



## Newsletter 22nd January 2021

### Wellbeing and Mental Health

Dear Parents and Carers

Well done everyone for getting through another week in lockdown! As a school, we feel very lucky to have such a supportive community of parents and carers who we see time and time again doing an incredible job in supporting their children through an unbelievably challenging time.

We also wanted to let our families know that while we have been required to increase our expectations around home learning, we are continuing to do our best to support the wellbeing and mental health of our children because this is still our priority.

We are very aware that the pressures on families at the moment are huge, from trying to juggle the needs of different age children at home, shared quiet space issues, children having more meltdowns, struggling to explain home learning, work pressures, money worries, feeling isolated, anxieties around Covid and much more. Some days it may feel like we have nothing more to give and our patience tank has well and truly run out!

Some families might also be enjoying some of the changes that the pandemic has brought about. We realise that you know your children better than anyone, but for those tricky times, some of these tips may come in handy to re-visit.

#### **1. Go gently on yourself**

Looking after our own mental health as adults and looking out for those around us who might be struggling is more important than ever in these crazy times. If things feel overwhelming/you're having a day where you feel like you're tearing your hair out - please talk to a friend/family member/staff at school and remember you're not on your own. Your own self-care is so important particularly if we are to try and keep our patience levels as parents topped up during this tricky time!

#### **2. Listening to and acknowledging our children's concerns.**

As we're all aware, children may respond to stress/changes in different ways, for example: they may get more easily upset, distressed, anxious, angry or agitated, seem more withdrawn or perhaps experience physical signs like stomach aches. If we try to view behaviour as a communication of need - it can help us to connect with and support our children with their feelings, rather than focussing on the behaviour alone. It can be important to remember that many of these feelings can be normal responses to all the changes they are faced with at this abnormal time. Providing ways for our children to express their emotions safely is really important too.

### 3. Support safe ways for children and young people to connect with their friends.

You could try setting up something like a virtual Lego playdate for your child and a friend - where children, over a video call/zoom just play, build, and chat in an entirely child-led way, with adults only in the background to support if needed.

### 4. Limiting exposure to media and continuing to talk about what they have seen and heard.

Like adults, children may become more distressed if they see repeated coverage about the pandemic in the media. Continuing to talk to our children about what is happening and ask them what they have heard, can be useful in exploring and supporting their feelings. Some children may be confused about why this has been going on for so long. Try to answer their questions honestly but in an age appropriate way and reassuring where you can. Continuing to talk about the things we are all doing to help keep safe, such as frequent handwashing, can be a comfort to children.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you would like support with any of the above. We will all get through this together. Your children make us smile in so many different ways - which we are so grateful for in these strange times. I have attached a link to a resource, which is designed to offer advice on how parents can safeguard their child/ren's mental health and promote their wellbeing and is available as a document and short video presentation.

<https://ssscpd.co.uk/education/parentsandguardians/child-mental-health-10-tips-for-parents/-/pj==>

#### Music Mark Award

Despite the pandemic, which has disrupted some of our music teaching this year, we are really proud to have received this award this week.

Music Mark Schools are nominated for their recognition of the value of music as part of the curriculum and are actively engaged in improving music education provision within the school community.

We know how important music is, whether that be listening to music to calm us and de stress, playing music to cheer us up or composing music to develop our creative skills. We firmly believe that music should be an entitlement for every child and an integral part of school life.

10 brilliant benefits of music:

<https://www.musicmark.org.uk/resources/10-things-schools-should-know-aboutlearning-music/>



Watton at Stone Primary and Nursery School, Rectory Lane, Watton at Stone, Hertford, SG14 3SG <http://www.wattonatstone.herts.sch.uk>  
Headteacher: Mrs N.Etienne Deputy Headteacher: Mrs S. Gill

### Upcoming Event

Oxford University Department of Physics Stargazing Oxford 2021 will take place on the 28th of January 2021. It will be held online, with lots of fun filled events and things to do for the whole family.



### Remote Learning Questionnaire

On Tuesday this week, we sent home an online questionnaire to provide us feedback about the remote learning that we are providing for the children.

The whole staffing team are working incredibly hard to provide the very best remote learning possible for all the children. However, having your feedback is incredibly important to us.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete this. We had a fantastic response with 114 completed questionnaires. You have our reassurance that we will be reading all of the responses and discussing what changes could be made in order to further improve the remote learning for the children.

I have highlighted some of the changes we are going to make in the covering letter to the email and in next weeks newsletter I will let you know of any further changes we are going to make.

Thank you for your help and participation.

### Live Zoom Lessons

This week, I had the pleasure of joining some of the live Zoom lessons across the school. I saw a phonics lesson, maths lesson and a science lesson. I was incredibly happy with the lessons I saw and was amazed at the level of the children's engagement, participation and concentration. The teachers were maximising the teaching options available to them through Zoom and they were making the lessons as interactive as possible. This week all teachers have enabled the waiting room facility which has stopped children joining the meeting before the teacher does. This has improved the behaviour in some classes. We have also requested that children don't use the chat facility during the teaching session, especially if the comments aren't related to the lesson in progress. This also has improved as the week has progressed.

### Remote Learning Offer

We have added our remote learning offer to the school website for parents and carers to read should you wish to.

<https://www.wattonatstone.herts.sch.uk/virtual-office/remote-learning-guidance>

This is intended to provide clarity and transparency to the children and parents/carers about what you can expect to receive from the school during this period of National lockdown.

## Library services

Libraries have been deemed to be an essential service by the Government, and whilst we are not allowed to let people enter the building and browse themselves, Ready Reads is a new way to borrow books from selected libraries during lockdown.

We select you collect! Simply visit <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/libraries-and-archives/other-library-services/ready-reads.aspx> to fill out the form and tell us the types of books, or favourite authors you'd like to receive, and we will make up a pack especially for you.

Books can be ordered for all family members, all on the same form, but each person will need to be a library member to use this service.

We will send you an email to confirm your Ready Reads pack is available for collection from Hertford library. Social distancing measures will be in place and packs will need to be collected during our revised opening hours from the library door.

Please help our staff by:

- \*Wearing a face covering
- \*Following the social distancing guidance
- \*Bringing your library card, or another form of ID
- \*Bringing a bag to carry your Ready Reads books home!

We are unable to take enquiries, account or membership queries at the library door. If you need support with anything else, please contact us

Hertford Library - Temporary opening hours for Ready Reads pack collections:

Monday 10am - 5pm  
Tuesday 1pm - 5pm  
Wednesday closed  
Thursday 10am - 5pm  
Friday 10am - 5pm  
Saturday 10am - 4pm  
Sunday Closed



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## Dates for your Diary

### **January**

25<sup>th</sup> - Parent Forum meeting 6pm

### **February**

9<sup>th</sup> - Internet safety day

15<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> - Half term

### **March**

4<sup>th</sup> - World Book Day

5<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> - Science week

12<sup>th</sup> - Comic relief/sports relief

15<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> - Assessment Week

16<sup>th</sup> - Parent consultations 4pm - 7pm

17<sup>th</sup> - Parent Consultations 3.45 - 5.45pm

22<sup>nd</sup> - No Pens Day

26<sup>th</sup> - Last day of spring term

### **April**

12<sup>th</sup> - INSET Day 3

13<sup>th</sup> - Children return to school

23<sup>rd</sup> - St. George's day

### **May**

3<sup>rd</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> - Geography fieldwork week

21<sup>st</sup> - No Pens Day

31<sup>st</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> June - Half term

### **June**

7<sup>th</sup> - INSET Day 4

10<sup>th</sup> - Sports Day

17<sup>th</sup> - Reserve sports Day

30<sup>th</sup> - Book fair arrives for 1 week

### **July**

2<sup>nd</sup> - Enterprise Day

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Deputy Headteacher: Mrs S. Gill



5<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> - Assessment Week

12<sup>th</sup> - No Pens Day

14<sup>th</sup> - End of Year reports to parents/carers

21<sup>st</sup> - Last day of summer term

22<sup>nd</sup> - INSET Day