



Weekly Newsletter

5 February 2021

Making learning a lifelong adventure

Our school value for this half-term is kindness

Dear Parents/Carers

As you will know, we have been focusing on mental health and wellbeing as part of Children's Mental Health Week this week. This has included a special Oak Academy Assembly on Monday, year group assemblies with involvement from our governing body, the collaborate Odd Dog Out story and the introduction of Freetime Friday (afternoons), this afternoon and continuing in future weeks. The theme of the week this year is *Express Yourself* and this is explained really well in the following message to parents from the organisers of the initiative.

Yours faithfully

Jonathan Walker Headteacher

When children are able to find creative ways to share their feelings, thoughts or ideas it can help them feel good about themselves and who they are. Children can do this through art, music, writing and poetry, dance and drama, photography and film, and doing activities that they enjoy.

It's really important to remember that being able to express yourself is not about being the best at something or putting on a performance for others. It is about finding a way to show who you are, and how you see the world, that can help you feel good about yourself.

Given that the past year will have left many of us feeling out of control and helpless, supporting children and young people to express themselves is arguably more important than ever.

What can you do?

Here are a few simple ways you can encourage your child to express themselves.

- 1. Could you build on existing interests or passions? Think about what has helped them get through the past year. A love of dancing? Baking? Drawing? Fashion? Encourage your child by noticing their unique interests and praising their efforts.*
- 2. Trying new things can be a great way to find a new creative outlet. There are lots of online tutorials and video demos that you and your child could be inspired by... could you try out something new together? Or perhaps ask someone you know to share their creative hobbies and give them a go.*
- 3. Some children may not think of themselves as being creative. Try to focus on the importance of the process and the way it can make them feel, rather than the end result. Try not to judge their efforts and remember to give encouragement for trying rather than for doing something well.*
- 4. Listening carefully can help children feel more comfortable and confident when expressing themselves. Try to minimise distractions and give your child your full attention when you're spending time together, being aware of your own body language and eye contact. You might want to try summarising what they've shared and acknowledging their feelings.*
- 5. Children are expressing themselves all the time but not necessarily with words. 'Listen' to everything they are trying to tell you with their behaviour, or with their play and creativity or with their silence. It's all self-expression.*
- 6. Remember – you don't need a lot of expensive equipment to get creative at home. Recyclable materials or older items you no longer have a use for can provide amazing inspiration, and of course there's no limit to your imagination!*

Let your child know that if they are worried about something, they should always talk to an adult they trust. It could be you, someone in your family, a teacher or someone else in their school.

If you're worried about your child's mental health you can talk to your GP or someone at your child's school. You can also find a list of organisations that provide support and advice on our [website](#).

Headteacher Awards

Congratulations to the following children for their achievements that were celebrated in our online year group assemblies this week.

- **Reception Chestnut Class** Theo – for showing enthusiasm and always being willing to challenge himself.
Maya – for showing creativity in her learning and always being positive.
- **Reception Oak Class** Georgie – for showing perseverance and a positive attitude to home learning this week.
Henry – for putting lots of effort into his home learning, including writing a super sentence!
- **Year 1 Cedar Class** Donovan – for his brilliant ideas when writing about Zog and sounding out his words.
Nina – for a positive attitude towards every lesson and super independent work in Maths.
- **Year 1 Elm Class** Daniel Pimblett – for a positive attitude to learning this week.
Luke Turner – showing great effort with English and Maths this week
- **Year 2 Hazel Class** Emma – for a fantastic effort in all areas of home learning.
Lucas – for a huge improvement in his attitude to learning and the fantastic work he has produced as a result
- **Year 2 Willow Class** Rowan - for working hard and completing home learning work with enthusiasm.
Albie - for putting lots of effort into his home learning, including coming up with a hypothesis for his DT.
- **Year 3 Birch Class** Amelie - for having a fantastic attitude and being especially kind and helpful to others.
Holly - for a very positive attitude to the online learning and making an excellent effort.
- **Year 3 Redwood Class** Aiza- for working so hard and persevering in all her lessons this week.
Kiara - for great effort across the board in home learning, especially her video responses.
- **Year 4 Maple Class** Amy – for showing great perseverance in her home learning and sharing her feelings in a class catch up.
Felix – for putting enormous effort into his home learning and producing an excellent newspaper article.
Amy – for never giving up.
Harrison – for consistently working hard with his remote learning.
- **Year 5 Ash Class** Brendan – for putting in maximum effort when completing his work
Will - for a positive attitude to his remote learning and producing high quality work in all subjects.
- **Year 5 Hawthorn Class** Finn - focusing and concentrating well with his remote learning.
Sophia – showing kindness by involving her brother in her remote learning.
- **Year 6 Rowan Class** Harry – for writing an excellent explanation text this week and working hard to act upon all feedback to given to him.
Arianna – for working hard in all subjects and producing excellent work at all times
- **Year 6 Sycamore Class** Thomas - for completing all the activities set on Seesaw across the week and for working to the best of his ability at all times.
Ishika – for a fantastic effort with his explanation text work this week – creative ideas, ambitious vocabulary and great presentation.

Staying Safe

One area of children's (and adults') lives that can contribute adversely to mental health, is our online activity. We know that premature and unrestrained use of social media can impact on an individual's self-esteem and, consequently, their wellbeing. And we know that children need particular support to keep themselves safe from potential harm online.

Please take some time to read the latest online safety newsletter from Herts for Learning, which was sent out via School Jotter yesterday and is also available on our website [here](#).

Additionally, I found the following Parentzone parent guide on Tiktok useful and interesting. This can be viewed [here](#).

Community Matters

Parents are invited to view the January/February edition of *Families Herts*, a commercially produced magazine for families which includes a variety of home-based activities, topical features on health & well-being, education and fun online classes, by following [this link](#).

Further Information and Reminders

Parking

Please can we ask that if you do not have prior permission from the school that you do not park in the staff car park. Please pass this to Carers/Grandparents who may be dropping off or collecting. Parking at all times should be in our designated car park in Waldegrave Park. Thank you for your co-operation.

Outstanding Payments

Please check your School Gateway account for any outstanding payments. As we approach the end of our financial year we are required to have all monies owed, settled by the end of the month. There are still quite a lot of outstanding payments for the pantomime and several workshops both from this term and last. Thank you.

Refunds

Again, to help with our year end, please complete any refund forms you have been sent for trips which did not go ahead ie Yr1 Dinoland, Yr1 Lego workshop, Y5 St Albans Chorister Day. Forms were sent via the School Jotter to those year groups. Please complete and return all forms by Wednesday 10th February at the very latest. Thank you