



Brookside Primary School

Learning for Life

Newsletter Spring Term Issue 3

www.brookside.oxon.sch.uk



@brooksidetweets

5th February 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

Next week is the last week of the half term and I am sure you are all looking forward to a break from home learning. It has been a long time for children to be out of school and I am sure they are missing the routine of school, seeing their friends and being able to learn in a classroom with the support of school staff. We understand how hard this time is for parents as well. Many of you are still working whilst supporting your child's learning which takes up lots of time and energy.

Hopefully, the rates of infection will continue to fall which will allow the reopening of schools when it is deemed safe to do so.

COVID Testing of staff

All staff in school are now taking lateral flow device tests twice per week. This is to try to pick up any asymptomatic cases in schools and reduce the spread of infection in the community.

Extreme Reading Video

If you haven't seen it already then check out the Extreme Reading video which you will find on the school closure OneDrive. Not only is it great to see that reading can be enjoyed anywhere, but it is just wonderful to see lots of pupils' faces after such a long time apart. Remember, reading is such an easy and enjoyable activity that provides immense benefits in many areas and we hope both pupils and parents are picking up a book on a regular basis to help escape from the world for a little while. Thank you to everyone who sent in a picture.

PE Lockdown Challenges

We hope you have enjoyed the PE challenges that are on the OneDrive. It is great to hear that lots of children are taking part and trying to complete all of the challenges.

Online Safety – Supporting Children to Express Themselves Safely Online

This week is Children's Mental Health Week and the theme is 'Express Yourself' – We have added at the end of the newsletter a poster explain how children can express themselves safely online. Please take a moment to read the advice. Please email your child's class teacher or the school office if you require any further support or advice about how to keep your child safe online.

Winter Support Grant Scheme

Cherwell District Council is able to help people who are struggling to afford food and stay warm this winter. If you are struggling to afford food or pay your fuel bills, you may be eligible to receive help. If you are struggling to afford food for your children during half term then please email or call the school office. If adults are struggling to afford food or pay fuel bills please have a look at how to apply on this [website](#).

Bereavement Support

SeeSaw Oxfordshire are able to offer support for parents who would like to discuss bereavement with their child. They can be contacted through their website www.seesaw.org.uk. If you would rather talk to a member of staff at school about how to discuss bereavement with your child then please call the school and ask to speak to Mr Watt or Mr Cornell who will be able to provide support.

Safeguarding of Children

With half term approaching and schools closed to all pupils for a week you may be worried about your child or another child. Oxfordshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub can be contacted on 0345 050 7666. Outside of office hours call the Emergency Duty Team on 0800 833 408. If you are worried about a child, even if you are unsure, you can contact the NSPCC professional counsellors for help, advice and support. They can be emailed on help@nspcc.org.uk or by calling 0800 800 5000.

Dates for your diary

Monday 15th— Friday 19th February—Half Term

Wednesday 31st March—last day of Spring Term

Best wishes,

Mr Cornell and the staff of Brookside

7 Top Tips for Supporting Children to EXPRESS THEMSELVES SAFELY ONLINE

The past year has left many children feeling uncertain and worried. So Children's Mental Health Week 2021 has adopted the theme of 'express yourself'. It's not necessarily about being the best – but instead encouraging young people to relish the joy of being 'in the moment' and loving what they do. So whether they're into music, art, photography, film, drama or dance, here are our top tips for helping your child to express themselves safely online.

1 Celebrate their Identity

Celebrating who children are and reminding them of their uniqueness has a huge impact on their confidence and self-esteem. This week, remind them of what you love about them. You could revisit some photos and videos on your phone or computer of special times you've shared. Chat about the importance of finding time to do what they love: underline that it's an important part of who they are.

3 Support Their Interests

Some children seem to know instinctively what interests them and what they enjoy doing; others can be less decisive about hobbies. Spend some time this week sharing their interests and doing something connected to it together. You could make a short Lego film to post on your Instagram, a vlog about baking that you share with relatives, or just play with them on their favourite video game.

5 Enable Emotional Expression

Children sometimes need help in articulating how they're feeling and in beginning to understand how to manage their emotions. A safe, healthy way for your child to explore their feelings is to let them conduct an activity – like listening to a story, or creating some art – and discuss with them afterwards how it made them feel. There are lots of stories available on YouTube, while Audible is streaming children's audiobooks free of charge while schools are closed. YouTube also has a plethora of fun art tutorials (if you log in on an adult's account, remember to adjust your settings first to block inappropriate content and stop potentially unsuitable material auto-playing).

Meet Our Expert

Anna Bateman is passionate about placing prevention at the heart of every school, integrating mental wellbeing within the curriculum, school culture and systems. She is also a member of the advisory group for the Department for Education, advising them on their mental health green paper.

6 Let Them Stay Connected

The online world is a fantastic space for staying in contact with those who we can't be with right now. Young people are often very comfortable using social media to express themselves and stay connected by sharing their ideas, thoughts and feelings with friends. But bear in mind that most social media platforms require a child to be at least 13 before they should access it (WhatsApp is 16). Remind your child that, while it's OK to express who we are on social media, they should still always think before posting – and that their self-worth is never measured by their number of likes, friends or followers.

2 Promote Their Passions

It's different for all of us, but every child has something which ignites their passions and brings them joy. Perhaps they love music and you could introduce them to a music-making app? Or if they enjoy taking photos or making videos, use this week to set a photography or video competition at home, with some fun categories.

4 Help Them Help Others

Some children love to express themselves through activities which help others. Perhaps your local area's Facebook group has a community project that your family could get involved with – even as a one-off; it doesn't have to be a long-term commitment. Depending on your child's age, you could introduce them to online fundraising (such as sites like JustGiving, for example) and how it can make a difference to less fortunate people.

7 Coach 'Safe Sharing'

As part of expressing themselves, your child may want to share something online that they've created – like a funny video, a sketch, a meme or a dance. If they're too young to have their own social media, you could use your own account to share it with selected people who you trust. Emphasise the importance of only sharing content with people that your child knows well, like family and friends. This type of conversation is also useful for introducing young people to the risks and challenges that can come when expressing ourselves to a wider online audience of strangers.

About Children's Mental Health Week

Around three children in every primary school class has a mental health problem. Many more struggle with challenges from bullying to bereavement. Now in its seventh year, Children's Mental Health Week shines a spotlight on the importance of young people's mental health – and it's never seemed more relevant than it does in 2021.

Find out more at www.childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk