



Pitmaston Primary School

# FAMILY SUPPORT NEWSLETTER

Vol.4 (Spring 2021)



**Dear Parents/Carers.** As we approach half-term I just wanted to say a heartfelt WELL DONE to all of our Pitmaston parents. Having spoken to a number of you over the past six weeks it is clear that January felt like a very long and difficult month. With the added news of lockdown restrictions being extended it is natural if, at this point, you are starting to feel very 'burnt out'. Hopefully this newsletter will provide a few useful tips and resources to keep you going over the next few weeks. Please don't forget, support is still available to all parents/carers, even if your child is currently not in school. Please email me directly [kpusharski@pitmaston.worcs.sch.uk], or phone the school office to get in touch if you would like to chat [01905 423710]. **Stay safe, Kelethé (Family Support Worker)**

**UNCERTAINTY CAN LEAD TO FEELINGS OF ANXIETY:** during uncertain times it is normal for children (and adults!) to be feeling anxious about a number of things. Here are a couple of tips to help create structure and routine at home, which should help minimise feelings of uncertainty or helplessness.

**HOT CHOCOLATE BREATHING** a relaxation strategy for children of all ages!

Step 1: Hold out your hands like you're holding a mug of hot chocolate.

Step 2: Breathe in slowly, through your nose, to smell the hot chocolate.

Step 3: Breathe out slowly, through your mouth, blowing onto the hot chocolate to cool it down.

Step 4: Repeat, as many times as you need to.



## TOP TIP: PRESCHOOL

The subject of 'body safety' can sometimes feel a little taboo, but as parents it is our responsibility to teach children these simple **BODY SAFETY RULES**. By the time children reach school-age it is recommended that they have a good understanding of these 5 simple rules:



## TOP TIP: KS1



**Q. How can using 'STORIES OF SAMENESS' help my child stay in bed at bedtime?!** As adults we long to jump into bed at the end of a busy day, but for our children just the thought of going to bed is enough to send them into a panic! For lots of children in KS1 this is because of something called 'SEPARATION ANXIETY' - they are simply feeling anxious about being away from you. Something that may help is using a strategy called 'stories of sameness';

**What?** 'Stories of sameness' is about sharing your own childhood bedtime story i.e. "when I was little I remember feeling really sad at bedtime because I didn't want to be alone—can I tell you about it?". If your child seems interested you could then share more: "When I was your age I found it hard to be in my bedroom alone. I missed my Mummy and loved hanging out with them so much. Sometimes when I was feeling lonely I'd remember that they were only down stairs washing up and were right there if I needed them. I loved knowing that they knew exactly where I was—tucked up, safe in bed. Sometimes they would leave the hallway light on to remind me they were close by.. Shall I do that for you?"

**Why?** Sharing your story helps your child to know what they are feeling is normal. It lets them feel seen and understood, and can be a bonding opportunity. It can also help develop feelings of hope and confidence.

## TOP TIP: KS2

As children grow older, it seems to become increasingly difficult to get them to open up and talk about how they are feeling. Rather than just saying 'how are you feeling?' it can help to ask more specific questions instead:



**Q. What have you been thinking about?**

**Q. What made you laugh/feel worried today?**

**Q. How does it feel to be you right now?**

**Q. What is something you are looking forward to?**

## We all have arguments

How do you resolve yours?



How might your children feel when you argue?

Harmony at Home is Worcestershire's approach to the Reducing Parental Conflict (RPC) initiative.



Parental conflict, can range from swearing and shouting between parents, to children feeling like they are walking on egg shells when the conflict is more silent. This is known to have a negative impact on the life chances and well-being of children and young people, particularly when conflict happens a lot, and is left unresolved.

For more information and resources to support healthy relationships please visit:

[www.worcestershire.gov.uk/harmonyathome](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/harmonyathome)

WORCESTERSHIRE  
CHILDREN FIRST



HARMONY  
AT HOME



### WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD OF "THIS IS GOOD FOR YOU"

**AGE: 0-4**

"Red foods make your heart strong."

**AGE: 5-6**

"Red foods have something in them called lycopene that is red. It helps protect your heart and body for a long time."

**AGE: 7-12**

"Lycopene is an antioxidant. Antioxidants help protect our heart, skin, and other parts of our bodies for a long time. It gives red foods their red color."



**SIBLING DRAMA?** For those of you juggling more than one child at home it might seem like that you are living in a world of constant name-calling, bickering and fights. As children learn to navigate their emotions it is natural for there to be moments of emotional unrest. With the added challenge of siblings spending more time together than they are used to, it is understandable that children will be taking out their frustrations on the people closest to them—usually their siblings!



...but what can I do?

1. Check in with yourself. Remember pre-lockdown, you could have had the best day and then all of a sudden someone comes home from school/work in a bad mood and within minutes you are *all* in a bad mood? This is because families tend to mirror one another when it comes to emotions. As the grown-ups we need to check in with ourselves, assess how we are behaving, before we turn our focus on the children.

2. Nip any bad behaviour choices in the bud. The best way to cope with a meltdown, is to stop behaviour before it escalates this far. If siblings are constantly name-calling, start a new zero-tolerance rule whereby there is an immediate consequence—this could be something simple like 10 minutes of lost TV/iPad/Xbox time for each time they are caught name-calling.

3. Encourage "I" statements. When siblings come running to share their side of the story at the same time, encourage the use of 'I' statements to help defuse the situation. Rather than "you took my toy!" encourage an 'I' statement such as 'I felt really sad when you took my toy'. This lets children share with you what has happened, while also giving them an opportunity to express a feeling that goes with it. In turn, this is usually met with the other sibling becoming less defensive and argumentative when it is their turn to talk.

4. Children thrive with routine. This needn't be a routine mapping every minute of every day, but keeping a simple schedule for the day can really help. This is especially relevant for meal times and bedtimes—we know that children are more likely to become grumpy and fight with one another when they are hungry or tired!

5. Expel any extra energy. Children need to experience some type of physical movement every day. At school children use break times to run around and expel any nervous or excited energy. During lockdown children are being cooped up at home for longer periods of time and it is only natural that eventually they will start to push, pull or kick whatever is closest to them. When possible, go for a walk, play in the garden, do a Joe Wicks workout in the living room—anything to get your children moving and burning off some energy!