

# The Topsham School Newsletter 20



A love of learning and commitment to the success of every child at the heart of all we do.  
Tel: 01392 874498 Website: [www.topsham.devon.sch.uk](http://www.topsham.devon.sch.uk)

Friday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2020



Child Protection  
and Safeguarding;

Everybody's business,  
Everybody's concern,  
Everybody's responsibility

## Tuesday 11th February is Safer Internet Day

Safeguarding our children is of the utmost importance to The Topsham School and supporting our children and parents to understand and know how to be safe online is an essential part of our work in this area. Safer Internet Day provides us with the opportunity to highlight this area of keeping children safe.

As you will know, Safer Internet Day is a national initiative aimed at promoting awareness of staying safe online. Children will be exploring ideas about identity online with a focus on 'It's good to be me!'

To support parents and carers understand further what children will be covering and discussing throughout next week, please find a link to the parent's page of their website. Do spend some time exploring the ideas and advice this site provides; the information is both accessible and informative.

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/safer-internet-day/safer-internet-day-2020/i-am-parent-or-carer>

The school has invested a great deal of time and money in new Chromebooks and system setup and we are very excited that we are just about ready to start to put these into use. We know this will have a huge impact on our Computing Curriculum and also on the effective use of technology throughout our curriculum.

Online Safety will be an ongoing parallel thread to our teaching to increase and sustain our pupil's awareness and knowledge of how to keep safe online both at school and at home. We feel so passionate about this aspect of safeguarding that we have invested in National Online Safety; an organisation that provides resources, training and support for schools and parents. Alongside our Newsletter each Friday, starting from today, we will be providing the weekly National Online Safety parent information sheets that will inform parents/carers about current online safety concerns. This is a great resource that many schools are using and providing. These fact sheets are both informative and accessible, enabling parents to make informed decisions or to simply be more aware of areas of online safety that might not have been explored before.

Please take the time to read them as they come out- some of the facts, figures and information may surprise you!

Safeguarding our children is everyone's business. We work with the opinion that 'It could happen here'. Staff at The Topsham School will do all they can to ensure our children stay safe both on and offline. We know our parent's will do the same.

Thank you for your ongoing support.



### **Payment for meals**

**Please may I remind parents that if you pay for your child's dinners you need to ensure you pay on time and your account does not go into arrears. The school cannot afford to subsidise meals and having to 'chase' parents who do fall into arrears causes unnecessary work for my office staff. It is a parent's responsibility to pay for their child's meal not for my staff to chase**

**payment. If you need support in relation to school meal payments please request a meeting with myself where we can have a confidential discussion. Thank you. Mrs Pipe**

As you know, communication is very important in sustaining positive working relationships and with this in mind, I would like to remind all parents and carers of the procedures to follow if you have a query or concern in relation to your child.

1. The first person to see if you have any query or concern regarding your child academically, socially or emotionally is always the class teacher. They are the person in school who knows and works with your child the most. Class teachers are always happy to meet with parents and, if necessary, will communicate via other means such as telephone or email if this is more convenient.
2. If after seeing the class teacher, you still have questions or concerns that cannot be met by the class teacher, then please make an appointment to see the phase leader:  
FSU/KS1: Mrs Whitehead  
KS2: Miss White  
SENDSCO: Mrs Hartmann
3. Any aspect for which you feel you need further support then please see the Deputy Headteacher, Miss White.
4. If after seeing all these professionals you need further support, Miss White will refer you to meet with me.
5. Finally, if it is an urgent matter of safeguarding, then please see me as the Designated Safeguarding Lead. In my absence, please see Miss White who is the Deputy Safeguarding Lead.

Have a lovely weekend

Emma Pipe  
Headteacher

## Achievers

As a school, we promote positive behaviour and we have numerous incentives to support this. The recipients of last week's awards are pictured below:



### Achievers:

Syd, Alina, Oscar, Rudy, Oscar, Maiya, Otilie, Oskaras, Bertie, Oscar, Anya, Florence, Isaac, Zoe and George.



**Sports Stars:**  
James, Elowen, Oscar,  
Millie and Daisy.



**Winning House:**  
Emerald

## **PE Kit**

Recently we have noticed a growing number of children do not have any/a complete PE kit. Please may we remind you that PE is a very important part of our curriculum and it is vital that children have the appropriate PE kit in school.

PE Kit includes:

- Black or dark blue shorts (black sports leggings are also acceptable)
- White T - shirt
- Trainers or plimsolls. Trainers are best for outdoor PE. (For Health and Safety reasons children usually do dance and gymnastics in bare feet)
- During the winter children need to bring jogging bottoms and a sweatshirt (other than their school sweatshirt) to keep them warm. We also recommend that children have spare socks so their feet can stay dry.
- PE kit needs be kept in a drawstring bag – not in a large sports bag or plastic carrier, as space for storage is limited.

If your child participates in a **sporting club** after school we ask that **a separate kit** is brought in for this. This prevents any school PE kit being lost or not returned in readiness for their next PE lesson.

Over the half term we ask that you ensure your child has the correct items in their PE bag and that this is brought back into school on the first day. This can remain in school for the half term. If you wish to wash your child's PE kit more frequently, this is of course fine, however it must be returned at the beginning of the week in readiness for PE lessons.

### **Advice from the Department for Education: Coronavirus**

The government is closely monitoring the spread of the Coronavirus and is taking action at home and abroad. The overall risk of Coronavirus to the UK remains moderate. However we understand that people may be concerned where there are children, students or staff returning from or visiting China. Public Health England and the Foreign Office have issued advice for anyone travelling to the area. This can be found at:

- <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/china>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-and-avian-flu-advice-for-travel-to-china>

Latest information and advice can also be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

### **Advice for parents/guardians**

You should not be unduly worried about the possibility of your children catching the Coronavirus. There is no reason why your children should not continue to attend their early years, school or further education setting as normal. We recognise that some families or children may be planning to travel to China during the forthcoming half term period. If so, please refer to the FCO's latest travel advice via the link above.

## COMMUNITY NEWS

### Exeter City Football – February Half Term Courses

We are running our February holiday courses in various locations across Devon which caters for children aged 5-16 years old.

If you would like more information, or to book a place, please click on the link below:  
<https://www.exetercitycommunitytrust.co.uk/courses/february-half-term-2020>



## SAFEGUARDING

### Railway Safety

We have been contacted again by Network Rail, who have expressed concern about the number of people trespassing on train tracks. With half-term approaching, we would like to remind parents of the importance of having conversations with children about the safety aspects of playing near to train tracks.

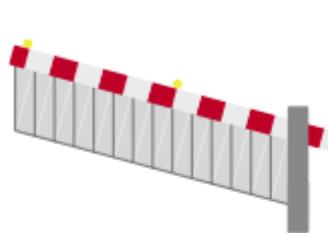
#### The Rail Life 'Safety Top 3':



1.

**Stay clear of the tracks.  
Is it worth putting your  
life on the line?**

- electricity can jump up to three metres.
- don't play with kites or balloons near overhead lines.



2.

**Use the level crossing.**

Shortcuts across the railway can kill.



3.

**Know the signs.**

Be alert to railway signs, they could save your life.

## PTA NEWS

### **Year 3 Cake Sale – TODAY!**

Look out! It's the Y3 cake sale outside the main entrance at 3.30pm today! If you've managed to have a cake at every single cake sale since September, you really owe it to yourself to continue your unbroken record. And everyone else – just buy some cake, you won't regret it.

### **Disco – 5<sup>th</sup> March**

You should have received a letter this week telling you all about the arrangements for the school disco. If not, search those book bags! It'll be lurking at the bottom with last Autumn's copy of the Primary Times and furry, green easy peeler. Or enquire at the office.

### **Spring Nature Day – 14<sup>th</sup> March**

More information about this great way to help the school and get in the swing for spring will be arriving very soon. In brief, we're hoping that loads of families will come along to school to help with a bit of grounds clearance and tidying, while their lucky children enjoy crafts, games, activities, music and (probably) face painting – all with a nature and spring theme. And everyone gets lunch!

### **The Great Big Silent Auction – starts soon, ends with the quiz night on 20<sup>th</sup> March**

Please get in touch with your lovely offers of 'lots' for the auction. So far we have a family surf lesson, the loan of kayaks, and 6 weeks supply of fresh eggs from Topsham's happiest hens, to name but a few. All offers gratefully received! Just email [TopshamPTA@outlook.com](mailto:TopshamPTA@outlook.com), or grab your class rep.

### **Quiz Night – 20<sup>th</sup> March**

This year's must-have sartorial embellishment is facial hair – stick it on, draw it on, grow it, it's your choice. Most striking wins a prize. Oh, and there's an amazing quiz (with a bar), and the finale of the silent auction too.

Next cake sale: Year 2 on 28<sup>th</sup> February

Next PTA meeting: Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> February, 8pm at The Globe



## ABSENCE PROCEDURES

Children's regular attendance at school is essential to ensure that they maximise their learning opportunities to achieve their full potential. We would like to take the opportunity to remind parents about absence procedures:

### Illness

If your child is unwell, please leave a message on the absence line before 8.50 am on the first day of absence. Please remember to explain the symptoms that your child is presenting rather than just saying that they are unwell. This enables us to track any patterns in illness across the school and some illnesses i.e. Scarlet Fever need to be reported to Public Health. Remembering to phone in to report absences is extremely important. This enables us to safeguard children, as we have to assume that any child who has not turned up for school or to an afterschool club is missing until we have heard from their parents. When children are absent from school for 5 consecutive days, the Educational Welfare Officer requires us to ask parents to provide some form of medical evidence in order to authorise the absence as illness. We are not looking for doctor's notes – they cost money and take up GP's time.

Suitable evidence could include:

- Doctors appointment card stamped and signed by receptionist to confirm appointment kept
- Prescribed medication
- Walk in centre slip
- Call log/consultation text printed by receptionist
- Some parents have online access to patient records – from here you can print past, current, future appointments and/or a patient summary record.

### Appointments

If your child is going to be absent from school for a medical or dental appointment, please bring a copy of the hospital letter, appointment card, prescription label or text confirming the appointment to the school office. This can also be emailed to [admin@topsham.devon.sch.uk](mailto:admin@topsham.devon.sch.uk)  
Please do not request a letter from your doctor, an appointment card with the time and date can be obtained from receptionists. This will enable us to authorise your child's absence as a medical appointment.

### Other absences

For any other planned absence, please use the S2 Absence Request form which can be obtained from the rack in the foyer or downloaded from the school website. As you are no doubt aware, holidays in term time are strongly discouraged and the school will continue to follow Government guidelines which do not allow for authorisation of holidays in term time.



### Key Dates

Friday 7 <sup>th</sup> February	Year 3 Cake Sale
Thursday 13 <sup>th</sup> February	Children break up for half-term (3.30pm finish)
Friday 14 <sup>th</sup> February	Non-Pupil Day
Monday 24 <sup>th</sup> February	Return to school after half-term
Tuesday 25 <sup>th</sup> February	PTA Meeting 8pm at The Globe
Friday 28 <sup>th</sup> February	Year 2 Cake Sale
Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup> March	World Book Day
Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup> March	PTA Disco
Friday 6 <sup>th</sup> March	Reports home to parents
Tuesday 10 <sup>th</sup> March	Parents' Evening
Thursday 12 <sup>th</sup> March	Year 1 and 2 Trip to The Golden Hind
Thursday 12 <sup>th</sup> March	Parents' Evening
Saturday 14 <sup>th</sup> March	PTA Spring Nature Day
w/b 16 <sup>th</sup> March	Last week for staff led clubs
Thursday 19 <sup>th</sup> March	Year 2 and Year 5 Fire Safety Workshops
Friday 20 <sup>th</sup> March	Year 5 and 6 Trip to Eden Project
Friday 20 <sup>th</sup> March	Year 1 Cake Sale
Friday 20 <sup>th</sup> March	PTA Quiz Night
Wednesday 25 <sup>th</sup> – Friday 27 <sup>th</sup> March	Year 4 Heatree Residential
Friday 27 <sup>th</sup> March	Break up for Easter (2.30pm finish)
Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup> April	Return to school after Easter Holidays
Throughout May	KS1 SATs to be administered
Friday 8 <sup>th</sup> May	Early May Bank Holiday (school closed)
w/b 11 <sup>th</sup> May	KS2 SATs week
Monday 11 <sup>th</sup> May	KS2 English Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling Test Papers 1 and 2
Tuesday 12 <sup>th</sup> May	KS2 English Reading Test
Wednesday 13 <sup>th</sup> May	KS2 Maths Test Papers 1 and 2
Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup> May	KS2 Maths Test Paper 3
Friday 22 <sup>nd</sup> May	Break up for half-term (3.30pm finish)
Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> June	Return to school after half-term
w/b 8 <sup>th</sup> June	Year 1 Phonics Screening week
Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> June	Tempest Class Group Photos
Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> – Friday 17 <sup>th</sup> July	Year 6 Dartmoor Residential (Pixie's Holt)
Wednesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> July	Break up for Summer Holiday (2.30pm finish)
Thursday 23 <sup>rd</sup> July	Non-Pupil Day

# SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

## 10 Conversation Starters for Parents

Talking about mental health to children is sometimes hard. To the point that we can put off raising the subject, not wanting to unearth problems or raise overwhelming subjects that we perceive our child is too young or not ready for. But rather than keeping children in the dark, this guide is designed to help you confidently talk about mental health, so they feel comfortable talking about their own worries and any stigma before it begins.



### 1 LISTEN

This sounds obvious, but it is not something we are always great at. Active listening is where we listen without interrupting or making judgements and shows interest in what is being said. If your child feels listened to in the 'biggest of problems' they will become confident that you will listen when the 'biggest of problems' arise.

### 2 ASK TWICE

The campaign from time to change is great. <http://www.time-to-change.org.uk/support/ask-twice-campaign>. Be lenient about your child's wellbeing. Children instinctively know when your questions and support come from a place of wanting to help and care.

Are you sure?

### 3 THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A STUPID QUESTION

This advice also relates to the first point. If your child can ask you any questions about the smallest of things and you listen and answer without shaming or belittling, then they will have more confidence to ask the biggest of questions.

### 4 BE OPEN AND HONEST

Children appreciate honesty, particularly if you are having to share information or talk about a difficult subject. For example, you may be talking about death or loss: 'It's very sad that Nana has died' or 'I feel sad that Nana has died'. How you talk about a subject will differ depending on their age and developmental maturity. Talking about death to a younger child for example will be different to that of an older teen, as their experience and understanding of death is different.

### 5 KNOW WHEN TO SEEK HELP

Assess the severity of the mental health difficulty you are noticing. Is the difficulty making it hard for your child to function regularly throughout everyday life? How frequently is your child affected, how long does it last and how persistent is it? Are they having problems controlling the difficulty? Talk to your child about your concerns and that it is likely they will need further support beyond family and friends.

### 6 TALK ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH NATURALLY

Speak about mental health as part of everyday life, so that talking about our feelings and those of others is normalised. If the usual 'are you ok?' is not creating an opportunity for dialogue then say something like 'I know when something like that has happened to me I feel like this... is that how you are feeling or are you feeling something else?'

### 7 EMPATHISE

It makes sense that you would feel this way, it is understandable. Children often worry about things that we, as adults, might see as trivial or silly. However, for them at their age and stage it is a big concern and they need our kindness and care when they show their vulnerability and share their worries.

### 8 HELP YOUR CHILD FEEL SAFE

Teens particularly feel that by talking about their worries or concerns that this will make things worse. Reassure your child that you will discuss a plan of action together and what may or may not need to happen next. If they are a younger child, it is likely you will need to lead the conversation and explain next steps.

### 9 MIND YOUR LANGUAGE

Be mindful of the language you use at home to describe and talk about mental health. Stigma often allows these misconceptions and a choice of language which is harmful. Using the word 'mental', 'lean up' or other such words in a derogatory way won't encourage your child to talk about their mental health for fear of being belittled.

### 10 IT IS OK TO SAY 'I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO NEXT'

Adults do not have all the answers but often children think they do. It is ok to acknowledge that what your child is experiencing is not something you have come across before or know anything about, but that you will work it out together and seek help together.

## Meet our expert

This guide has been written by Anna Bateman. Anna is passionate about placing prevention at the heart of every school, integrating mental wellbeing within the curriculum, school culture and systems. She is also a member of the advisory group for the Department of Education, advising them on their mental health green paper.



## Sources of Information and Support

Your GP  
Young Minds <http://www.youngminds.org.uk/>  
<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/its-our-ability-department>  
<http://www.nationalonlinesafety.com/advice-and-support/parenting-tips/2016/10/06/a-simple-guide-to-active-listening-for-parents/>  
<http://www.themsa.org.uk/mental-health>