



Issue #8

# BRENTFIELD NEWS

Friday 5th February 2021

This week we have been taking part in Children’s Mental Health week. Now more than ever it is important for children to talk about their feelings and worries. This year’s theme is



## IMPORTANT

### INFORMATION

#### Lockdown Update

Schools across England will continue to teach via remote learning until at least March 8<sup>th</sup>.

There will be more information on 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb when the Prime Minister will set out a ‘route map’ out of lockdown.

I will keep you updated on how Brentfield will begin to open to more year groups when I receive the information.

**School will be closed to all**

**pupils for half term**

**15<sup>th</sup> Feb – 19<sup>th</sup> Feb**

## What is self-expression, and why is it important?

Self-expression is about communicating your individuality. This can be through words, clothing and hairstyle, or through art forms such as writing, drawing, music and dance.

Self-expression can help children to showcase their true self – their story, their thoughts, feelings and emotions. But this can also make them feel vulnerable, so they might want to take things one step at a time.

Children often get told by their family, friends, school, communities and through social media how they ‘should’ look, think, speak, and act. These constant messages about what they ought to do, and who they ought to be, can make it difficult to let go of expectations and express their true selves.

## Self-expression helps us connect to our true self

Self-expression is a great way for children to relieve themselves of stress and free their mind. Self-expression can help them to reflect on their life, actions, decisions, relationships, beliefs, and thoughts – rather than keep them buried deep down.

## Self-expression helps us connect to each other – in good times and bad

By expressing themselves thoughtfully, they can better communicate, collaborate and build a community with others. At times of crisis, people come together to express themselves individually, and as a group, through the arts.

Thank you to Mrs. Mckinson for planning our ‘Water, Water Everywhere’ art competition. We have some very talented artists in our school! I am delighted to share the winning entries with you. The winners should keep a careful eye on the post next week as your prizes will be delivered straight to your door!



## 'Water, Water, Everywhere' Competition Winners!

Congratulations to ours Early Years winner Anais, KS1 winner, Fatima and Persia and Baya from KS2.

Early Years



KS1



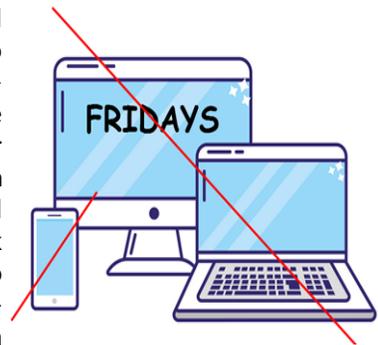
KS2



Image - Winning artwork

## Screen Free Fridays!

Thank you for your feedback on remote learning which you discussed with teachers this week during parent consultations. It is important to us to hear how your children are accessing the work at home. We received feedback from the overwhelming majority of parents who were happy with the amount of work their children were receiving. However some were concerned about the amount of 'screen time' their children are having. A majority of parents asked if we could provide practical non screen activities that enable the children to be more creative, work collaboratively together with their siblings and have the opportunity to develop handwriting and fine motor skills. Next Friday we will be introducing 'screen free' Friday afternoons to encourage children to turn off their electrical devices and spend time with their families. Children will not be expected to turn in work or photos for these activities.



This year the children will be having lessons about making the internet a kinder place. Throughout the week parents and careers will receive information about how to keep their children safe online. It is very important that you monitor your children when they are 'gaming' and using internet platforms. You need to know who they are interacting with online. Children should only be playing with children they know and not friends of friends. Please give your children a clear timeframe of how long they can spend on games and internet platforms.

## Parent Governor Vacancies

We currently have a vacancy for a Parent Governor on our Governing Board. The role is open to all parents and carers. It would require your attendance to at least 7 governing board meetings which take place from 5.30pm throughout the school year. At the meetings we discuss finance, curriculum, safeguarding and the progress of the children as well as ensuring the school is compliant in all policies and procedures. If you would like further information or are interested in becoming a governor please call the office for further details.





**Amina Abdisalam**

## EDUCATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH PRACTITIONER (EMHP)

Hi there, My name is Amina and I am a trainee Educational Mental Health Practitioner (EMHP), part of a Mental Health Support Team working in schools with a focus on early intervention. I'll be working in partnership with Brentfield Primary School to help develop a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing, building on what is already being done. Some of the services we will be offering include:

One to one CBT interventions with parents who have children experiencing difficulties in managing emotions

Delivering training and workshops for staff, children and parents and carers

Group interventions for children

Improving access to mental health support and services

I am really looking forward to meeting & supporting both parents & children from the school.

Amina



## **EDUCATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH PRACTITIONER (EMHP)**

Improving Mental Health Outcomes for Children and Young People in Brent.



The Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families; University College London; King's College London and NHS have collaborated to co-create this early intervention initiative.

**WHO ARE WE?** A team of Educational Mental Health Practitioners (EMHP), assigned to support children and young people (YP) in schools, at the earliest signs of mental health difficulties. Our aim is to improve mental health outcomes for children and YP by delivering evidence-based low intensity interventions, as part of a health promotion strategy in educational settings. Early intervention has been proven to reduce the likelihood of mental health difficulties emerging later in life. As children and YP spend a large part of their time in educational settings, it is crucial that schools are equipped to take care of their mental health and well-being.

**WHAT DO WE DO?** We deliver up to eight 1:1 CBT based Guided Self Help (GSH) sessions to young people experiencing low mood and anxiety and to the parents of younger children with behavioural difficulties. We work in collaboration with the YP and their families to support them to reach their wellbeing goals. We help achieve this by equipping them with self-help coping strategies that can be used in difficult situations interfering with their life. Moreover, we provide training on mental health and work closely with schools in order to ensure that the well-being of children, YP and all staff is taken care of.

**WHAT CAN WE OFFER?** The GSH intervention method is designed to support YP to become specialists in their own mental health wellbeing and to build confidence and independence. EMHPs provide the tools YP can use to manage any current emotional difficulties. In addition, achievable tasks are set to be completed outside of sessions, with the aim of meeting an agreed outcome.

**HOW DO YOUNG PEOPLE GET INVOLVED?** To take part in the program, YP and the parents of primary school children will need to complete an application form. Consent and confidentiality will be discussed with all YP before any intervention commences. Although support from EMHPs will be provided throughout the intervention, the GSH method requires that the YP and parents/carers have the motivation to engage with the program, and work towards the desired changes.

# 7 Top Tips for Supporting Children to EXPRESS THEMSELVES SAFELY ONLINE

The past year has left many children feeling uncertain and worried. So Children's Mental Health Week 2021 has adopted the theme of 'express yourself'. It's not necessarily about being the best – but instead encouraging young people to relish the joy of being 'in the moment' and loving what they do. So whether they're into music, art, photography, film, drama or dance, here are our top tips for helping your child to express themselves safely online.

## 1 Celebrate their Identity

Celebrating who children are and reminding them of their uniqueness has a huge impact on their confidence and self-esteem. This week, remind them of what you love about them. You could revisit some photos and videos on your phone or computer of special times you've shared. Chat about the importance of finding time to do what they love: underline that it's an important part of who they are.

## 2 Promote Their Passions

It's different for all of us, but every child has something which ignites their passions and brings them joy. Perhaps they love music and you could introduce them to a music-making app? Or if they enjoy taking photos or making videos, use this week to set a photography or video competition at home, with some fun categories.

## 3 Support Their Interests

Some children seem to know instinctively what interests them and what they enjoy doing; others can be less decisive about hobbies. Spend some time this week sharing their interests and doing something connected to it together. You could make a short Lego film to post on your Instagram, a vlog about baking that you share with relatives, or just play with them on their favourite video game.

## 4 Help Them Help Others

Some children love to express themselves through activities which help others. Perhaps your local area's Facebook group has a community project that your family could get involved with – even as a one-off; it doesn't have to be a long-term commitment. Depending on your child's age, you could introduce them to online fundraising (such as sites like JustGiving, for example) and how it can make a difference to less fortunate people.

## 5 Enable Emotional Expression

Children sometimes need help in articulating how they're feeling and in beginning to understand how to manage their emotions. A safe, healthy way for your child to explore their feelings is to let them conduct an activity – like listening to a story, or creating some art – and discuss with them afterwards how it made them feel. There are lots of stories available on YouTube, while Audible is streaming children's audiobooks free of charge while schools are closed. YouTube also has a plethora of fun art tutorials (if you log in on adult's account, remember to adjust your settings first to block inappropriate content and stop potentially unsuitable material auto-playing).

## 6 Let Them Stay Connected

The online world is a fantastic space for staying in contact with those who we can't be with right now. Young people are often very comfortable using social media to express themselves and stay connected by sharing their ideas, thoughts and feelings with friends. But bear in mind that most social media platforms require a child to be at least 13 before they should access it (WhatsApp is 16). Remind your child that, while it's OK to express who we are on social media, they should still always think before posting – and that their self-worth is never measured by their number of likes, friends or followers.

## 7 Coach 'Safe Sharing'

As part of expressing themselves, your child may want to share something online that they've created – like a funny video, a sketch, a meme or a dance. If they're too young to have their own social media, you could use your own account to share it with selected people who you trust. Emphasise the importance of only sharing content with people that your child knows well, like family and friends. This type of conversation is also useful for introducing young people to the risks and challenges that can come when expressing ourselves to a wider online audience of strangers.

## Meet Our Expert

Anna Bateman 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 for Education, advising them on their mental health green paper.



## About Children's Mental Health Week

Around three children in every primary school class has a mental health problem. Many more struggle with challenges from bullying to bereavement. Now in its seventh year, Children's Mental Health Week shines a spotlight on the importance of young people's mental health – and it's never seemed more relevant than it does in 2021.

Find out more at [www.childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk](http://www.childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk)