



## Newsletter: November 2023

### Congratulations, Mrs Gynane!

Huge congratulations to Rebecca and Sean who got married over half term. It will take a while to get used to Mrs Gynane and not Miss Popple!



### Homework Policy

We have recently reviewed our Homework Policy. Our belief is that homework should not be onerous at primary school and should focus on the basic skills, particularly reading, phonics, spellings, early number fluency and times tables, as well as preparing them for key educational milestones such as the Year 1 Phonics Screening and Year 6 SATs tests.

#### RECEPTION

- Regular reading (minimum of three times a week, but daily if possible). Parents are expected to record this in their child's reading diary.
- Sharing books at home (including weekly 'bedtime books'), nursery rhymes and flashcards.
- Phonics practice, and practice of rainbow words (from Animaphonics).

#### KEY STAGE 1

- Regular reading (minimum of three times a week, but daily if possible). Parents are expected to record this in their child's reading diary.
- Sharing books at home (including weekly 'bedtime books').
- Phonics and/or spellings (from Animaphonics); practice of rainbow words.
- Numbots practice (online maths). Children will have an individual log-in to access Numbots.
- From the spring term onwards:
  - Year 1 children will have homework linked to prepare them for their Year 1 Phonics Screening Check,
  - Year 2 children will have homework linked to prepare them for their KS1 tests in reading, maths and spelling, punctuation & grammar.

In both cases, this will be fully discussed with parents so that appropriate support can be given.

#### KEY STAGE 2

- Regular reading at home. Parents are expected to sign their child's reading diary at least three times a week.
- Practising their times tables through 'Times Tables Rockstars' (TTRS), at least three times a week. Children will have an individual log-in to access TTRS.
- Weekly spellings (Spelling Shed). Children will have an individual log-in to access Spelling Shed. Sometimes children will have a personalised spelling programme.
- From the spring term onwards:
  - Year 4 children will have homework linked to prepare them for their Year 4 Multiplication Tables Check
- From October half term onwards:
  - Year 6 children will have homework linked to prepare them for their KS2 SATs tests in reading, maths and spelling, punctuation & grammar

In both cases, this will be fully discussed with parents so that appropriate support can be given.

#### CREATIVE HOMEWORK

From time-to-time, teachers may set 'one-off' homework projects linked to a class theme or topic, or there may be a whole-school creative task set (for instance, linked to an event such as World Book Day). These projects may involve a practical, creative approach. Any tasks set will:

- Have a very clear focus and time guideline, which will be clearly shared with pupils and parents;



- Be open-ended, and give opportunities for all pupils to succeed.

Parents/carers are also encouraged to share any additional homework that their children have carried out through Class Dojo, for instance, going on a woodland walk or doing some cooking at home. Additional work at home will be shared and celebrated by the class teacher.

**One whole-school creative task that we would really like our pupils to take part in is applying for the Blue Peter Reading Badge (see below).**

### Blue Peter Reading Badge

Tell us about a book you have read and what you think about it. Maybe you liked the characters, or perhaps you enjoyed going on exciting adventures in faraway places.

Upload your illustration of a character or a scene from the story. This could be a drawing, painting or even digital artwork.

Let us know what other books and authors you have enjoyed reading and why.

Get your parent or guardian to help you fill out your form and personal details.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/findoutmore/blue-peter-apply-for-a-book-badge>



### Macmillan Coffee Morning and Harvest

Thank you so much to everyone who helped make our Macmillan Coffee Morning such a success this year – we raised £395! Special thanks to Sharon from Macmillan for telling our children all about the charity, and to Rachel for organising lots of Macmillan goodies for us to take home!

Thanks also for all the harvest donations, which have been gratefully delivered to the Ashby Food Bank.

### What is Bullying?

We are proud to have received the Beyond Bullying Gold Award for our anti-bullying teaching and ethos. So, how do we define bullying to our children?

Our children know that we use the **STOP** acronym:

What is bullying?      Bullying is **S**everal **T**imes **O**n **P**urpose

What should we do?      We should **S**tart **T**elling **O**ther **P**eople

Further information, advice and support can be found on the Beyond Bullying website, at

<https://www.beyondbullying.com/>



**Next week is Anti-Bullying Week; the theme is 'Make a Noise About Bullying!' Children are invited to wear their odd socks on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> November for Odd Socks Day, to celebrate diversity and uniqueness!**



### Run Pudsey 2023!

A reminder that we have registered to take part in Run Pudsey 2023. This is a fun run that will take place at school on Children in Need Day. If you would like your child to receive a medal, you will need to register as a parent by visiting

<https://www.runpudsey.co.uk/school/snarestone-primary-school> The school code is **7438**. Please be aware that only registered children with an active sponsorship page will receive medals.

Children in Need is on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> November.

## National Online Safety Guides

This month's parent guide is about supporting children's mental health:

At National Online Safety we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information they need to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one platform of many which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit [www.nationalonlinesafety.com](http://www.nationalonlinesafety.com) for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

# 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.

Are you sure?

### 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.

### 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.

### 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.

### 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.

### 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.

### 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/v>  
<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>

For further guidance, tips and resources, visit the UK Safer Internet Centre at

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/parents-and-carers>



[www.snarestoneprimary.org](http://www.snarestoneprimary.org)



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