



Dear Parents and Carers,

February 1st sees the start of Children's Mental Health Week. The week is organised by the charity Place2Be to focus on the importance of children's mental health and I think we would all agree that this is more important than ever. This year's theme is Express Yourself. Throughout the week teachers will be focusing on this as part of our home learning. When children are able to find creative ways to share their feelings it can make them feel good about themselves. They can do this through art, music, writing, drama, drawing, dance, through what they chose to wear or by engaging in activities that they enjoy. Given our current situation supporting our children to feel good about themselves and helping them to express themselves is so important.

Here are a few simple ways you can encourage your child to express themselves.

- Could you build on existing interests or passions? Think about what has helped them get through the past year. A love of dancing? Baking? Drawing? Encourage your child by noticing their unique interests and praising their efforts.
- Trying new things can be a great way to find a new creative outlet. Could you try out something new together?
- Some children may not think of themselves as being creative. Try to focus on the importance of the process and the way it can make them feel, rather than the end result. Try not to judge their efforts and remember to give encouragement for trying rather than for doing something well.
- Listening carefully can help children feel more comfortable and confident when expressing themselves. Try your best to minimise distractions and give your child your full attention when you're spending time together, being aware of your own body language and eye contact. You might want to try summarising what they've shared and acknowledging their feelings.
- Children are expressing themselves all the time but not necessarily with words. 'Listen' to everything they are trying to tell you with their behaviour, or with their play and creativity or with their silence. It's all self-expression.
- Remember – you don't need a lot of expensive equipment to get creative at home. Recyclable materials can provide amazing inspiration and creations.
- Use the 'Express Yourself' calendar for daily ideas of what your child could do.
- Have fun, laugh and take time to do things together.

Throughout the week will be encouraging everyone to get involved so please do look out for our 'show and tell' on Facebook.

By talking about mental wellbeing from a young age, children can learn to better understand their emotions, break down stigma, and feel safe enough to reach out for help when it's needed. Talking about mental health and expressing our feelings can be difficult, no matter our age. During lockdown, it's more important than ever to share how we're feeling with others. Remember to talk to family and friends and do get in touch with school if you are struggling. Attached is our 'Emotional Wellbeing Home Learning Pack' that we shared last year which has lots of information and ideas related to emotional wellbeing. If you are concerned about your own or your child's emotional wellbeing please let school know so we can signpost you to support services.

Thanks, take care and stay safe

Kind regards

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| Emma Hardy | Nicole Ramsey | Guy Willatt | Joanna Kay |
| Head Teacher | Deputy Head | Deputy Head | SENCO |