

teachertalk

helping you deal with cancer in the school community



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Welcome to the autumn 2005 *teachertalk*. Thank you to all the

schools that took part in our World's Biggest Coffee Morning in September, you all helped to make the event bigger and better than ever before.

We've included a readers' survey with this issue so that you can tell us how we can make this newsletter even better – and there's a free gift for anyone who sends in their comments!

We also want to hear about any Macmillan fundraising or awareness raising activities your school has been involved in, so please send me your stories and photos.

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Get your class into action

Macmillan is delighted to announce the launch of the new 'Class Action' website for teachers at www.macmillan.org.uk/classaction

With more than one million people in the UK having had a cancer diagnosis, many children and young people are affected by the illness, either through living with it themselves, or knowing a classmate, teacher or family member who has been diagnosed.

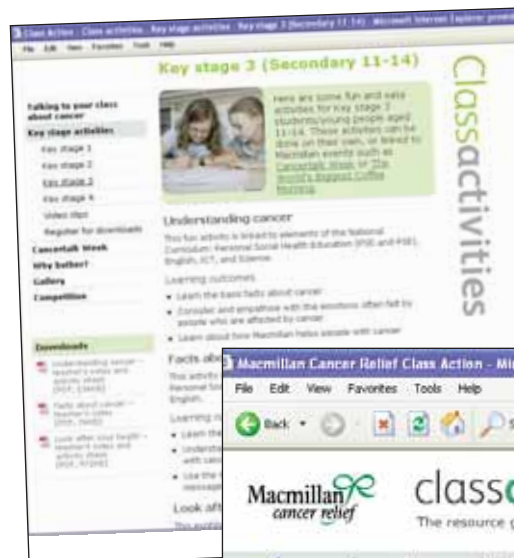
This brand new website provides everything teachers, health and education professionals and youth leaders need to

help them discuss cancer and related issues with children and young people. The information on the site can be used to tackle myths and rumours, and offers answers to the questions that children and young people often ask.

The 'Class Action' site includes:

- free downloadable *Cancertalk* teaching packs and activity sheets for Key Stages 1–4
- detailed support and information materials such as lesson plans, extension activities and links to other sites and organisations
- an up-to-date Macmillan fundraising section with activities that children can organise or take part in
- information on cancer and Macmillan's services

Visit the 'Class Action' website today at www.macmillan.org.uk/classaction to find the information your school needs to deal with cancer.



Feature focus

One of the hardest lessons a child will learn is to grieve for someone close. *teachertalk* offers some tips for teachers on coping with a loss in the classroom.



Remember, you don't have to deal with the situation alone

Learning to grieve

Although the majority of the 1,500 children who are diagnosed with cancer in the UK each year will be successfully treated, schools still need to be prepared for dealing with the issues that arise when a child dies.

Bringing open discussions about diseases such as cancer to the classroom will give pupils the message that it's ok to talk about illness and loss. Anna Broughton from Macmillan's Children's Bereavement Service sees these sessions as an opportunity for children who have been bereaved to open up, and a way of encouraging children to support each other. She says: 'If children are given information about life limiting conditions, like cancer, they can be helped to prepare for and cope with loss.'

When someone dies

When a death from cancer directly affects a school, teachers have an essential role to play in supporting children through the grieving process.

It's important that pupils are told about the death of a classmate or teacher as soon as possible – and given all the facts. Without the correct information, rumours can start and

children use their imaginations to fill in the gaps. Pupils need to be reminded, for example, that cancer is not contagious and that not everyone who has cancer will die.

Dealing with emotions

Expect a range of emotions – sadness, anger, confusion, guilt, relief – and help your class to understand that it's normal to feel a variety of, often conflicting, emotions when someone dies. Changes in behaviour are likely too. Children and young people will often express their feelings in actions rather than words.

But as Anna Broughton says: 'It's important to maintain boundaries of acceptable and non-acceptable

behaviour, but offer children the chance to talk about what feelings they have when they behave in that way.'

'Don't be hard on yourself if the children see you upset', says Anna. 'This will show them that it is normal to be upset and will give them permission to do the same. It isn't a sign of weakness to need support yourself, it will make you better equipped to support your class.'

Remember, you don't have to deal with the situation alone. As well as turning to colleagues for help, there's a range of support and information available for you and your pupils when you're coping with a loss in school.

Help and support

Macmillan CancerLine

Freephone: **0808 808 2020** or textphone: **0808 808 0121**

(Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm), or email: cancerline@macmillan.org.uk

Cruse Bereavement Care

www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk

Young People's Website: www.rd4u.org.uk

Young People's Helpline Freephone: **0808 808 1677**

Winston's Wish

www.winstonswish.org.uk

Helpline: **0845 20 30 40 5**

The Big Hush and *Cancertalk* Week

Join thousands of happy teachers across the UK on Friday 27 January 2006 as over 135,000 children take part in The Big Hush.

It can happen anywhere – in the classroom, hall or playground – and we will provide you with a free fundraising pack with all you need including posters, sponsor forms, stickers and guidelines.

The Big Hush falls at the end of *Cancertalk* Week (23 to 27 January 2006), a week-long opportunity for your school to focus on cancer-related issues through assemblies, classes and presentations. Schools registering to take part in the week will be sent a free *Cancertalk* teaching pack and *Cancertalk* Week materials. Joining in The Big Hush at the end of *Cancertalk* Week can be a great way to reinforce the messages the pupils have learnt during the week.

For the first time this year, children taking part in

The Big Hush can also participate in a story

writing competition – in blissful silence! *Loudmouth Louis* by Anne Fine is a popular story about a very loud boy who challenged himself to stay silent to raise money for a new school library. We are inviting children to write about the next adventure of Loudmouth Louis and Anne Fine herself will be choosing the winners!

The winners will receive £50 of book vouchers and £100 of book vouchers for their school.

Competition rules

There is no charge to enter the competition. Entries must be received by 1 May 2006. Judging will take place by 31 May 2006 and Macmillan Cancer Relief will notify the winners at their school within seven days of the decision. Macmillan's decision is final. Macmillan reserves the right to substitute an alternative prize if necessary. Entry into the competition implies that permission has been given to publish the story in future Macmillan publications.

Register today

To register for your free Big Hush or *Cancertalk* Week pack simply complete and return the coupon on the opposite page.

Alternatively you can register online at

www.macmillan.org.uk/classaction or by calling

0845 601 1716 quoting reference SCHL.





Dartford Extra

Sutton-at-Hone Primary School taking part in The Big Hush

Peace, quiet – and cash!

Macmillan's fundraising packs made it easy for Sutton-at-Hone Primary School to take part in The Big Hush – the challenge was staying quiet!

Our school took part in The Big Hush 2005 and it was an enormous success with both pupils and staff. The children really enjoyed the challenge of staying silent for 20 minutes, and we were amazed by how peaceful the classroom could be! We used all of the materials that were provided by Macmillan. We found the online activity sheets particularly helpful as they gave us the opportunity to tie in the event with this important cause. We also tied it in with talks in assembly and PSHE lessons, and we put the posters up all around the school.

There will always be connections with cancer within the school. Everyone knows someone who has been affected by cancer,

whether it is a parent, grandparent or teacher. The Big Hush is a great way for children to raise money for people living with cancer, and it's easy to take part because Macmillan provides everything you need to make the event a success.

I shall certainly be registering Sutton-at-Hone Primary School for The Big Hush 2006. I can't wait to challenge the children to stay quiet for even longer!

Debbie Hockey, Deputy Headteacher, Sutton-at-Hone Primary School, Dartford.



Send off for your pack today!

Send off for your free Big Hush or Cancertalk Week pack today! Please return the coupon to:

The Big Hush/Cancertalk Week
Macmillan Cancer Relief
Freepost RG172
Bracknell
RG12 1ZX

Alternatively, call **0845 601 1716** and quote SCHL. You can also email schools@macmillan.org.uk or visit www.macmillan.org.uk/classaction

Mrs/Miss/Ms/Mr/Other

First name

Surname

Name of school (if appropriate)

Address

Town

County

Postcode

Which packs would you like to receive?

The Big Hush Cancertalk Week
Both

If you have requested the Cancertalk Week pack, would you like the primary or secondary school pack?

Primary pack Secondary pack
Both

Macmillan Cancer Relief would like to hold your details and send you further information about our work. Macmillan Cancer Relief, Cancer Relief Sales Ltd and Macmillan Cancer Relief Trading Ltd may review these details to help us understand more about you and to contact you about our fundraising and campaign work. We may also ask you to take part in confidential market research. If you prefer us not to use your details in any of these ways, please tick here. We will not pass or sell your personal details to any other person or organisation.

Keyword SCHL

Registered charity number 261017



Jed's story



Jed being awarded the Diana Memorial Award by Liberal Democrat MP Jeremy Browne

Has **your** school been affected by cancer?

If so we want to hear about it.

We would like to publish your stories and experiences in future issues of *teachertalk*, so that other teachers can get a real idea about what a cancer diagnosis in the school community can mean.

Please send your stories to Christopher Rushbrook, Editor, *teachertalk*, Macmillan Cancer Relief, 89 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7UQ, email crushbrook@macmillan.org.uk or call 020 7840 7805.

Meeting my challenges

My name is Jed McQueen Jones and I'm 18. I left school with good GCSEs and went on to study AS level Physics, Maths, Chemistry and Geology at college. Before I started college I was experiencing headaches and blurred vision. I was devastated to learn four weeks into term that I had a brain tumour that needed immediate removal. The operation and subsequent radiotherapy meant that I was completely disabled and unable to manage any AS level work, or even attend college. My previous social and independent life disappeared. However, I used the school on the children's ward at hospital to get a nationally recognised qualification in IT.

When I went home I embarked on 10 months of chemotherapy and I knew it would be impossible to return to college that year. But to give myself a challenge I decided to study for a physics module at home without tuition. When I got the result I was

disappointed to see that I passed it with a grade D. I also became involved with TOPS, a teenage support network which gave me a great deal of inspiration and spurred me on to get my life started again.

6 I've also just got my AS level results back – two As and a B! 9

At the start of this academic year I rejoined college to study physics, chemistry and maths. My energy levels were really low as I was still having chemotherapy, and the operation has left me weak on my left side and needing to walk with a walking stick. College have been brilliant in getting me help in practicals and with note taking. At the start of December I finished chemo, and have since started to feel better. I've also just got my AS level results back – two As and a B!

College also nominated me for the Diana Memorial Award which I have since received. A lot of people have said to me that managing this whilst having chemo and still recovering is amazing, but I think as long as you remain positive in your attitude you can achieve anything you want.



Break time

SUDOKU

7	8					1	9	
3	1		8					
		9	1	5	7	3	8	
	3	7			6	8		
		4		1				9
		1	5				6	4
9		2	6					
5		3			4			2
				2	5		7	

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9.

Solutions to last issue's crossword

Across:

- 1 & 5 Standard rose, 9 Fades, 10 Capable, 11 Metropolitan, 13 Celtic, 14 Accent, 17 Dead language, 20 Magenta, 21 Beech, 22 Cork, 23 Defender

Down:

- 1 & 2 Safe and well, 3 Desert island, 4 Recipe, 6 Orbit, 7 Eternity, 8 Apple crumble, 12 Academic, 15 Egghead, 16 Inhale, 18 Anger, 19 Thor

QUICK CLUES

ACROSS

- 1 Feudal superior (8)
- 5 Gossip (4)
- 9 The length of (5)
- 10 Marked like wood (7)
- 11 Spirit making process (12)
- 13 Take-off strip (6)
- 14 Rods (6)
- 17 Paving blocks (12)
- 20 Painful back condition (7)
- 21 Caribbean state (5)
- 22 Job (4)
- 23 Seaside shelter (5,3)

DOWN

- 1 Egg-shaped (4)
- 2 Feeling (7)
- 3 Passenger transport (5,7)
- 4 Entertain (6)
- 6 Indian language (5)
- 7 Neatness (8)
- 8 Devastating (12)
- 12 Wrist ornament (8)
- 15 From Flanders (7)
- 16 On land (6)
- 18 Impacts (5)
- 19 Herb (4)

CRYPTIC CLUES

ACROSS

- 1 Commanding Officer of Normandy operation (8)
- 5 Bird talk? (4)
- 9 Lengthwise - a student on string (5)
- 10 It's furrowed around Reading (7)
- 11 Endless calm during expansion of spirit manufacture (12)
- 13 Mastermind movement at airport (6)
- 14 Poles - small English county (6)
- 17 Fix rocks for paving pieces (12)

- 20 Boa glum - disturbed by backache (7)
- 21 Tropical hot-spot - in Omaha it isn't (5)
- 22 Model appeal for employment (4)
- 23 Shelter by the sea, but hold each hand briefly (5,3)

1		2		3		4		5	6		7
							8				
9					10						
	11										
12											
13						14			15		
					16						
17		18									
											19
20							21				
22					23						

DOWN

- 1 Eggs taken by student to cricket ground (4)
- 2 Feeling energy flow (7)
- 3 Illumination tube - not for heavy traffic (5,7)
- 4 Divert about strong wind (6)
- 6 Include Czech in dictionary of Eastern language (5)
- 7 Commits sins on diet but stays ship-shape (8)
- 8 Scratch around patio - its disastrous (12)
- 12 Pair allow jewellery (8)
- 15 Motorway cut through meat in the low countries (7)
- 16 A buttress on land (6)
- 18 Jolts member travelling in public transport (5)
- 19 Money making plant (4)

Fundraising thanks

We'd like to say a big thank you to all the schools that have taken part in fundraising activities for us. Here are a few examples.

A close shave

▼ Staff members Debbie Skelton and Ann Morris and a Year 9 pupil at Archers Court School, Dover, shaved their heads to raise over £1,500 for Macmillan. Debbie also organised an anti-bullying day to raise awareness of bullying of children with cancer, prompted by our feature in the Spring 2005 issue of *teachertalk*.



Flying high

▶ Students from White Hart Lane School, London, designed, made and sold ceramic butterflies as part of a business enterprise project. They donated the £114 profit to Macmillan.

A class result

▶ Class 10G at St Boniface's College, Plymouth, took part in The Big Hush, being sponsored to spend four hours in silence. They raised £1,000 to help people living with cancer.



Send us your stories

Have you got a story for us? Then send us an email with the details (and photo) or post it to: Macmillan Cancer Relief, Schools and Youth Department, UK Office, 89 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7UQ.

Contact us

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The wardrobe

Read the story below about how Paul, a young man whose mother has recently died of cancer, reacts when he clears out a wardrobe filled with her clothes.

In childhood, wardrobes and hide and seek went together. Paul loved their darkness. He remembered squashing in among the clothes or crouching down among the empty shoes, his heart thumping as the sounds of searching approached.

Now Paul was grown up and his mother's house was up for sale. People interested in buying it had commented on the storage space in her old bedroom wardrobe. The comment had stuck with him. He knew why. There was no avoiding it – the time had come to dispose of his mother's lifetime of possessions. Now he thought about it, he was dreading the experience of picking through her clothes.

For a long time he paused at the wardrobe door.

At first Paul worked clinically – shoving the clothes into the first of several grey bin bags. What stopped his rapid progress was reaching out and feeling something soft and velvety. In his hand was the shabby, worn collar of an old coat. It had belonged to his

grandmother. His mother had thought it horrible but had never thrown it out.

To his surprise, as he held the coat, he started crying. There had been tears before in the hospital ward, at the funeral and on odd occasions after that. By now he thought his grief had passed. The fact that it hadn't was a comfort to him. He wiped his eyes.

Paul carried on. How could these clothes have a physical presence in his life when she no longer did? He wondered what would happen to these things after he'd given them away. Would they ever be worn again? Were they destined for dusting cloths or retro-shops? Would someone provide a good home for the coat?

And then he realised something. What he was handling were just odd arrangements of cloth and fabric. These objects had nothing to do with his mother now. They were as empty of her as her body had seemed as soon as she had died. He felt lighter. Relieved.

Paul carried on filling the bags.

For more information and support visit
www.macmillan.org.uk/whybother

The wardrobe

Here's a tear-off lesson plan and activity sheet to photocopy and use with your class to discuss bereavement and coping strategies. These sheets are based on our free *Cancertalk* teaching packs – to order your copy please call 0845 601 1716 or email cancertalk@mktpoint.com quoting reference TLK305.

Cross-curricular fit

- ▶ English

Objectives

- ▶ To openly discuss major life changes, such as loss.
- ▶ To understand and evaluate different ways of coping.

Introduction

Introduce the theme of coping with major life changes, and explain that people have different ways of coping.

Some people cope with difficult situations by pursuing a creative activity. The students are going to read the story of Paul, a young man whose mother has died of cancer.

Explain to your students that although some people with cancer die, many people recover and live fulfilling lives. For more information about cancer, refer to previous *teachertalk* resource sheets or visit

www.macmillan.org.uk/classaction

Class activities

Ask your students to read the resource sheet 'The wardrobe', then work through the following questions with them:

- ▶ What impression do you get of Paul from his childhood memories described in paragraph one?
- ▶ Describe Paul's emotions in paragraph two.
- ▶ In paragraphs four and five the author links the key emotions to specific events. Which do you feel is the most moving?
- ▶ What does Paul realise in paragraph seven?

Now discuss with students the following points on ways to cope with loss:

- ▶ In your opinion, how well has Paul coped?
- ▶ Would you share any of his emotions if you were in his position?
- ▶ Instead of throwing things out, some people follow the opposite route to Paul, and keep

everything as it was when someone died. For example, they may leave their bedroom as it was. What are your feelings about this way of coping?

- ▶ Overall – do you find the story uplifting, encouraging or depressing? If you feel it is depressing, what would need to be included in the story to make it more uplifting?

Brainstorm other ways of coping with difficult things, however large or small (e.g. playing sport, having a hot bath, writing a diary, talking about a problem, following a routine, other creative activities). Discuss why people might find these strategies useful.

Assembly/display idea

- ▶ The students could create and perform a dialogue between two people who argue the case for and against this statement: 'After someone in the family has died, we must stop looking back, and just get on with our lives.'

