

News from Mr Edwards-Grundy

In Collective Worship on Monday, I will be reflecting on the importance of being kind to ourselves.

You may be aware that this past week has been Children's Mental Health Week. We hope that you will have found the resources in last week's newsletter and those we are sharing today, helpful in supporting your children and also yourselves, as you face the challenges of this season. When we have all children back in school, we will be investing time and resources into activities that will support children's mental health.

Being kind to yourself is essential to good mental health, it is the recognition that sometimes "good enough is good enough" and that we should take time, amidst all the competing demands, for ourselves. As parents it is very easy to succumb to guilt, the list of things we have not done, the times we didn't get it quite right, the housework not finished, the home learning waiting for a bit of peace and quiet! This weekend I would like to encourage you to turn your back on the guilt, the what ifs and if onlys and instead take some time to be kind, to yourself first and foremost and then kind to those around you.

I would like to encourage you by sharing with you how impressed we have been by the myriad ways that you have engaged with school and your children's learning over the past weeks. Learning, whether in school, or at home, looks different for every child. Children are excited by some things and challenged by others, they will focus on some things and much less so on others!

We, like you, have high ambitions for your children and when we are all back in school, we will be investing significantly in ensuring all your children make rapid progress. But learning happens best when children's mental health is strong and learning to be kind to ourselves is a great starting place.

Top Doodlers!

It's another week of success for the children in Mr Noble's class who, for the fifth week in a row, are this week's 'Top Doodlers!'

Home School Key Worker

We caught up this week with Judith Ledden, who is our Home School Key Worker.

Judith's role is hugely varied, with no two days ever being the same.

Judith told us that she really enjoys meeting people and chatting things through; she especially likes helping people access support or advice.



Judith is very happy to talk about any parenting questions or concerns and is always willing to liaise with other agencies for a wide variety of issues such as health concerns, housing and financial difficulties.

Judith's name quite often appears on the newsletter as she arranges workshops or short courses on subjects of interest to parents and carers.

Judith told us that she finds being part of The Blake School community very rewarding and that she loves to see children and their parents and carers overcome difficulties, grow in confidence and flourish.

If you have any concerns that you would appreciate talking through, or you would like some help with contacting or dealing with external agencies, do contact Judith – jledden@blake.oxon.sch.uk

News from around the school

This week Year 3 couldn't wait to share with us all the learning that they have been doing about the Egyptians. Last week we gave out packs on all sorts of areas for independent research including mummification, the pyramids and Tutankhamun. In school and at home, children have been making pyramids – we love how creative children have been and all the different resources they have used.



We hope that children enjoyed eating their edible pyramids as much as they enjoyed making them! They look delicious.



Stay safe online

With so much of our lives, both children and adults, now taking place online, please take some time to talk to your children about [staying safe online](#).

When they are often talking to their friends and class teachers it is easy for them to forget that not everyone online is who they say they are, and they need to think carefully about what they are sharing and with whom.

Remember to make sure that all devices have appropriate parental controls on them and that your children know what to do in the event that something online makes them feel uncomfortable.

Half-term childcare

Oxford Active, who usually provide our wrap around provision, are running their usual holiday camps over the half-term break.

You can find out more about the camps, which this half-term are for key worker families only, and how to book via their [website](#).



Parentalk

Why not take advantage of the winter lockdown nights to grow as a parent? St Mary's Cogges is running the Parentalk parenting course on Tuesday evenings from Tuesday 23rd February to Tuesday 30th March between 7.30 and 9.30pm.

The course is aimed at parents with primary school aged children. Each evening will provide an opportunity for reflection on some of the challenges of parenting as well as celebrating the things that are going well.

Join members of St Mary's for evenings of fun, with some thought-provoking input and opportunities to share with others in order that everyone learns how to be a better parent.

Sign up for the course [here](#).

BBC Children in Need

This week we received our certificate for the fundraising we did for BBC Children in Need. The monies raised in this year's campaign are being used to support projects that will help children's wellbeing.

You may like to explore some of the resources that have been sent through.

[Get Active with Joe Wicks](#) – PE with Joe takes place at 9am on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

[Get creative with Me2Club](#) – see who can describe and draw the best monsters.

[Explore additional resources](#) – including how to have difficult conversations with your children and activities you can do as a family that will support everyone's mental health.

Ideas for every day

[Action for kindness](#) has produced their monthly calendar, with ideas for everyday of February – why not try a few and see what difference it makes for you and those around you.

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
1 Send someone a message to say how much they mean to you	2 Ask a friend how they have been feeling recently	3 Do an act of kindness to make life easier for someone else	4 Organise a virtual 'tea break' with colleagues or friends	5 Show an active interest by asking questions when talking to others	6 Get back in touch with an old friend you've not seen for a while	7 Make an effort to have a friendly chat with a neighbour
8 Share what you're feeling with someone you really trust	9 Thank someone how they made a difference for you	10 Look for the good in people, even when they frustrate you	11 Send an encouraging note to someone who needs a boost	12 Focus on being kind rather than being right	13 Send a friendly message of support to a local business	14 Tell your loved ones why they are special to you
15 Smile at the people you see and brighten their day	16 Check in on someone who may be struggling and offer to help	17 Respond kindly to everyone you talk to today, including yourself	18 Appreciate the good qualities of someone in your life	19 Share a video or message you find inspiring or helpful	20 Make a plan to connect with others and do something fun	21 Actively listen to what people say, without judging them
22 Give sincere compliments to people you talk to today	23 Be gentle with someone who you feel inclined to criticise	24 Tell a loved one about their strengths that you value most	25 Thank three people you feel grateful to and tell them why	26 Give positive comments to as many people as possible today	27 Call a friend to catch up and really listen to them	28 Make uninterrupted time for your loved ones

Stay safe through education

Staywise has produced some great online resources to help children continue to learn how to stay safe.

[The website](#) contains all sorts of games and resources that you can pick and choose from to help your children learn about how to stay safe in a wide variety of circumstances.

You can search their resources by age or by subject so that you can find what is most relevant to your circumstances.

Great British Bird Watch

Children in many of our year groups took part in last weekend's 'Great British Bird watch'. Children sat with parents, counted and identified birds and generated some great data to help with this citizen science project. Lots of children also made bird feeders or food to attract more birds to their gardens. As the days get longer, it will be a great joy to hear more birdsong and see birds building their nests.

