

Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> April 2021

# The Weekly Bulletin

Inspire, Create, Discover, Together

## Welcome to the Start of Term...eventually!

What a start to the Summer Term it was this week, with an unexpected day of power disruption at the school on Tuesday morning. A huge thank you to all of our parents for your patience and understanding whilst the staff team managed the uncertainty of the situation at a difficult time of the day. We were really pleased to be able to re-open again mid-morning and welcome in most children for the first day of the term.

With such an event as the short notice closure of the school in our minds, **we would ask all parents to ensure that the school office hold up to date emergency contacts.** Please update us on who we are able to contact in an emergency should we need to if your circumstances have changed throughout the year. It's important that we are able to get hold of appointed family or friends at short notice should we need to for any reason, including for an emergency in school, bubble closure or illness. Holding up to date information such as this is also part of our

## Barrow Extra Staffing Update

We have been delighted to have Becky McLachlan leading the staff team at Barrow Extra this year. Becky has now though taken a full time Teaching Assistant role within the school and joined the EYFS team at the start of the Spring Term. This meant that we recently advertised for a new Barrow Extra Co-ordinator and over the Easter holidays we were thrilled to appoint Heeyoung Barrett into the role from this term. Heeyoung already knows the school really well as a longstanding volunteer (and Oscar's mummy) and she has been working with the BEx team since last year. It's been a seamless handover this week and we know the provision will continue to go from strength to strength.



## Year 3 & 4 Girls Football Festival

Some of our Year 3 and 4 girls had the opportunity this week to take part in a Girls' Football Festival organised by Ipswich Town Football Club. A fabulous morning was had in the sunshine at Portman Road with the girls benefiting from a skills coaching sessions with Eva Hubbard, captain of the ladies first team and then playing a series of mini-matches against other Suffolk schools. The girls had an amazing time and were an enormous credit to the school with their enthusiasm, commitment and sportsmanship. We're looking forward to be able to take part in many more events like this in the coming months!



# SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

## 10 Conversation Starters for Parents

Talking about mental health to children is sometimes hard. To the point that we can put off raising the subject, not wanting to unearth problems or raise overwhelming subjects that we perceive our child is too young or not ready for. But rather than keeping children in the dark, this guide is designed to help you confidently talk about mental health, so they feel comfortable talking about their own worries and end any stigma before it begins.



### 1 LISTEN

This sounds obvious, but it is not something we are always great at. Active listening is where we listen without interrupting or making judgements and shows interest in what is being said. If your child feels listened to in the 'smallest of problems' they will become confident that you will listen when the 'biggest of problems' arise.

### 2 ASK TWICE

The campaign from time to change is great. <https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/support-ask-twice-campaign>. Be tenacious about your child's wellbeing. Children instinctively know when your questions and support come from a place of wanting to help and care.



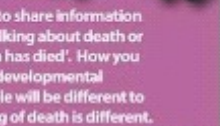
### 3 THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A STUPID QUESTION

This advice also relates to the first point. If your child can ask you any questions about the smallest of things and you listen and answer without shaming or belittling, then they will have more confidence to ask the biggest of questions.



### 4 BE OPEN AND HONEST

Children appreciate honesty, particularly if you are having to share information or talk about a difficult subject. For example, you may be talking about death or loss; 'It's very sad that Nana has died' or 'I feel sad that Nana has died'. How you talk about a subject will differ depending on their age and developmental maturity. Talking about death to a younger child for example will be different to that of an older teen, as their experience and understanding of death is different.



### 5 KNOW WHEN TO SEEK HELP

Assess the severity of the mental health difficulty you are noticing. Is the difficulty making it hard for your child to function regularly throughout everyday life? How frequently is your child affected, how long does it last and how persistent is it? Are they having problems controlling the difficulty? Talk to your child about your concerns and that it is likely they will need further support beyond family and friends.



### 6 TALK ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH NATURALLY

Speak about mental health as part of everyday life, so that talking about our feelings and those of others is normalised. If the usual 'are you ok?' is not creating an opportunity for dialogue then say something like 'I know when something like that has happened to me I felt like this... is that how you are feeling or are you feeling something else?'

### 7 EMPATHISE

'It makes sense that you would feel this way, it is understandable'. Children often worry about things that we, as adults, might see as trivial or silly. However, for them at their age and stage it is a big concern and they need our kindness and care when they show their vulnerability and share their worries.



### 8 HELP YOUR CHILD FEEL SAFE

Teens particularly feel that by talking about their worries or concerns that this will make things worse. Reassure your child that you will discuss a plan of action together and what may or may not need to happen next. If they are a younger child, it is likely you will need to lead the conversation and explain next steps.



### 9 MIND YOUR LANGUAGE

Be mindful of the language you use at home to describe and talk about mental health. Stigma often arises from misconceptions and a choice of language which is harmful. Using the word 'mental', 'man-up' or other such words in a derogatory way won't encourage your child to talk about their mental health for fear of being belittled.



### 10 IT IS OK TO SAY 'I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO NEXT'

Adults do not have all the answers but often children think they do. It is ok to acknowledge that what your child is experiencing is not something you have come across before or know anything about, but that you will work it out together and seek help together.



## Meet our expert

This guide has been written by Anna Bateman. Anna 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 of Education, advising them on their mental health green paper.



## Sources of Information and Support

Your GP  
Young Minds <https://youngminds.org.uk/>  
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/>  
<https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/news-and-blogs/parenting-tips/2016/november/a-simple-guide-to-active-listening-for-parents/>  
<https://www.themix.org.uk/mental-health>

