

Ox Close Primary School Newsletter



Dedicated to Excellence

February 5th 2021 Volume 20

Children's Mental Health Week 2021

As you know, this week has been Children's Mental Health Week and we have marked that with a number of activities. The pandemic has brought the issue of Mental Health to the fore and it is great that it is becoming more widely spoken about. There is no doubt that many children and adults across the country will have suffered with anxiety as a result of the pandemic and it is something which we have been keeping a close eye on from September. Miss Bewick, our PSA, has counselling qualifications and is available to speak to, in confidence, if either you or your child need support or advice in this area. She also has a background in working for Families First so has a good knowledge of available support services.

Miss Bewick would also like me to share her email address with you so that you can contact her directly: r.bewick300@oxclosespennymoor.uk. Please feel free to get in touch with her about this or any other matters which she would normally deal with during more normal times!

Connecting the Community: Solan Connor Fawcett Cancer Trust

From the outset of the pandemic, our objectives were to maintain learning but also to attempt to maintain the Ox Close community. This has resulted in some innovative measures such as the Ox Close Beat, the VE Day celebrations, Facebook challenges, Harvest Hearts, our amazing Whole School Christmas performance, the Ox Close podcasts and Miss Bowden's recent assemblies. On Wednesday, we are due to be joined by Mark Solan from the Solan Connor Fawcett Cancer Trust in assemblies. We will be bringing you news of our new competition, something which everyone who would like to can become involved with. This initiative will reflect the shared values of Ox Close and the Trust and will also promote positive community engagement and Mental Health.

Assemblies

This week, Miss Bowden has continued her programme of virtual assemblies as we continue to strive to connect the Ox Close community and these continue to be a tremendous success. Miss Bowden will continue with the assemblies next week. The days and times are as follows:

Reception, Year 1 and Year 2	Thursday at 2pm
Years 3. 4. 5 and 6	Friday at 9:30am

Next week, I will also be delivering an assembly along with Mark Solan. We will be launching our competition and sharing news about our partnership and how you can get involved.

Reception, Year 1 and Year 2	Wednesday at 2pm
Years 3. 4. 5 and 6	Wednesday at 9:30am

Your child will just need to log in the usual way. On the Class Channel, a link will appear just before the assembly that will say 'Click to Join'.

Children's Leadership Team

The undoubted highlight of my week has been meeting with the Children's Leadership Team. They really are fantastic and an absolute credit to themselves, their families and Ox Close. We discussed how they have been finding life during lockdown - particularly schooling, our planned project with the Solan Connor Fawcett Trust and the arrangements for this year's Eggs Factor! Our Children's Champion, Emily C, joined both meetings and took great pride in modelling her Children's Champion jumper.

Virtual Classroom

Please remember that all of the planning is here for you to access:

<http://www.ox-close.durham.sch.uk/virtual-classroom/weekly-plans/>

It is updated every Friday afternoon with the planning and resources for the week after. There is an explanation of what task the children have to complete for every lesson

YouTube Learning Videos: Mrs Harvey

Mrs Harvey has also recorded some more fantastic Geography, History and RE videos for children who are in Years 1 and 2, 3 and 4 and 5 and 6. We asked Mrs Harvey to begin producing these in September and she has done a great job. These short videos are on our YouTube channel and offer the key points covered during the input by the teacher. Please check them out, I am sure that they will be useful. Teachers may also use some of them as an aide in their wider curriculum lessons. Please follow the link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCz-cgNhnaE1qUhwllq-UNCw/playlists>

Virtual Learning: Parent Survey

Thank you to everyone who has taken part in our Virtual Learning Parent Survey on Survey Monkey. It was especially important that we gathered your thoughts now that we are 5 weeks into the half term and also following the announcement that the current lockdown will last until at least March 8th. On Monday, we held a staff meeting with the teaching staff and it was a pleasure to share your feedback with the team. Levels of engagement are incredibly high (98%), while average attendance for Teams lessons is 90%. All concerned deserve credit for this. The school has created an ambitious offer and parents have embraced this, supporting us in our common goal to allow the children to at least maintain learning and also to maintain the school community. Our children have shown resilience and skill and have adapted superbly to the situation. Yesterday, I spoke to the Children's Leadership Team virtually and they were exceptionally insightful. While not all suggestions for improvement are feasible, we do consider everything and the tweaks that have been made to our Maths provision are evidence of this.

Collection and Drop Off

We respectfully ask that only one parent accompanies the children to and collects the children from school. In addition, in the interests of minimising the risk of the spread of the virus, we ask that parents do not arrive early at school and that they leave as soon as they collect the children. While schools do not have jurisdiction over parents off site, the advice from Durham County Council is that parents may choose to wear a face covering or mask if they feel as though it is difficult to maintain social distancing at the school gate. **We do require visitors to the office to wear a mask at this time, just as they would be asked to wear one in a shop or garage.** Thank you for your continued co-operation and for working with us to slow the spread of the virus, something which is especially important at this point in time.

Controlling the spread of the virus

The Government decision to restrict school access to key workers and vulnerable children only was as part of the effort to control the spread of the virus. As has been the case since the outset, we have a number of measures in place in school to help mitigate against the spread but ultimately COVID-19 is a community virus. In order to help control the spread of the virus, we ask if key worker parents can continue to only send the children into school if it is essential to do so - i.e. there are no safe alternative arrangements at home. Thank you for your continued support with this.

COVID-19

If you or anyone in your family are displaying COVID-19 symptoms then the following link is useful in order for you to be able to book a test: <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>. Alternatively, you can also call 119. Under these circumstances, please keep us informed if your child has been in school. It is also important that if anyone in your household, child or adult, displays symptoms or has a test all within the household self isolates. This means that, even if children are eligible to attend, all siblings who live with a child or adult who is displaying symptoms should not attend school until the end of the self-isolation period or after the affected person has had a negative test. Please check by calling the school office if you are unsure. Thank you.

A Bowden

Miss A Bowden
Head of School

D Harrison

Mr D Harrison
Executive Headteacher