

THE OTTER

THE NEWSLETTER OF OTTERBOURNE CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL.



Dear Families

Today is an important day in the lives of the Year 6 children, as the Year 7 allocations have been published. I know that there is a mix of emotions in the year group: some excitement, a little bit of disappointment, but quite a lot of realisation that we are starting to see the end of their time with us...it isn't over yet though and we are determined, as always, to ensure that we make the most of the last few months. We have our plans but I'm always open to new ideas if you have any for how we can celebrate this important transition time, or to improve the experiences for all of our children.

Outside of school, and as much as I'm not able to do much about it, I am hearing about more issues with the car parking, including people being blocked, congestion at the entrance/exit and children not having their seatbelts on. Please don't 'shoot the messenger' here; we care very much about the safety of everyone in the community.

I hope you have a safe and enjoyable weekend.

Mr Geraghty

REMINDER

FOS QUIZ

NIGHT

22nd March

Here's a lovely notice created by Matilda and Elizabeth Blachford on behalf of St. Matthew's Church.

Easter Monday Funday



St Matthew's church is having an Easter Monday Funday on Easter Monday.

There will be lots of activities for all ages including:

- Chocolate Tombola
- Name the Binny
- Number of eggs in a jar
- Face paint
- Raffle

and many more.

So make sure you come along and support our local church on Easter Monday for fun and games. Don't forget your cash! Don't worry if you don't have cash - we accept card.

Remember Easter Monday Funday!!



ALLERGIES - please remember that we are a peanut-free school.

Thank you.

Parent webinar County Lines in Hampshire

Hosted by

Iverson Trust,
a parent with lived experience & a
local police officer.

Register today

www.iversontrust.org.uk/webinars

7-8.30pm
21st
March



i feel so much
more confident to
to talk to my child

PLEASE REMEMBER TO VISIT OUR 'DIGITAL WELLBEING' PAGES AS WE UPDATE THESE WITH NEW GUIDANCE AND ADVICE AS WE RECEIVE IT.

Digital Wellbeing

Home >> Parents/Carers >> Digital Wellbeing

Digital Wellbeing: Empowering our Children in a Digital World

On Tuesday 7th November, we hosted our first ever Digital Wellbeing event. This workshop was designed to focus on 3 key areas, alongside supporting and education parents with the risks and dangers our children are being exposed to online.

10 Top Tips on Supporting Children with SELF-REGULATION

Children need to learn to understand and recognise their emotions, while finding healthy ways to process them. Emotional self-regulation, however, depends heavily on age and development. While very young ones or children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) may find it particularly challenging to self-regulate, nurturing these important skills can be hugely beneficial. Here are ten top tips for supporting children with their self-regulation.

1. DESIGNATE A TRUSTED ADULT

It's vital that children feel safe and know that there's someone they can always go to for help if they need it. Schedule consistent times for the child to develop a relationship with this person – ideally through play and games – allowing trust to grow and ensuring that the child is more likely to come forward if anything is wrong, rather than hiding their emotions.

2. MEET CHILDREN HALFWAY

Unless you know where a child is developmentally and tailor your approach to their needs, you're less likely to have an impact. In particular, younger ones and children with SEND can struggle to self-regulate and instead rely on others to help them. We call this 'co-regulation'. Rather than offering strategies for self-regulation, it could be better to start co-regulating with a trusted adult first.

3. FACTOR IN THEIR BASIC NEEDS

Remember that for a child to develop emotional regulation skills, their basic needs must be met first. Children who are hungry, tired, cold and so on – as well as those who have experienced adverse childhood experiences – may struggle to self-regulate. Before you develop strategies with any child, make sure they feel safe, secure and comfortable in themselves.

4. REMAIN PATIENT

If a child is struggling with their emotions, it can often become difficult to stay calm. Remember that dysregulation is beyond their control, so a display of frustration or anger could negatively impact the situation. Instead, children need to be met with comfort and understanding to help them manage these problematic feelings.

5. BE 'A DYSREGULATION DETECTIVE'

While some children can tell you why they become dysregulated, many others can't. You could investigate potential triggers by observing the child and talking to their family. When the child becomes dysregulated, note down details like the time, what they're doing and who they're with – the trigger may be someone they sit near, an unmet sensory need or something else entirely. Once we identify some triggers, we can help to avoid or overcome them.

6. USE SUITABLE LITERATURE

There are some wonderful books that can help you teach self-regulation to children. Reading these with a child can be especially powerful. Take time to discuss the content: ask questions about what feelings the characters had, why they felt that way and what strategies helped them. It can also be useful to refer back to snippets of these books at appropriate moments.

7. TRY SENSORY RESOURCES

An overlap between sensory needs and emotional regulation is possible. Children may struggle to self-regulate if they're experiencing sensory overload (a noisy classroom, for example). Positive sensory input can help calm them down. Use resources such as weighted blankets and fibre-optic lights. Of course, what works for one child might not work for another – so it's important to offer a choice of resources to discover which they prefer.

8. NURTURE INDEPENDENCE

If you feel it's appropriate, let children try out these strategies alone. Always offer them a choice: they could listen to music when they're feeling stressed, for example, or they could write down their worries or draw something to represent how they feel. This may take time for the child to get used to, so be patient. Encourage them to share any helpful strategies with a trusted adult.

9. MODEL GENUINE FEELINGS

Children learn a lot just from watching grown-ups. Don't be afraid to show your own emotions and self-regulation strategies. While you'll obviously want to avoid sharing anything too personal with children, they should still see us experiencing and handling our own feelings. Tell them how you are feeling, then show them how to respond in a healthy manner.

10. FORMULATE A PLAN

As much as we try to prevent children from experiencing dysregulation, it's always wise to have an appropriate plan for when it does happen. Discuss this strategy with the child (if appropriate) and their family. The best approach for an individual child is often a bespoke one; it's hugely important to know in advance what might help and what could worsen the situation.

Meet Our Expert

Georgina Durrant is an author, former teacher, Special Educational Needs Coordinator and the founder of the award-winning SEN Resources Blog, where she shares activities, advice and recommendations for parents and teachers of children with SEND.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about ONLINE DATING & RELATIONSHIPS

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Most online dating apps claim to be for over-18s only but, in some cases, relaxed age verification also allows children to access them. What's more, some popular social media platforms use similar design features to many dating sites – blurring the line between why a young person initially downloads an app and what they actually end up using it for.

ONLINE GROOMING



Online grooming is when someone forms a connection with a child in the digital world and carefully cultivates this relationship with the intention of manipulating the child into doing something sexual or illegal. The process involves gaining the young person's confidence – which can make them far less likely to tell a trusted adult about their new online 'friend', or to recognise what is even happening.

WEBCAM BLACKMAIL



Some young people have been coaxed into getting nude or semi-nude on a video chat with someone they met on a dating platform. They're then told that, unless they hand over a certain amount of money, a recording of the video will be posted online (or possibly sent to their contacts). This can be hugely traumatic for a young person and, in extreme cases, has resulted in self-harm and even suicide.

DAMAGE TO SELF ESTEEM



Many dating platforms encourage users to rate the images that people upload; this has clear potential to negatively impact a young person's self-esteem. On some apps, pictures of a user's face and body can be rated anonymously, with notifications informing them if someone has then declined to match with them. This form of rejection can feel extremely hurtful and degrading.

CATFISHING AND SCAMS



Creating a false identity to deliberately lure people into a relationship (whether romantic or platonic) online is known as catfishing. Commonly, someone pretends to share interests or beliefs with their victim and gradually gains their trust. A young person's feelings for this fake 'friend' may cloud their judgement and can lead to them surrendering money, personal images, passwords and so on.

STALKING AND HARASSMENT



Stalking is obsessive behaviour by a fixated individual which disrupts their victim's life; it can bring severe distress and even the fear of violence. There have been frequent reports of stalking cases that originated on dating apps, with perpetrators creating new accounts in response to being reported or blocked. It's a particular cause for concern if a young person has ever given out personal details (such as their street or school name) online.

Advice for Parents & Carers

KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING

Reassure your child that they can always talk to you about anything online that's worried them. Emphasise that if they're being sent unwanted images – or if they've shared images or video content themselves – they should tell you straight away. Discuss the potential risks of online dating and check in with them frequently to ensure that they're feeling comfortable about their online relationships.

TAKE A 'SAFETY FIRST' STANDPOINT

Encourage young people to be careful about who they send invitations to – and accept them from – on dating sites and apps. Familiarise yourself with how to adjust the privacy settings on your child's devices and apps to help them control who can access their profiles and information. Talk to your child about why it's unwise to share any sensitive, private or confidential information in their profile.

PROTECT CONTACT DETAILS

If a young person is interested in using online dating sites or apps, strongly encourage them to choose one that offers the facility to conceal both parties' email addresses when messaging prospective dates. If that's not possible, ensure that the young person sets up a separate email address which doesn't include their real name. This is easy to do via providers like Hotmail, Yahoo! Mail or gmail.

HIGHLIGHT COMMON DANGER SIGNS

Talk to your child about some of the obvious red flags in online dating: requests for money, for instance, should always ring alarm bells. Likewise, if a young person is in contact with someone who they feel is pressuring them into providing personal or financial information – or who they suspect is trying to trick them into it – they should end communication immediately and contact the dating service provider.

Meet Our Expert

Rebecca Jennings has more than 20 years' experience in the field of relationships, sex and health education (RSHE). As well as delivering workshops and training for young people, parents and schools, she is also a subject matter expert on RSHE for the Department of Education.



The National College



National Online Safety

#WakeUpWednesday

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT!

The following pages include extracts from previous newsletters, just in case you missed some of the more important messages we are trying to share.

THE VILLAGE CAR PARK AND VOLUNTARY ONE-WAY SYSTEM

Thank you for the positive responses regarding the voluntary one-way system, which was first mentioned in the previous newsletter. It's becoming clear that it is something that would be beneficial to a lot of families. If you are happy to start following it, you will help to keep the flow of traffic moving safely in the mornings and afternoons.

FROM LAST NEWSLETTER: A few years ago, there was a voluntary one-way system that essentially meant Cranbourne Drive was a one-way road at school drop-off and pick-up times, with the entrance being the junction nearest to the school. It ensured that everyone who followed the system could safely turn left in to the car park, and then left out of the car park before following the road round to the junction at the far end (from the school).

My understanding is that most parents stuck to this, and then residents were informed so that they could do the same, which ensured that they too, were less affected by school traffic.

I have been in contact with the local council about this, and they are going to discuss it further, but for now, could you please send to headteacher@otterbourne.hants.sch.uk any thoughts or comments you have about this idea. In the meantime, these things do have a tendency to change organically, so if you choose to follow this route anyway, then things should improve!

Spotlight on School Attendance

Driving up attendance and tackling persistent absence is at the centre of new stronger measures launched today as pupils return to school.

- The Rt Hon Gillian Keegan MP and the DfE (January 2024).

*It is usually appropriate for parents and carers to send their children to school with mild respiratory illnesses. This would include general cold symptoms: a minor cough, runny nose or sore throat. However, children should not be sent to school if they have a temperature of 38°C or above. **It can be tricky deciding whether or not to keep your child off school, nursery or playgroup when they're unwell.***

The NHS have produced the following guidance for parents: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

From a letter by The Chief Medical Officer and leading health professionals.

Across the county, there are changes being put in place to help families where persistent absence is an issue that needs further support; there are also indications that the penalty system is being reviewed.

Our school attendance currently exceeds the national average which, by comparison, is excellent but the impact of lost learning is something that is felt by children, families and school staff so it is something that we will continue to work with families to improve, where necessary. Where we have a concern about the level of attendance, starting with children with an attendance figure of 95% or less, we will be in touch to see what help we can offer to support children and families.

SIGNING IN AND OUT OF SCHOOL

It is important to make clear that it is not just a day away from school that can affect a child's attendance. Late arrivals, those children who arrive at school after the register has closed at 9:05, receive a 'late' mark. We are also being asked to monitor...but **not yet** report on...'early leavers' and we need to follow the appropriate procedures for safeguarding children who are attending alternative venues, for any reason, during the school day.

If your child is regularly being taken out of school early, we will need to understand the reason for this as well as undergo a risk assessment with the appropriate organisations (which might involve us having to visit them ourselves).

If your child is to attend a medical appointment, I need to encourage you to try and make these after school or during holidays.

We are currently exploring remote options for signing children out of school, but for now I must ask you to come in to the school to sign children out. This needs to be a parent/guardian as the process of signing out means that the children are then out of our care and control.

WhatsApp Worries

As a parent of a primary-aged child myself, I know that social media can be incredibly useful when it comes to sharing news and information with other parents, especially when it comes to trips, or the incredible work of our amazing FOS representatives. It is a powerful tool that we can all benefit from.

The flipside of that though, is that what children come home saying is sometimes a personal interpretation of the core message that was given to them, which is then easily lost as it bounces around social media platforms. I always want there to be clarity though, and feel that this is something we can work on together to improve, as sadly, any misinterpretations can easily turn in to negativity about the decisions we are taking for the greater good or the safety of the children.

From conversations we have had with parents in the past 48-hours, there are a couple of things that seem to need some clarification:

1 - The children are not banned from running around school. As highlighted in the last newsletter, we are seeing far too much 'rough play'; children are getting hurt from 'bundling' on each other; we have had an incident of a coat getting ripped as children are pulling at each others clothes, and there is a kicking game that children are all too happy to play.

However, there are places around the school, mostly the paths directly adjacent to the building where children must walk, which is a decision I've made to reduce the risk of accidents and to give children quiet spaces. Children can run on or between either playground. They can even continue to play light-touch 'tag' games but otherwise we do have a rule of 'hands and feet to yourself' so the game where they push each other over has been banned.

2 - Star Parties. We all want the children to enjoy celebrations as a whole class throughout the year, but the children need to feel that they are contributing to star parties going ahead as they are a way of developing positive learning behaviours and promoting quality contributions or collaboration. The teachers will always strive to ensure children get star parties regularly, but we don't set a particular day for them as this would lead to the children expecting them, which essentially defeats the object of having extrinsic rewards. I will be working with the teaching team to ensure that the approach to all rewards is consistent across the school but they all need to be able to respond to the needs of their own cohort of children each year.

There will always be decisions that divide opinion but if you would like to seek clarity on any points of confusion, whether that is from social media or other sources, I (or a member of SLT) open the gate each day (with few exceptions) and my door is always open, or you can call/email me at the school on 01962 712020 / headteacher@otterbourne.hants.sch.uk.

If you have other suggestions for how we can improve communication, please do let me know. All I ask is that the new 'clearer' message be shared amongst parent groups too please.

Mr Geraghty

Support for parents

Whatever family life brings, we're here to help

NSPCC

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents/>

A message from Winchester Basics Bank

Winchester Basics Bank has been operating in the territory for 20 years and has been running a holiday lunch scheme since 2016. Our last scheme, which ran at Christmas, provided 10 days' worth of lunches for some 250 children in the area. We are running the holiday lunch scheme this Easter and we rely on your help in identifying those children who are eligible and approaching their parents or carers on our behalf.

The criteria is as follows:-

ANY child who is receiving free school meals during term time and whom you believe may not receive a nutritious meal at lunchtimes during the school holiday (this may include school aged siblings who are not at your school).

ANY child whom you believe, as an outcome of current, difficult family circumstances, may not receive a nutritious meal at lunchtime during the school holiday (this may include school aged siblings who are not at your school).

We are willing to discuss with you any queries you may have, either by telephone or by making a brief visit to your school. Please telephone one of the numbers below to discuss further.

The food supplied is designed to replace the hot meal and will be tinned/dried; we do not have food items suitable for packed lunch style meals. We can offer food suitable for most dietary requirements.

We have 4 locations for parents to collect from; Bar End, Highcliffe, New Alresford, Weeke, – operating on specific days (Mon – Fri). The family will be asked to nominate which location they will be collecting your food from.

Bar End (Vineyard Church, SO23 9NR) – Mon 18th, or Thurs 21st March @ 10am – 12pm

Highcliffe (21a Penton Place, SO23 0PZ) – Tues 19th, or Fri 22nd March @ 10am – 3pm

New Alresford (St Gregory's Church, New Alresford) – Weds 20th March @ 10am – 12pm

Weeke (St Barnabas Church, SO22 6EF) – Thursday 21st March 10am – 1pm

We are also able to arrange deliveries for families who are housebound, who are disabled or who have disabled children, and do not have anyone who can collect on their behalf. Deliveries will either be made on the 19th or the 22nd March 2024. Closing date is **Friday 15th March 2024**.

Parents/carers can simply go online and complete the form at the following address:

<https://winchesterbasicsbank.co.uk/easter-lunch-scheme/>

We sincerely hope that you will be able to give your support to this project and that in partnership, we will be able to ensure that this group of children have a healthy, nutritious lunchtime meal during the school holiday.



We are looking forward to seeing the actors from M & M back in school on the 28th March for their version of Alice in Wonderland. These shows are really enjoyable and suitable for all ages. A voluntary contribution (£3) will be added to Scopay for this magical experience.

Crisp recycling...

Up until recently, we have always asked any of the children having a packed lunch to take everything home afterwards so that parents can see what has or hasn't been eaten. As an eco-aware school, we have changed this slightly recently and are now allowing children to leave their empty crisp packets at school. These are being collected and taken for recycling by the Eco-council. I need to give my thanks to the Eco Councillors for doing this for us.

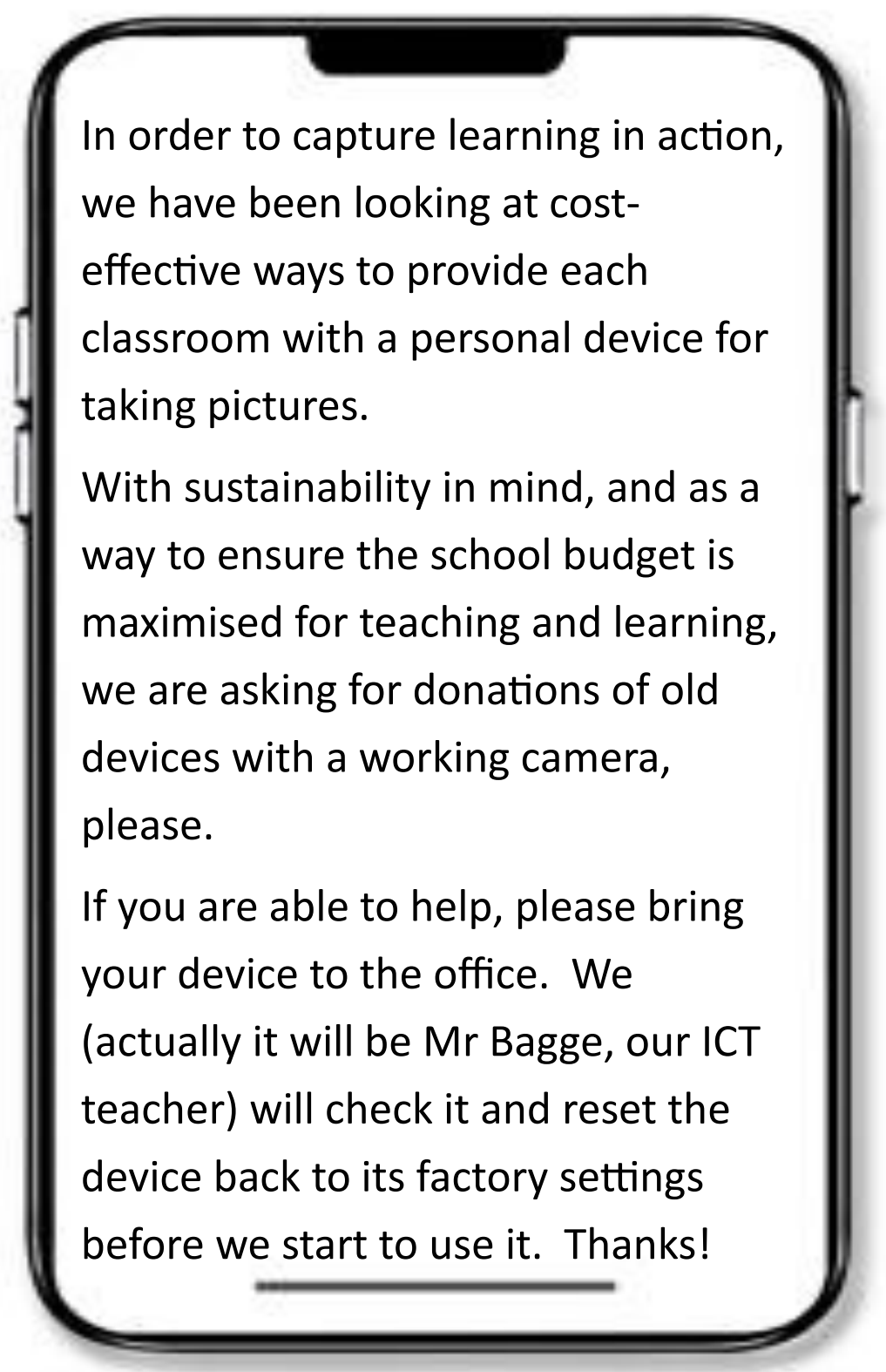


HEALTHY EATING AT BREAK TIME.

This is always a difficult topic to raise as there is divided opinion. We all want children to eat healthily, but the main thing has to be that they are eating something to get them through the day. It would be remiss though to not mention that we are seeing a lot more crisps at breaktime and anything you can do to ensure the morning snack is a healthier option which would be appreciated. I know that many other schools are still asking for purely healthy options, and this is something that is hard to balance, so it is something I'm continuing to keep an eye on, and we still ask that children don't come to school with sweets or chocolate for break time. Thank you.

DOES YOUR PRELOVED TECH NEED A NEW HOME?

Wanted: old iPads, iPhones (series 5 or above) or other tablets.

A graphic of a smartphone frame with a black border and rounded corners. Inside the frame, there is text. At the top of the frame, there is a black notch. At the bottom, there is a thin horizontal line representing a home indicator.

In order to capture learning in action, we have been looking at cost-effective ways to provide each classroom with a personal device for taking pictures.

With sustainability in mind, and as a way to ensure the school budget is maximised for teaching and learning, we are asking for donations of old devices with a working camera, please.

If you are able to help, please bring your device to the office. We (actually it will be Mr Bagge, our ICT teacher) will check it and reset the device back to its factory settings before we start to use it. Thanks!

We will be buying new cases, in the school colours, to identify the school devices as personal phones are not allowed around the school.

Many thanks in advance for any donations you are able to provide.

Mr Geraghty and the teaching team.