we want to achieve during our break. Setting intentions can help you look after yourself and to make the most of the time whilst you have it.

What is setting intentions?

Unlike goals, intentions are about how we want to feel. They help our mindset which makes them perfect for trying to keep a positive mental health throughout the holidays.

Why would you set intentions?

- *They help us to feel more in control of our day-to-day lives.*
- *They encourage healthy habits and positive thinking.*
- *They remind us to reflect and to slow down.*
- *They encourage motivation.*



How to set a good intention

1. *Think about what you found challenging last half-term and how you want to improve it this time.*
2. *Choose something simple and realistic as they work best when it is easily achievable*
3. *Focus on what you want to change, not avoid.*
4. *Make sure you write it down and keep it somewhere that you will see every day in case you forget about it.*
5. *Remember that intentions are not rules and some days will be harder to do than others.*

Some examples of good intentions

"I will take breaks most days to relax and breathe"

"I won't be harsh on myself when I make mistakes"

"I will reach out to someone if I feel stressed or overwhelmed"

"I'll make time for things that make me happy"

By Elise

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MINDFUL CHRISTMAS BAKING

MELTING SNOWMAN COOKIES

INGREDIENTS

To make the biscuit:

115g (softened) butter

65g sugar

5ml vanilla extract

200g plain flour

To decorate:

195g icing sugar or white sugar

30ml water

Large, white marshmallow

Pretzel sticks

Multi-coloured sprinkles

HOW TO PREPARE

1. Mix the butter, vanilla extract and sugar until a smooth mixture forms. Add the flour and mix to form the biscuit dough. If the dough is too crumbly, add 1-2 tsp of milk.

2. once the dough is formed, roll out to a thickness of approx. half cm on a surface lightly dusted with flour. Cut out circles using a cookie cutter.

3. Line a baking tray with parchment paper, place the biscuits on a tray and leave them to chill in the fridge for 30 minutes so they can hold their shape

4. 10 minutes before the biscuits are ready to bake pre-heat your oven to 180°C/ 160°C fan. Place your biscuits in the oven to bake for 15-20 minutes, until they are golden brown in colour. Remove the biscuits from the oven and leave to cool on the tray.

DECORATING

5. whilst your biscuits are cooling, it is time to make the icing. Add the water to the icing sugar and mix until smooth and all combined. Or you can substitute this step by using melted white chocolate.

6. Once your biscuits are cool, spoon over the icing / white chocolate and allow to drip off the sides of the biscuits.

7. cut the large, white marshmallows in half and pop them onto the biscuit

8. add a smile and eyes onto the snowman using black sprinkles, and add a little carrot nose using an orange sprinkle.

9. stick pretzel sticks into the sides of the marshmallow to make the snowman's arms.

10. optional- wrap some rainbow fruit belts around the snowman's neck to give it a scarf!



By Jenessa

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***Try some mindful colouring in
using the images on this page!***



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Getting Help at Home

If you are struggling with your mental health, the most important thing to do is talk to someone. It can be scary trying to figure things out on your own, especially during the winter without the support from school. Here are a few websites, apps and helplines that support children and teenagers who struggle with mental health. (Don't forget there is a Wellbeing section in the Student tab on the School website too). There's a variety of help for anxiety, self-harm, suicidal thoughts, eating disorders and more. Reaching out is the first step and shows a great deal of strength, remember you are never on your own.



Remember, you're not alone - Kooth is still available to access during the Winter holiday period.

If you or someone you know needs extra mental wellbeing support during the holiday season, www.kooth.com are here.

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