

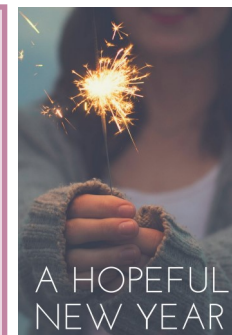


Pitmaston Primary School

# FAMILY SUPPORT NEWSLETTER

Vol.3 Spring 2021 (Lockdown Edition)

**Dear Parents/Carers.** When I sent out the last 'Family Support' newsletter in December I didn't anticipate I would be sending out the next one in the middle of another national lockdown. I know that, from speaking to some of you, the news of increased restrictions was met with equal parts relief and dread and so I have brought forward sending out my next newsletter to you in the hope it might contain some useful bits of information to keep you going over the next few weeks. I know some of you will be enjoying the extra time with your children, while others will be feeling very overwhelmed with this—or maybe a mix of both! Just like we remind the children in school, these thoughts and feelings are valid—'feelings are feelings, and *all* feelings are OK'. In times like this, it is so important that we continue to look after ourselves and to look out for one another. Even if your child is not in school, you can still access our family support service. Please email me directly [kpusharski@pitmaston.worcs.sch.uk], or phone the school office to get in touch [01905 423710]. **Stay safe, Kelethé (Family Support Worker).**



FEELING  
ARE  
OKAY

## TOP TIPS FOR HOME LEARNING

By now some of you will have found a home learning routine that works for you and your child/ren. However, if you are still struggling (like many others out there!) please find below 4 helpful hints for a more positive home learning experience. Try not to worry—your child's class teacher is available for support with all home learning issues when needed.



**1. ENGAGEMENT:** Children's brains respond well to reward systems. If you are struggling to get your child engaged with school work, have a think about some of the things which usually motivate them and use this to your advantage! Praise, winning points, keeping a tally—anything which hooks them in. Create a system with your child in which a reward is given after so many stars, ticks, coins, marbles etc. are earned. Rewards could be as simple as extra TV time at the end of the day, playing a game with one another or an extra zoom call to friends.

**3. DON'T PANIC:** It is inevitable that at times your child will get stuck. In these moments you might not have a clue how to help. What is important is how you respond in these moments. Model to your children how to respond in moments of uncertainty... don't panic! Teach them that curiosity can sometimes solve a problem—ask them question about the subject, see what they already know. Activating this prior knowledge in the brain could help to shed light on a problem, and also shows your child that you are there to offer support in times of difficulty.

**2. EMOTIONS:** In a time of increased pressure and expectations, emotions can be difficult to keep in check. Did you know that you and your child have 'mirror neuron systems' in the brain? These systems enable us to imitate body language, facial expressions and emotions and are key for child development. This system means you and your child will experience each others emotions as if they were your own. As the parent, it is our responsibility to keep our emotions in check and avoid going into battle with our children. Instead, use that energy in showing (faking if needed!) a positive attitude that will encourage and motivate your child to learn.

**4. SLEEP:** Don't underestimate the importance of sleep. Everything we learn during the day becomes permanent through the power of sleep—it is therefore essential for learning. Try to stick to your usual bedtime/ morning routines and sleep patterns during lockdown. Lost sleep can impact learning twice over—children may forget what they have learnt during the day, and are then too tired to effectively learn anything the next day! Limit the use of technology before bed, especially in older children who may have devices/screens in their bedrooms.



## Q. Can nature make your child 'smarter'?

Read about how the 'relaxation response' can aid memory and learning.

**Our brains love nature!** When we go outside and explore, our brains become so absorbed by the interesting aspects of nature that it 'switches off' - which, in turn, sends our bodies into what is known as the "**relaxation response**" (the complete opposite to the "stress response").

In the "relaxation response, we experience a decrease in blood pressure, a decrease in cortisol output (you might recognise this from my last newsletter as being the stress hormone), heightened immunity, a decrease in muscle tension, and an increase in alertness. **Blood flow to the brain increases by approx. 25%!** All of these factors offer the perfect groundwork for increased memory and learning.

But not only that! **The more a child is able to experience the "relaxation response", the less vulnerable they become to the "stress response" overall** - meaning that even when they aren't outside, your child will have developed the skill to move themselves out of the "stress response" and back into the "relaxation response" when needed i.e. they can learn to regulate their feelings during times of stress.

Although restrictions are in place, you are still allowed to go out once a day to exercise—go outside and explore the nature around your home; help your child to experience the "relaxation response" and the other amazing benefits to mind and body that come with this!



## 8 THINGS TO SAY TO AN ANXIOUS CHILD

@teenhealthdoc x @mamapsychologists



You are safe with me



It's ok to feel nervous, I do too sometimes



Let's go for a walk



Let's draw the worry, how big is it?



Let's talk back to this worry



I am here for you



Let's sit together until the thought passes



Let's take a few deep breaths together

If your child is feeling anxious during lockdown and you are struggling to know the right thing to say, try these simple phrases to help validate and reassure.

SOMETIMES THE BRAVEST THINGS TO DO IS ASK FOR HELP!

### Samaritans

call 116 123  
jo@samaritans.co.uk  
24/7

### CALM

call 0800 58 58 58  
5.00pm to midnight  
everyday

### SANE

call 0300 304 7000  
info@sane.org.uk  
4.30pm to 10.30pm  
everyday

## Family Learning Courses

Family Learning Courses are **FREE**

**Spring 2021**

Please check the "**been referred**" box to book on free

Please book onto each course by searching for the course title:

[www.worcestershire.gov.uk/courses](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/courses) or call 01905 728537



### Supporting you with Young Children

**Fun Phonics** - introduction to phonics in Early Years & ideas to use at home  
Starts 4th Feb Thur's 1pm

**Magnificent Maths** - intro to Early Years maths & making resources to use at home  
Starts 4th Feb Thur's 11am

**Making & Using Story Sacks** - supporting imagination and story telling  
Starts 4th Feb Thur's 7pm

**Zog's Fire Breathing Adventures** - art & craft  
Starts 19th Jan Tue's 11am

### Supporting your Mental Health and Wellbeing

**Marvellous Me** - supporting you during lockdown  
Starts 2nd Feb Tue's 1pm

**Art in Your Heart** - Colour Therapy  
Starts 2nd Feb Tue's 7.30pm

**Time for You** - Mindfulness activities & offloading  
Starts 28th Jan Thur's 7.30pm

**Heartful of Art** - more complex art for those with current knowledge  
Starts 20th Jan Wed's 7pm