



St Mary's News

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Dear Parents,

We have been enjoying having so many of our children back in school, and the groups seem very happy.

Please make sure you are dropping your child off and collecting them promptly each day at the correct time.

You will all have noted that the government have now released the advice for the full opening of schools in September. From September, we will expect all children to return to school. We have begun planning for this, and our priority is to keep our children, staff and families safe when we open. Children will no longer be able to stay at home.

Children are spending much more time online at the moment, and so parents need to supervise computer access to make sure children are safe. If you are not sure how you can monitor this, please check the following website: <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/Support-tools/home-activity-worksheets/>

Lets remember that even though we are apart, we still belong to one community. Please take a moment over the next few days to pray for our school.

Our School Prayer:

This is our school
Let peace dwell here
Let the room be full of contentment
Let love abide here
Love one another
Love of all pupils
Love of life itself and love of God
Let us remember
That as many hands build a house
So many hearts build a school



Nursery

Acorns have been exploring different ways of getting from one place to another and exploring. They have made trails just like in Hansel and Gretel. They finished off their week by creating their own little picnic outdoors.



Reception

This week the children continued to explore 'The 3 Billy Goats' story. They created story maps changing one part of the story and adapted the original bridge designs to make them stronger.

Using the puppets the children created, they retold the story using their own story language and role.



Year 1

Year 1's focus has been 'The Three Little Pigs' They have solved mathematical problems and written about the characters and the setting. They finished the week by creating a piece of art using mixed media.



Year 2

Year 2 have been revising money. They have enjoyed using coins and notes to understand how to make different amounts. They have also been learning how to calculate change.



Year 5

We have welcomed back year 5 this week. They have spent their mornings taking part in English and mathematics lessons and then enjoying PE and art sessions in the afternoon. Below, the children are creating stained glass windows as part of their Religious Education lesson.



Year 6

Equality Vs equity was the focus of the year 6 art sessions this week. Although both promote fairness, **equality** achieves this through treating everyone the same regardless of need, while **equity** achieves this through treating people differently dependent on need. The children then produced art work that depicted this.



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.



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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.



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.

