



## **Bruche Primary School Academy**

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Executive Headteacher: Mr C Jones

School: [www.bruchepriamry.co.uk](http://www.bruchepriamry.co.uk)

Multi academy trust: [wpat.warrington.sch.uk](http://wpat.warrington.sch.uk)

[Bruche.office@wpat.uk](mailto:Bruche.office@wpat.uk)

[@Bruche\\_P\\_School](#)

Welcome to our latest newsletter.

I had the absolute privilege of watching some of our very talented children at the Parr Hall last Monday. We took part in the Primary Arts Network performance with six other schools! Each child showcased not only their talents but also their dedication and love for dancing and performing! A special thank you goes to Mrs Gould (Mr Gould's wife) for her support and training with our children in preparation for the performance! I know I'm a little biased but we definitely had the best performance!

Thank you to everyone who managed to complete this terms parent survey. I have attached the results and responses to this newsletter email.

Have a lovely weekend everyone!

Mr Jones

Communication Corner

- 25/03/2024 PTA Easter Bake sale after school
- 26/03/2024 Open Evening for prospective parents for Nursery September 2024 – 5pm
- 27/03/2024 Spring Bonnet Assembly – 2.30pm Reception and Nursery
- 28/03/2024 Non Uniform Day
- 28/03/2024 School Closes for Easter
- 08/04/2024 School Opens after Half Term
- 12/04/2024 PTA Raisin challenge (more information to follow)
- 18/04/2024 Tempest Photographs
- 29.04.24- 03.05.24 Scholastic Book Fayre week
- 02/05/2024 Polling Day – (School open as normal)
- 06/05/2024 May Bank Holiday
- 08/05/2024 Nursery Welcome Event 5.00pm
- 20.05.2024-22.05.2024 PTA Donate a toy
- 23/05/2024 PTA Toy sale
- 24/05/2024 School Closes for Summer Half Term
- 03/06/2024 School Opens after Half Term
- 12/06/2024 Reception Welcome Event 5.00pm
- 14/06/2024 Sports Day – Morning EYFS
- 14/06/2024 Sports Day – Afternoon KS1 & KS2
- 18/06/2024 Sports Day (back up day if the weather is bad on 14/06/2024)
- 19/06/2024 Y6 to Robinwood
- 21/06/2024 Y6 return from Robinwood
- 06/07/2024 Summer Fair
- 08/07/2024 Transition Day for the children
- 08/07/2024 School reports to parents
- 08/07/2024 Y6 - Bikeability
- 09/07/2024 Transition day drop in for parents to meet new class teacher 3.30pm – 4.00pm
- 15/07/2024 School report drop in for parents after reports 3.30pm – 4.00pm
- 18/07/2024 Y6 Leavers Assembly – Parents Invited
- 18/07/2024 School finishes for Summer
- 19/07/2024 INSET Day – School Closed
- 22/07/2024 INSET Day – School Closed

We are really excited to host our Nursery Open evening on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> March at 5pm. This evening will be dedicated to any new families who would be interested in their children coming to our Nursery in September 2024. Please share this news with all your family and friends. Thank you Mrs Kerrigan.

**SEND Award**

This year we are going to be re assessed for the SENDIA inclusion award. We gained this award back in 2021 and during this academic year Miss Kerrigan has been evidencing all of the high quality provision and outcomes for children with SEND at Bruche. As part of the award school is required to reflect and improve their provision in line with a series of objectives that fulfil both Ofsted and the SEND code of Practice. If you would like to have your say please send an email in to Miss Kerrigan ([bruche.office@WPAT.UK](mailto:bruche.office@WPAT.UK)) and she can share this with the assessor. We are in the process of confirming a reassessment date but when we have an official reassessment date we will let you know.

Thank you for your continued support

Miss Kerrigan

Bruce PTA are hosting a  
**EASTER  
BAKE SALE**



After school, in the playground.  
25th March from 3.20pm, please bring cash.



*Cake Donations*

If you would be willing to bake (or buy) some cakes for us to sell, please bring them into the school office during the day on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> March.

Please label all ingredients clearly to ensure that we are allergy friendly. NO NUTS PLEASE.

### **Special Mentions**

**Nursery- Indie Goulden** – Indie has been doing so well in phonics and has shown great determination and perseverance when practising the formation of her letters. She has done some fabulous learning this week and she is a lovely role model for her friends.  
Well Done Indie!

**Reception-** My special mention is going to be for **Edward Hitchmough**. Edward has shown a great confidence in his ability to read words containing special friends. Keep up the super reading, Edward!

**Year 1- Callie Sinclair** for always trying very hard in every subject! Well done Callie I am so proud of you.

**Year 2 –Jorgie Edmonds** for excellent contributions in Maths! You are really trying so hard everyday well done!

**Year 3 –Scarlett Taylor** for her amazing knowledge and fantastic questioning on our Beeston Castle trip!

**Year 4** –Well done to **Jesse McNamara** for settling in to his new class and welcome to class,

**Year 5 –Areen Sheli** for her beautiful rainforest description!

**Year 6 –Oscar Falconer** for showing fantastic concentration to retrieve in reading activities.

**PE Star- Max Davies** overall his improvement this year has been remarkable.

### **Early Years News**

#### **Nursery**

We have had such a fantastic week with our gorgeous chicks. The children have all enjoyed holding them and watching them having playtime to stretch their little legs and have a run about in the middle of our carpet circle.

It is impossible to put into words how proud we are of the mature and gentle approach the children have had towards caring for and tending to our gorgeous chicks and what a lovely start to life they have had.

We will all be sad to see them go back to Living Eggs tomorrow, but we know they will have so much fun once they are able to explore their new lives in the big outdoors.

In addition to learning all about the lifecycle of a chick we have also been finding out about the lifecycle of frogs and butterflies and the children have loved creating their own symmetrical butterfly patterns.

In phonics we have been focussing on the sounds m, a, s and d and the children have been doing so well with suggesting words that begin with these sounds as well as having a go at forming the letters.

We have also been learning about the Hindu festival Holi ahead of the celebrations on March 25<sup>th</sup>. Holi celebrates spring, love and new life and the children have created some beautiful colour explosion pictures in reference to the traditional paint throwing celebration which is a big part of the festival.

What amazing examples of learning this week Nursery.

Well Done!

**Mrs. Wallace**

### **Reception**

This week in reception the children have been continuing to learn the little seed poem. The children have been challenged to place a variety of lines from the poem in the correct order. The children have also been using their rhyming skills to draw pictures to match a range of words from the poem.

In maths, the children have been showing their understanding of the number six by showing it in different ways; using a tens frame and part whole model to explore.

The children have really impressed me this week with their ability to design and build an extraordinary garden using a range of small world and construction materials. The children have also been extending their learning by writing 'I can see sentences' for their models. Well done!

Have a lovely weekend everyone.

**Miss Bostock**

### **Key Stage 1 News**

#### **Year 1**

In Literacy this week we have wrote letters to the teacher in our class text 'Beegu'. We discussed how 'unkind' and 'unhelpful' she was to Beegu and wanted to let her know how unhappy we are! The children used punctuation in their letters as well as suffixes in the correct places. We have also started to explore exclamation marks this week and how we punctuate our sentences accurately with them.

In Math's this week we have completed a special math's challenge all about shape showing Miss Lewis what we can remember! The children amazed me with their independence with this. We have also started a new topic in maths this week and started to explore fractions. We have recognised half of objects, shapes and started to look at finding half of a quantity. Year 1 now know that when you find half you are dividing a shape, object or quantity into 2 equal pieces or groups.

In Geography this week we had so much fun looking at landmarks in our local area. We looked at the Golden Dates, the Halliwell Jones Stadium, the Manchester Ship Canal and the Tea Party Statue. We enjoyed learning facts about these different landmarks and we were amazed to discover that the canal took 6 years to build and is 36 miles long.

In History we have continued with our topic 'Changes within Living Memory' and looked at shops in the past. We enjoyed looking at equipment used in the past and how the teacher would have delivered their lessons. The children enjoyed sitting in rows just like they did in the 1950s and 1960s!

On Friday we used the laptops to work on our keyboard and mouse skills. We now know a range of keys and their functions including the space bar, delete, enter, escape and print screen.

We had a visit from the chicks this week and we were so careful when handling them! Well done Year 1.

**Miss Lewis**

### **Year 2**

In Maths this week, we have been learning how to read word problems and solve them using the correct method. Our focus is still multiplication and arrays however next week we will be starting our division unit.

In Writing, we looked at what a good fact file should include and we annotated this identifying all its features. Later on in the week we learnt a few spelling rules. We retrieved our knowledge of vowels and consonants to help us when adding the suffix ing or ed to root words.

In Geography we looked at what the equator is and compared the different temperatures in continent.

In History, we retrieved knowledge about Christopher Columbus and we were all fantastic at remembering so many facts about him!

In PSHE, we discussed whether a secret is good or not. We debated this in class and we all shared our thoughts on this. We each gave examples of good secrets and things that should not be kept as a secret. We also continued to debate our big question this week which was all about how to deal with disappointment.

In Science, we were lucky enough to have a visit from our gorgeous chick's from Nursery. We all looked after them on Wednesday afternoon, talked about the life cycle of a chick and we were able hold and stroke them. We had so much fun!

This week we celebrated children and adults who are Neurodivergent! We learnt what abilities they all have and how it impacts them on a day to day basis. We learnt how all our brains work in different ways and how we need to be understanding of other people's needs and help our friends in any way we can.

**Miss Kerrigan**

### **Key Stage 2 News**

#### **Year 3**

This week in English, we have created amazing expanded noun phrases to prepare for our diary entry from a Stone Age perspective. We also researched synonyms for the words 'strange' and 'normal' in order for us to be able to use them in our diary entry.

In maths, we have learned how to use the bus stop method to help us work out hard division calculations! The class have done fantastic with it!

In geography we learned all about dams and how dams are helpful to communities that are prone to flooding. We focused on the Three Gorge Dam in China and the children were very engaged learning about its functions.

As it is neurodiversity week this week, we have focused on what this means to everyone and how it can be celebrated. We celebrated our own differences and spoke about how to ensure we respect everyone.

We are close to the end of Charlottes Webb, and the children have really enjoyed learning about Wilbur and Charlotte's friendship.

On Thursday, we had our amazing school trip to Beeston Castle! Despite the rain during our workshop, we had the BEST time. We started the trip out with our workshop where an expert led us around to the roundhouse that has been built there, to explain and show us how people of the Bronze Age would have lived. The children had an opportunity to hold some Bronze Age tools and also had a go at trying to make flour like they would have done, during this time. After the workshop we had lunch and dried off a little bit and luckily the rain stopped. We then walked up to the castle ruins where the children had a good explore! I was so impressed and proud of how amazing all the children were! All Beeston Castle photos will be on the Facebook page on Monday.

**Mrs Hogan**



**Year 4**

This week, in English, we have been delving into our book *The Lost Happy Endings*. We have been looking at the illustrations of the witch and collecting noun phrases to describe her appearance before turning these into similes and metaphors. We continued reading until the witch snatched the bag of happy endings from Jub. A scary witch then visited class (well Mrs Floyd) delivering a letter telling the class that she had stolen the happy endings of all the stories and that she won't return them until the class write her some twisted fairy tales where there are only unhappy endings and until then she wants the children of the world to be miserable. We looked at an example text that Mrs Floyd I mean the witch left us and looked for all the new vocabulary. We then each were given a



word we researched and we came together to share the meaning of all the new words. We then reviewed punctuating speech and practised this before applying it in a paragraph about the event of Jub's sack being stolen in the forest. We ended the week by looking at our example text and thinking carefully about the author's choice of language and phrases to show the personality of the characters.

In Maths, we started the week by multiplying by 1 and 0 and we soon realised there were some easy rules to help us know what to do. We then did the same with dividing by 1 and itself. We then moved on to multiplying by 10 which we all were fabulous at as we had done a lot of making things 10 times bigger at the start of the year in our place value unit before ending the week with multiplying by 100.

In Geography, we started our mountains, volcanoes and earthquakes unit. We started by looking at a picture and using our enquiry skills thought about who, where, what and why. We learnt we looking Tenzing Norgay and the person taking the photo was Edmund Hillary. We learnt all about their ascent to the peak of Mount Everest and learnt lots of interesting information. We then continued our research and created some fabulous fact sheets.

In Science, we have been looking at what the different states of matter are and looked at the characteristics of solids, liquids and gasses. We went into the playground and acted like we were particles in each of these materials.

**Mrs Shone**

#### **Year 5**

This week in Year 5, we have added and subtracted fractions with different denominators - we converted the fractions so that they did have a matching denominator and then completed the calculation. Later in the week, we moved onto multiplying fractions and mixed numbers by a whole.

In writing, we completed our rainforest descriptions. We will be writing these up for our hall display next week!

For our History topic, we looked at Mayan masks. We retrieved our knowledge of Tutankhamun and his death mask - we then compared this to a Mayan King's jade death mask. After looking at pictures of lots of colourful and animalistic Mayan event masks, we created our own. They turned out to be really effective!

In RE, we researched Palm Sunday in preparation for Easter. We will recap the rest of the Easter story next week.

Finally, it was Neurodiversity Celebration week. We learnt what this meant and focused on the Neurodiverse world of a person with Autism - we watched a video which portrayed how someone with autism might see the world. We then read about the Autism spectrum and discussed how we can respect other's differences. To celebrate our own brilliant minds, we created our own 'minds' which were sectioned off into categories e.g. what we like to do, our favourite movies and things we are good at.

**Mrs Ratcliffe**

#### **Year 6**

In Maths, Year 6 have been increasing and decreasing amounts by a percentage using related decimals. They have continued to look at reasoning problems with related fractions decimals and percentage facts.

In English, the children have been writing a retell of a selection of their current whole class shared reading text, 'The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas'. They were asked to use speech to convey character and effectively advance the action. The children produced some great description, showing a fabulous understanding of a complex, hard-hitting text theme and effectively punctuated their work, showing a good understanding of speech punctuation.

In whole class shared reading, the children have been looking at character analysis and have been using inference to show empathy towards the main characters, looking at concepts of naivety and comparison.

In Science, the children have been investigating the long term benefits of regular exercise. They have been completing retrieval of the things that keep us feeling healthy, grouping benefits into social benefits, mental benefits and physical benefits.

The children completed informative/persuasive posters encouraging people to exercise. Their posters included: a slogan, a question, the main benefits of exercise, a section on how often you should exercise and engaging images.

In History, the children have been looking at the impact of World War 2 with a particular focus on women and children, looking at how their lives significantly changed.

**Mr Gould**

**PE**

This week in PE we have been working on sending and receiving which is a part of our striking and fielding topic, children have been learning how to manipulate the ball in a variety of ways. We have also been focusing on our knowledge of different training styles that help our cardiovascular fitness.

## Lunch Menu W/C 25.03.24

### Week 1

Week One	Week Two	Week Three
<p><b>Meat Free Monday</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Homemade Macaroni Cheese</li><li>Vegetarian Sausage Roll baked diced potatoes and beans</li><li>Vanilla Ice Cream</li></ul>	<p><b>Meat Free Monday</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Margarita Pizza served with baked jacket wedges and sweetcorn</li><li>Jacket with Fillings</li><li>Vanilla Ice Cream</li></ul>	<p><b>Meat Free Monday</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Homemade Tomato and Mascarpone Pasta Bake served with seasonal vegetables</li><li>Quorn nuggets with baked herby diced potatoes, and sweetcorn</li><li>Vanilla Ice Cream Roll</li></ul>
<p><b>Tuesday</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Chicken Curry served with 50/50 rice</li><li>Baked fishfingers with baked potato waffles, peas and sweetcorn</li><li>Fresh Fruit Segments or yoghurt</li></ul>	<p><b>Tuesday</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Chilli Beef served with 50/50 rice</li><li>Ham and Cheese Panini, fresh salad, coleslaw</li><li>Fresh Fruit Salad or Yoghurt</li></ul>	<p><b>Tuesday</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Cajun Chicken in a bun, Baked wedged potatoes, coleslaw and sweetcorn</li><li>Vegetarian Burger in a bun Baked wedged potatoes, coleslaw and sweetcorn</li><li>Fresh Fruit Segments or Yoghurt</li></ul>
<p><b>Wednesday</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Pork Sausage with creamed potatoes, gravy served with seasonal fresh carrots and peas</li><li>Panini served with coleslaw, sweetcorn, and salad</li><li>Jelly and Fruit</li></ul>	<p><b>Wednesday</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Homemade tomato sauce with pasta served with mixed vegetables</li><li>Baked Falafel served with savoury rice and mixed vegetables</li><li>Jelly and Fruit</li></ul>	<p><b>Wednesday</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Chicken Tikka Masala served with 50/50 rice</li><li>Baguette pizza served with fresh salad and coleslaw</li><li>Jelly and Fruit</li></ul>
<p><b>Thursday</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Oven baked Battered Fish served with chunky chipped potatoes, garden peas or baked beans</li><li>Crumb Coated Chicken served with chunky chipped potatoes, garden peas or baked beans</li><li>Homemade sponge cake</li></ul>	<p><b>Thursday</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Oven baked Battered Salmon served with chunky chipped potatoes garden peas or baked beans</li><li>Chicken goujons served with chunky chipped potatoes garden peas or baked beans</li><li>Homemade Cake</li></ul>	<p><b>Thursday</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Crumb coated chicken served with chunky chipped potatoes, garden peas or baked beans</li><li>Oven baked Battered Fish served with chunky chipped potatoes, garden peas or baked beans</li><li>Homemade Cake</li></ul>
<p><b>Friday</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Spaghetti Bolognese served with seasonal vegetables</li><li>Homemade Cheese Flan served with baked jacket wedges sweetcorn and salad</li><li>Homemade Biscuit</li></ul>	<p><b>Friday</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Chicken curry and rice</li><li>Selection of filled wraps</li><li>Homemade Biscuit</li></ul>	<p><b>Friday</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Pork Meatballs in homemade tomato and basil sauce served with wholemeal pasta and garden peas</li><li>Twice Baked Jacket Potatoes with ham and cheese served with baked beans</li><li>Homemade Biscuit</li></ul>



**2-5 APRIL 2024**

# Forest Camp

**HOLIDAY CLUB @  
BRUCHE PRIMARY  
SCHOOL**

**DEN BUILDING,  
BUSHCRAFT, CAMP  
FIRES, COOKING AND  
MUCH MORE**

**Full (8.30-16.00) or half  
days (8.30-12.00)  
available**

**Bookable via ParentPay now**



Woolston Rovers Girls are currently on the lookout for girls in Reception and Year 1 who would like to play football.

All girls will be welcomed regardless of experience.

For more information please email:

[woolston.rovers.jfc.girls@gmail.com](mailto:woolston.rovers.jfc.girls@gmail.com)



## BRUCHE PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Term Dates 2023-2024

	<b>Closing Date</b>	<b>Opening Date</b>
Autumn 2024		06.09.23
Autumn Half Term	20.10.23	06.11.23
Christmas 2023	20.12.23	03.01.24
Spring Half Term 2024	09.02.24	19.02.24
Easter	28.03.24	08.04.24
Bank Holidays (Good Friday and Easter Monday)	29.03.24 and 01.04.24	
Bank Holiday (May Day)	06.05.24	
Summer Half Term	24.05.24	03.06.2024
Summer 2024	18.07.24	04.09.2024

### **INSET** (Training days for staff – children not in school)

<b>INSET 1</b>	04.09.23
<b>INSET 2</b>	05.09.23
<b>INSET 3</b>	28.06.24
<b>INSET 4</b>	19.07.24
<b>INSET 5</b>	22.07.24

<b>Holiday Dates</b>	
October Half Term	23.10.23 – 03.11.23
Christmas Holiday	21.12.23 – 02.01.24
February Half Term	12.02.24 – 16.02.24
Easter Holiday	01.04.24 – 05.04.24
May Half Term (Whit)	27.05.24 – 31.05.24
Summer Holiday	19.07.24- 04.09.24



## BRUCHE PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Term Dates 2024-2025

	<b>Closing Date</b>	<b>Opening Date</b>
Autumn 2024		04.09.24
Autumn Half Term	18.10.24	04.11.24
Christmas 2023	20.12.24	06.01.25
Spring Half Term 2024	14.02.25	24.02.25
Easter	11.04.25	22.04.25
Bank Holidays (Good Friday and Easter Monday)	18.04.25 and 21.04.25	
Bank Holiday (May Day)	05.05.25	
Summer Half Term	23.05.25	02.06.2025
Summer 2024	18.07.25	03.09.25

### **INSET** (Training days for staff – children not in school)

<b>INSET 1</b>	02.09.24
<b>INSET 2</b>	03.09.24
<b>INSET 3</b>	27.06.25
<b>INSET 4</b>	21.07.25
<b>INSET 5</b>	22.07.25

<b>Holiday Dates</b>	
October Half Term	18.10.24 – 03.11.24
Christmas Holiday	20.12.24 – 05.01.25
February Half Term	14.02.25 – 23.02.25
Easter Holiday	11.04.25 – 21.04.25
May Half Term (Whit)	23.05.25 – 01.06.25
Summer Holiday	18.07.25- 03.09.25



## BRUCHE PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Term Dates 2025-2026

	<b>Closing Date</b>	<b>Opening Date</b>
Autumn 2024		03.09.25
Autumn Half Term	17.10.25	03.11.25
Christmas 2024	19.12.25	05.01.26
Spring Half Term 2024	13.02.26	23.02.26
Easter	02.04.26	13.04.26
Bank Holidays (Good Friday and Easter Monday)	03.04.26 and 06.04.26	
Bank Holiday (May Day)	04.05.26	
Summer Half Term	22.05.26	01.06.26
Summer 2025	17.06.26	(TBC)

### **INSET** (Training days for staff – children not in school)

<b>INSET 1</b>	01.09.24
<b>INSET 2</b>	02.09.25
<b>INSET 3</b>	03.07.26
<b>INSET 4</b>	20.07.26
<b>INSET 5</b>	21.07.26

<b>Holiday Dates</b>	
October Half Term	20.10.25 - 31.10.25
Christmas Holiday	22.12.25 – 02.01.26
February Half Term	16.02.26 – 20.02.26
Easter Holiday	03.04.26 – 10.04.26
May Half Term (Whit)	25.05.26 – 29.05.26
Summer Holiday	20.07.26 - TBC





**Music is a compulsory and important part of the National Curriculum. The national curriculum for music aims to ensure that all pupils: perform, listen to, review and evaluate music.**

From September 2022 Early Notes Music Education will be able to offer support to students with small group and one to one instrumental tuition for the following...

**Ukulele** For KS1 & KS2 students

**Guitar** For KS2 students

**Keyboard** For KS1 & KS2 students **(all students will learn to read notation)**

**Flute** For KS2 students **(all students will learn to read notation)**

**Recorder (all ranges)** For KS2 students **(all students will learn to read notation)**

**Violin** For KS2 students **(all students will learn to read notation)**

**Drum Kit** For KS1 & KS2 students

Tuition prices start from £65 for 12 sessions, all lessons are held within school during lesson time. The 12 sessions will usually fit into a school term and lessons will be carried over should a term be less than 12 weeks.

For further information about Early Notes Music, details about specific instrumental lessons or to enroll for September, you can do this direct via our website [www.earlynotesmusic.education](http://www.earlynotesmusic.education)

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit [nationalcollege.com](http://nationalcollege.com).

# 10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators ENCOURAGING OPEN CONVERSATIONS AT HOME

With tricky topics and occasional clashes of opinion, it can be challenging to maintain an environment where children feel able to talk candidly and honestly. However, encouraging such conversations helps to develop trust – making it easier to unpack even sensitive subjects as children get older. Here are our top tips for promoting open conversations at home.

## 1 CREATE A SAFE SPACE

Criticism, blaming or shaming can all prevent children from feeling emotionally safe – while showing affection, positive attention and an interest in what a child has to say builds their sense of security. These formative years are when children's opinions and values begin to take shape, so it's important to provide a non-judgmental environment in which to discuss them – especially if their opinions differ from your own.

## 2 CONSIDER OTHER OUTLETS

Some children may find it easier to talk while they're participating in another activity such as drawing, writing, walking or sport. If it's possible, taking part in these activities together presents you with an opportunity to communicate while doing something side by side. A child may feel less pressure that way and can be more inclined to open up of their own accord.

## 3 NORMALISE CHATS ABOUT FEELINGS

Incorporate mental health and emotional wellbeing into everyday conversations, using age-appropriate language and examples to help children understand their emotions. Ask questions like "How are you feeling today?", "What was the best and worst part of your day?", "If you could start today again, what would you do differently?" and "Is there anything you want to talk about?"

## 4 LISTEN ACTIVELY

When children express themselves, make it obvious that you're listening closely and giving them your full attention. Maintain eye contact and validate their feelings without immediately trying to solve the problem. It's not helpful to dismiss their issues as childish or 'teenage angst' – or to assume that they'll simply 'get over' whatever they're feeling. Children don't have your life experience; their resilience is still developing as they learn to push through difficulties and handle problems.

## 5 ASK OPEN QUESTIONS

Encourage children to share their thoughts by asking open questions about their feelings and experiences. Closed questions (such as "Did you enjoy school today?") are more likely to elicit a simple "yes" or "no" response. Instead, you could ask things like "Who did you spend time with at break?" or "Who did you sit with at lunchtime?"

## 6 RESPECT THEIR BOUNDARIES

If a child isn't ready to talk to about something yet, respect their boundaries: this reinforces that their feelings are important and worthy of consideration. Ideally, you're aiming to let them know you care without smothering them, so just make it clear that you're there for them whenever they're ready to chat. Gentle, regular check-ins can sometimes be the best form of progress.

## 7 LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Model open, honest and healthy communication in front of children and young people. Try to demonstrate kindness when talking about others and yourself, because if children hear adults being overly harsh, critical or judgmental, or see them having unrealistic expectations of themselves, it makes them more likely to adopt and repeat this behaviour themselves as they grow.

## 8 HAVE REGULAR CHECK-INS

Check in with children periodically to discuss how they're feeling and what's going on in their lives. This could be a weekly or monthly conversation, where the child has an opportunity to share whatever's on their mind. For parents and carers, getting away from the house and other distractions might be productive here: you could consider regular trips to a coffee shop or a café, or just a weekly walk.

## 9 PROVIDE RESOURCES

It's often beneficial to let children know about other support that's available to them if they're struggling to talk to you specifically. Encourage them to talk to school counsellors, trusted adults or even a therapist, if necessary – while normalising this route and dispelling the harmful stigma around asking for help. Older children could engage with resources such as Kooth or YoungMinds.

## 10 CELEBRATE EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION

It's beneficial to praise children for expressing their feelings honestly – emphasising how important it is to talk about their emotions and how proud you are of them for doing so. This can be especially pivotal for boys, who often experience more of a stigma around talking frankly about their feelings and their mental health – a barrier that can be overcome, with enough love and support.

### Meet Our Expert

With 30 years' experience as a teacher, trainer, consultant and interim executive board member, Anna Bateman has a superb understanding of what works in pedagogy, school improvement and leadership. She has also advised the Department for Education on their mental health green paper.



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