

St. Thomas' C.E. Primary School

Newsletter

03.02.23

A note on worship...



Meeting a Personal Challenge

I can do all things through Him who strengthens me

Philippians 4:13

It is so easy to be out of meeting a personal challenge when the going gets tough. There have been many times in my life when the easiest option would be to give up or not to try in the first place. I am sure most of us can think of times when we have felt like giving up. However giving up on a personal challenge can lead to regret. We have to teach our children that those who persevere will reap the rewards. In our worship we explored the lives of many people who could have given up, but thankfully they didn't, for example Marcus Rashford, Stormzy, J.K. Rowling, Billy Monger, Steve Backshall, Bear Grylls, Tom Daly and Sir Richard Branson and many others. Many people's lives have been enriched because of their perseverance.

The Bible teaches Christians that God is with them, no matter what and through Him they seek the strength and the courage to keep going and to persevere.



Stars of the Week



**Lily B., Sadie, Eira, Branden F., Reggie, Codie, Harry,
Bodie, Stevie, Louis, Ruby, Oscar, Chester and
Charlie L.**

Well done to you all!

Events for the Week

Beginning 06.2.23

Monday

Ukulele lessons and Choir after school

Tuesday

Keyboard, strings and woodwind lessons

After school multi skills for Y1, 2 and 3 (4.00pm finish)

Wednesday

Guitar lessons

Swimming for Emerald class (expected to be back at school at 3.30pm)

After school multi skills for Y4, 5 and 6 (4.15pm finish)

Thursday

Friday

Wear something you love to school day (see below)

From the office...

- Please ensure that school dinners are ordered by midnight on Sunday for the following week
- A suggestion box will be available in the school office for parents to post any suggestions they may have for school. These could be ideas about newsletter content, suggestions for timings of parent's evening, workshop content, homework etc.

Attendance Trophy



Amethyst Class – 95.42%

Ruby Class – 98.28%

Opal Class – 95.71%

Emerald Class – 93.44%

Sapphire Class – 95.62%

This week's winners are **Ruby Class** – well done

Wellbeing

This week is Children's mental health week. The theme is Let's Connect. Place2Be have a wealth of resources for parents on their website.

LET'S CONNECT



TIPS FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

Dear parents and carers,

6 - 12 February 2023 is Children's Mental Health Week. The week is run by children's mental health charity Place2Be to raise awareness of the importance of children and young people's mental health. This year's theme is Let's Connect.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Let's Connect is about making meaningful connections, and for Children's Mental Health Week 2023, Place2Be is encouraging people to connect with others in healthy, rewarding and meaningful ways.

As parents and carers, you are an important role model to your child. How you connect with friends and family will influence your child, and how they develop their own friendships and relationships. For example, how you greet people and maintain friendships, but also how you forgive people or say sorry when you need to.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Here are a few simple ways you can connect with your child and help them to make meaningful connections.

1. Connect with your child in everyday ways

Moments of connection (and re-connection) are really important in child-caregiver relationships. For example, when you pick them up from school, or come in from work, try to give them your full attention and see if this helps you feel better connected as you hug, talk, smile and hear about their day. Watching your child play and joining in is really important to them – so put your phone away and have a bit of fun – being playful is good for adults, too!

With your older child, you may find times such as car journeys a good time to talk, or to re-connect by playing music you both like. It is important to be accessible to a teenager when they need to talk. You may have to be there 'on their terms' and be ready to listen.

2. Talk to your child about important connections

This could include talking about family members, friends, neighbours, childminders, people in the local community and others in your faith group (if you have one). Remember it's ok to talk about people they miss, for example, family members who live in a different country or people who have died.

Children learn a lot from their parents about how to express their feelings, including the joy that comes with feeling connected to others and the sadness that comes with missing others.

3. Talk to your child about their friends

As children become teenagers, their friendship groups become increasingly important to them. Be open to hearing about their friendships and try to listen without judgement.

Ask them about their life in real life and online. You may not think online friends are 'real friends', but your child may feel differently. Losing friends, feeling left out or being bullied is very painful and your child needs to know you will support them through these difficult times.

4. **Connect by taking an interest in your child's world**

As adults we can sometimes be dismissive of the things that our children and teenagers are interested in, e.g. their music, fashion, what they watch etc. If you do take an interest in these things, however, you may feel better connected to your child and the important things in their world. This can lead to other conversations about other things in their lives that matter to them.

5. **Find time to connect as a family**

Family life can become busy and stressful, so it's important to find some time where you connect together. This could include simple things like cooking, watching a film, playing a game, going to the park or even doing the family shop together.

6. **Try to resolve conflict and re-connect after arguments**

Arguments and moments of disconnection are bound to happen in families - between your children, between yourself and your children and between yourself and your partner, if you have one. It is important that children learn how to disagree in appropriate ways, how to say sorry and how to make amends when they have done something wrong. They will learn a lot about how to do these things from you - so try to model the behaviour you want to see in your children. Talk to them about how to re-connect with friends after arguments including what they can do to help repair relationships.

Video activities from Place2Be

Puzzle Pieces – aimed at 4-7 year olds, this activity is presented by CBBC's Art Ninja, Ricky Martin, and will show children how we are all connected. Why not take part as a family? childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk/puzzlepieces

Connecting Paperchains – developed by Place2Be's Art Room team for 7-11 year olds, this activity helps children think about the people, things and activities they feel connected to. childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk/paperchains

Exchanging Postcards – developed by Place2Be's Art Room team for 11-14 year olds, this activity encourages young people to explore what connection means to them. childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk/postcards

Looking for free practical advice to help you support your child?

Parenting Smart, Place2Be's site for parents and carers, is full of expert advice and tips on supporting primary-age children, and managing their behaviour. parentingsmart.org.uk

Let your child know that if they are worried about something, they should always talk to an adult they trust. It could be you, someone in your family, a teacher or someone else in their school.

If you're worried about your child's mental health you can talk to your GP or someone at your child's school.

You can also find a list of organisations that provide support and advice on our website: place2be.org.uk/help

Internet safety

Tuesday 7th February is Safer Internet day. It is important that we keep our children safe online. One of the most important things is be open with your children about their digital lives.

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

Tips for Encouraging Open Discussions about DIGITAL LIVES

The online world is an entirely familiar and commonplace part of life for today's children and young people, far more so than for previous generations. There are many positives to children being able to access online materials, so it's important not to demonise the internet, games and apps, and limit the benefit of their positive aspects. At the same time, we do have a responsibility to educate children about the hazards they may encounter online (just as we would about real-world dangers) so it's essential that we don't shy away from talking to them about the complex – and often sensitive – subject of what they do and what they see when they're online.

Here are some suggestions for kicking off conversations with your child about their digital life ...

MAKE YOUR INTEREST CLEAR

Showing enthusiasm when you broach the subject signals to your child that you're keen to learn about the positives of their online world. Most children enjoy educating adults and will happily chat about what they use the internet for, or what games and apps they're into and how these work. Asking to see their favourite games and apps in action could help you spot any aspects that may need your attention – such as chat functions which might require a settings adjustment to limit contact with strangers. Keep listening even if your child pauses for a long time; they could be considering how to phrase something specific, or they may be gauging your reaction.

DISCUSS THAT NOT EVERYTHING WE SEE ONLINE IS REAL

Here, you could give examples from your own digital life of the online world versus reality – for example, those Instagram posts which show the perfect house: spotlessly clean, never messy and immaculately decorated. Explain to your child that there are many other aspects of the online world which are also deliberately presented in an unrealistic way for effect – such as someone's relationship, their body, having perfect skin and so on.

BE OPEN AND HONEST, APPROPRIATE TO THEIR AGE

At various stages, children and young people become curious about puberty and how their body changes; about relationships; about how babies are made; and about sexual health. If your child knows that they can discuss these sensitive subjects with you, they tend to be less likely to go looking online for answers – which can often provide them with misleading information and, in some cases, lead to them consuming harmful content. Don't worry if you don't immediately know the answers to their questions – just find out for yourself and go back to them once you have the facts.

TRY TO REMAIN CALM

As much as possible, try to stay calm even if your child tells you about an online experience that makes you feel angry or fearful. Our immediate emotions frequently influence the way we talk, so it's possible that your initial reaction as a parent or carer could deter a child from speaking openly about what they've seen. Give yourself time to consider the right approach, and perhaps speak with other family members or school staff while you are considering your next steps.

REMIND YOUR CHILD THEY CAN ALWAYS TALK TO YOU

In my role I work with many children and young people who admit being reluctant to tell a trusted adult about harmful content they've viewed online, in case it leads to having their devices confiscated. Emphasise to your child that you're always there to listen and help; reassure them that if they do view harmful content, then they are not to blame – but talking about it openly will help. Children shouldn't be expected to be resilient against abuse or feel that it's their job to prevent it.

CREATE A 'FAMILY AGREEMENT'

Involving your whole household in coming up with a family agreement about device use can be immensely beneficial. You could discuss when (and for how long) it's OK to use phones, tablets, consoles and so on at home; what parental controls are for and why they're important; and why it's good to talk to each other about things we've seen or experienced online (both good and bad). Explaining your reasoning will help children to understand that, as trusted adults, we want to make sure they are well informed and kept safe. Allowing children to have their say when coming up with your family agreement also makes them far more likely to stick to it in the long term.

KEEP TALKING!

The most valuable advice we can give is to keep talking with your child about their digital lives. You could try using everyday situations to ask questions about their online experiences.

MEET OUR EXPERT

Rebecca Jennings of RASEE (Raising Awareness in Sex Education) has almost 20 years' experience delivering relationships and sex education and training to schools, colleges and other education providers. A published author on the subject, she also advises the Department of Education on the staff-training element of the RSE curriculum.



National Online Safety

#WakeUpWednesday

www.nationalonlinesafety.com @natonlinesafety /NationalOnlineSafety @nationalonlinesafety

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Reading and Phonics Workshop



Thank you to the 5 parents who attended this event. We discussed why reading is so important, how we teach reading and phonics and we shared examples of high quality children's books. Miss Lockley and Miss Hobbs were both there to answer questions.

Support for parents can be found at:

<https://www.songofsounds.co.uk/page/?title=Learning+at+Home&pid=8> (support for phonics)

<https://www.booktrust.org.uk/> (advice on choosing books for children)

<https://home.oxfordowl.co.uk/> (support on helping children with reading)

Young Voices



On Wednesday afternoon, our school choir went with Miss Wardle, Mrs Stewardson and Mr G. to the AO Arena to perform with children from all over Greater Manchester. There were 9000 children singing at the event alongside various bands and singers, including Heather Small.

The children had a fabulous time as did the parents who came to watch in the evening. The children were a credit to St. Thomas' and their parents as their behaviour was impeccable, despite them being some of the youngest children to take part and it not finishing until after 9.00pm!

Well done to all who took part – we are so proud of you!

Parent's Association



Friday 10th February is our 'Wear something you love' to school day. This is to raise funds for school. Children come to school in their own clothes in return for a **£1.00 donation**.

There will also be some Valentine's Day themed items to buy (more information to follow).

There is going to be a **Mother's Day Afternoon tea event on Friday 17th March**. There are to be two sittings, one at 2.00pm and one at 3.30pm. This is a very popular event. Tickets will go on sale after the half term holiday.

A bingo night is planned for **Friday 28th April** and there is going to be big twist to the **summer fair** which is planned for **Saturday 15th July!**