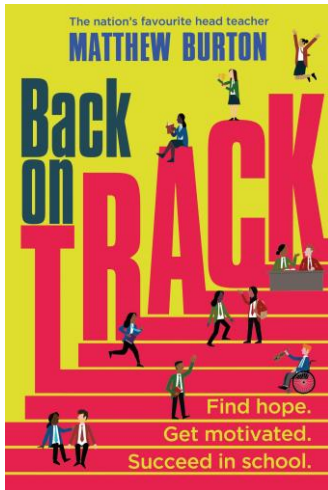


Back on Track: Notes for Teachers and Librarians

Matthew Burton



A motivational and hopeful school handbook for students navigating uncertain times, from Head Teacher, Matthew Burton.

Whether facing assessments, a big change or having to make up for lost time, Head Teacher Matthew Burton is here to help students get motivated again.

From ways to manage the tough times and solve even the biggest problems, to skills for beating school stress and tapping into your potential, this is the one-stop guide for kids who are in need of a bit of hope, some soothing words of advice and a good old pep talk to get them going in school again.

Whatever it is that young people are worried about, this book is crammed with advice so that though things at school might seem really hard, they will soon be back on track and raring to go.

9781526364067 PB £7.99

Four ideas to help students find their motivation and get Back on Track

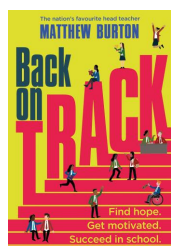
Notes for KS3 and KS4 teachers

Back on Track by Matthew Burton is suitable for teaching to children aged 12+.

The four ideas included in this Teachers' Pack are accompanied by corresponding discussion questions and activities. Together they prompt important discussions around bravery, motivation, routine, mental health, and hope.

Teacher's Pack created for Hachette Schools by Shapes for Schools.

Back on Track Matthew Burton



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IDEA 1: Being Brave

Objectives: Address misconceptions about bravery and fear; write down and talk through your fears with a partner.

IDEA 2: The Meh Monster

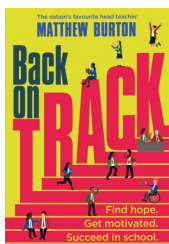
Objectives: Discuss how the Meh Monster affects mood and motivation; create Positive Affirmation Balloons and find other strategies to help get your mojo back.

IDEA 3: Keeping Your Head Up

Objectives: Understand the importance of talking openly about mental health; identify strategies you can use to support your mental health.

IDEA 4: Hope

Objectives: Discuss the power of hope and things that make you hopeful; identify 5 hurdles that you will overcome at secondary school.



IDEA 1: BEING BRAVE

Being brave is about facing up
to something which scares you.
And that could be ANYTHING.



Extract from p57

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

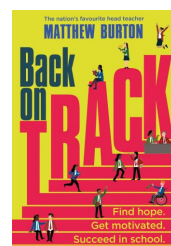
- Who and what springs to mind when you think of the word 'brave'?
- Would you describe yourself as brave? Why/why not?
- Can you think of a time you showed bravery? Explain what happened.
- What scares you? Why is fear a powerful feeling?
- What fears do you have about this school year and why?
- What strategies do you have for managing these fears?
- Who can help you to 'face up' to whatever scares you? Explain how.
- Can you think of any brave people at home or at school who inspire you?

ACTIVITY: CONFRONTING MY FEARS

On page 59, Mr Burton explains that: *'Bravery isn't not crying or not being upset or not acknowledging you are scared. It's writing it down, talking it through, and – even though you can't think of anything else in the world that you'd like to do less – it's getting through it, and getting it done.'*

By facing our fears, we learn and grow and ultimately become stronger. Be brave and confront your fears about this year and the future. Then, taking Mr Burton's advice, talk them through with a classmate and/or someone at home. Talking about things that scare you helps to develop confidence in yourself and others, so give it a go!

Fill in the sheet overleaf as a reminder of the fears you plan to face this year.



MY FEARS

If bravery was a colour, it would be ...

If fear was a colour, it would be ...

I am afraid of ...

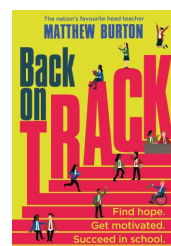
I am also scared of ...

This school year I promise myself that I will

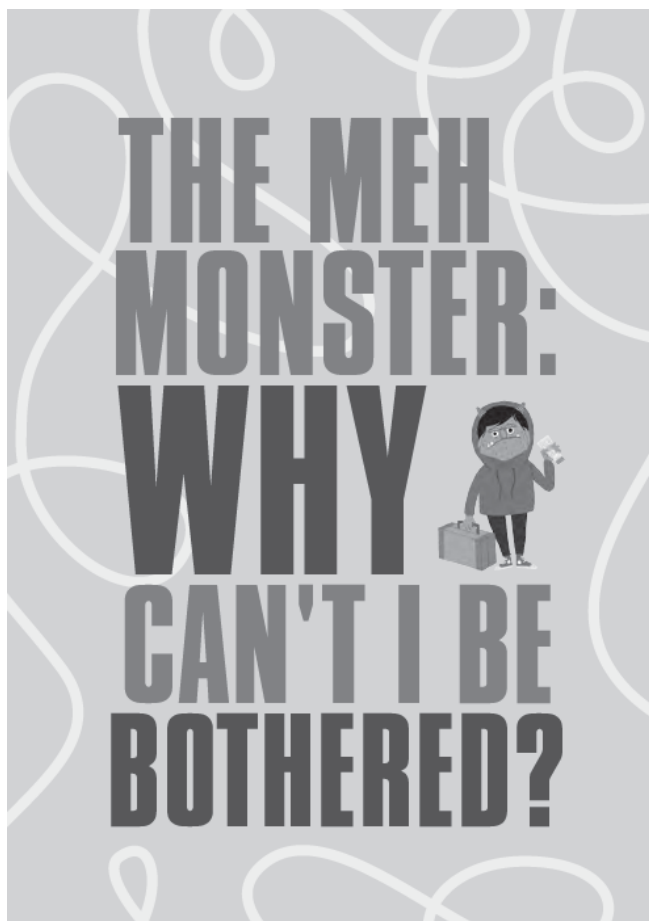
Outside of school I would like to try ...

When I feel afraid, I will try to ...

If that doesn't work, I know that I can ...



IDEA 2: THE MEH MONSTER



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What does the word 'meh' mean? Can you give an example of when and how you might say it?
- Can you think of any synonyms for feeling 'meh'?
- Why is 'meh' likened to a monster? How would you describe your meh monster?
- What impact can this monster have on your mental wellbeing?
- What strategies do you have to keep it away? Give examples.
- When was the last time you felt 'meh'? Describe the scenario.
- Can you spot when others around you feel this way? What are the signs?
- How can you support others if they are in the grasp of the meh monster?

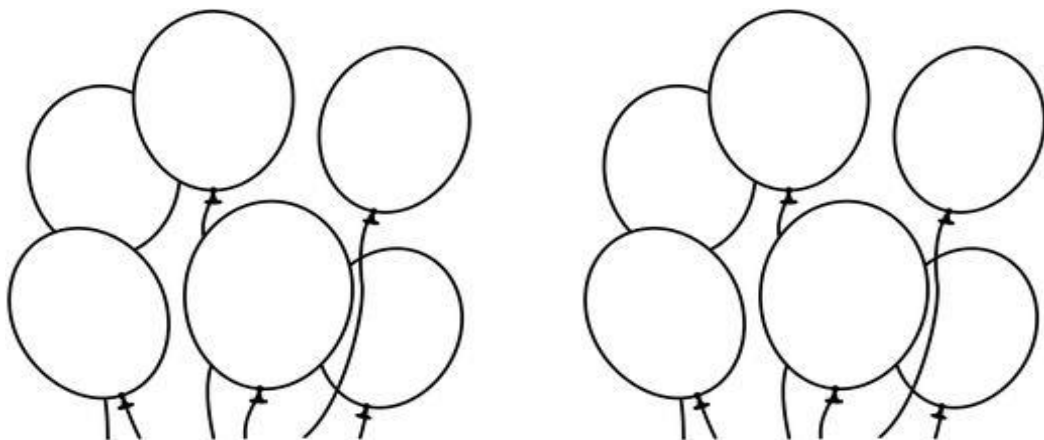
ACTIVITY: GETTING YOUR MOJO BACK

Read the extract from p85:

When you're at secondary school, there'll be times when you feel a certain way but just can't put your finger on exactly *why* you're feeling those things. You've tried to find something that's caused you a problem, and you've tried to plan your way out, but *you just can't find the reason*. It isn't a problem in the classroom, and it isn't anything else. You just feel 'meh' and there doesn't seem to be a proper reason why.

- As Mr Burton says, it isn't always possible to work out *why* you feel low in motivation. Often, it's a case of trying different things to find your mojo again and get back on track!
- Begin by having a go at Mr Burton's tip for 'Positive Affirmations', noting down in the balloons good things that you have in your life and things you are looking forward to.
- Then, begin working your way through the checklist below, attempting some of the activities now, and saving some for another day when the meh monster rears its ugly head!
- Discuss with a partner which items on the checklist worked well for you; remember to use these strategies again in the future!

POSITIVE AFFIRMATION BALLOONS: Draw some balloons and write in the good things you have in your life and what you're looking forward to. Colour them in!



GETTING MY MOJO BACK ... CHECKLIST

1. **FACE IT HEAD ON** – Get yourself to school and around friends who will help take your mind off things
 2. **PLAN** – If you can name the problem, write it down, then plan a strategy for confronting this problem
 3. **LOOK FORWARD** – Plan, note down, sketch, or visualise things to look forward to in the near future
 4. **DO IT!** – Get yourself back in your routine and good habits that you know help you
 5. **EXERCISE** – This could be just a walk in the fresh air or your favourite sport
 6. **HAVE FUN!** – Be daft, do silly voices, jump around your bedroom and sing your favourite song
 7. **PUT YOUR PROBLEMS TO BED** – Tomorrow is a new day and a fresh start, and you are amazing!
- Remember this!

IDEA 3: KEEPING YOUR HEAD UP

Everyone has mental health. Let's say that first. Whatever age, whatever gender, whatever your job or your qualifications, we *all* have mental health. That includes you, in secondary school. You don't have to get a set of qualifications aged 16 in order to earn your right to have mental health. Quite the opposite - your right to your mental health is yours **RIGHT NOW!**

Extract from
p132

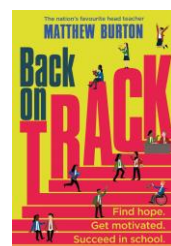
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Why do we use the expression 'keep your head up'? What does this mean?
- What sorts of pressures and worries make it hard to keep your head up sometimes?
- What does Mr Burton mean when he says, 'everyone has mental health'?
- How are you feeling today? Check-in with your own mental health.
- Why might some people find it difficult to discuss mental health? Give examples.
- How might we spot if someone is having a 'down' day? What behaviours or signs could you look for?
- How can you be a good friend to someone who is having a 'down' day? Give examples.
- Who could you turn to at school if you needed further support for your mental health?

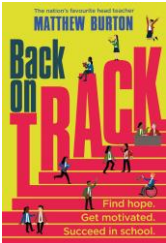
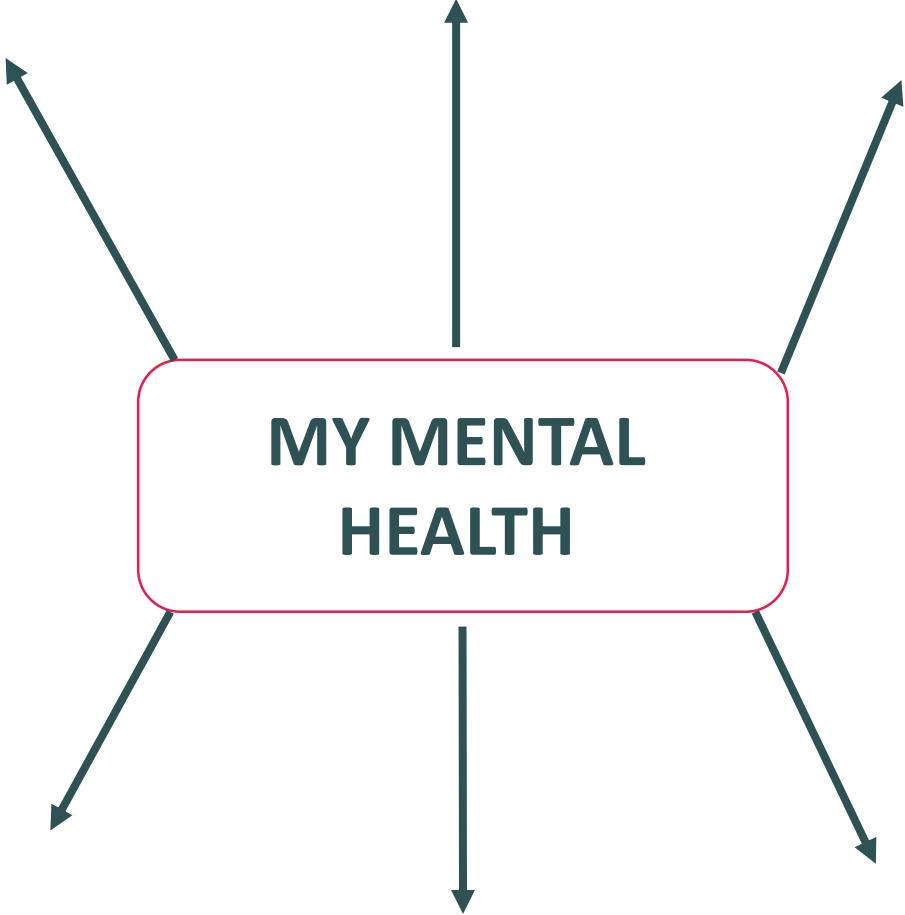
ACTIVITY: LOOKING AFTER MY MENTAL HEALTH

On your tables, get started by discussing different things you can do to support your mental health. Think about: what strategies can help you to relax; which activities help you to keep anxiety or frustration at bay and which aspects of your daily routine help to support your mental health. Note: Mr Burton offers some great tips on pages 138–145 if you need some inspiration!

Note or sketch these ideas down on the next page and feedback as a class what you have come up with. From today's discussions, are there any new strategies you might try in future? Reflect on how looking after your mental health enables you to stay on track in all areas of your life.




IDEA 3: KEEPING YOUR HEAD UP



IDEA 4: HOPE

You're going to be overcome with emotions at times for reasons you can't control (your body is going to do that to you, as are the events we're living through), and you're going to feel completely overworked and overwhelmed at times (again, because it's hard and tough and you'll need to work for what you want), but that doesn't mean that you can't do it.

No,
no, no,
no, NO!
You, my friend, *can*.
100 per cent you *can*.



Extract from
p198

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- How do you feel about tomorrow?
- What about next week, next month, or next year?
- Why is it easy to get overwhelmed sometimes when you think about the future?
- Why is it normal to have doubts at times? Can you give examples?
- How can you keep these feelings in check? What strategies have you learned over these lessons?
- Mr Burton says, 'The power of hope is HUGE'. Why do you think he says this? Do you agree with him?
- Who and what gives you hope? Explain your ideas.
- What else have you learned over the course of these lessons?

ACTIVITY: JUMPING THOSE HURDLES

In his book, Mr Burton refers to the fact that secondary school is like running a race – and a long one at that! There is no shortcut to the finish line but if you put in the hard work and the training, you'll more than likely get the time you want!

Draw 5 athletics hurdles on a sheet of paper and on each one note down a challenge that you must overcome on your journey through school. Whether it's keeping that attendance high when the meh monster has come to visit or maintaining those good habits to get through homework and revision, next to each challenge you face, note down something that will help you overcome it!

Discuss your work as a class and promise to support each other in getting **back on track** if any of you trip on a hurdle.

Back on Track Matthew Burton

