



The Avenue Infant School

FRIDAY UPDATE

Friday 22nd March 2024



In celebration assembly today we said well done to the following children, who received **Special Awards** and special gold Headteacher's Award sticker:

Tymon (Beech class) - for always showing all our Avenue values.

Arpita (Hazel class) - for working hard to use new vocabulary in maths.

Maiza (Maple class) - for being more confident and independent with her learning.

Aman (Cherry class) - for persevering in handwriting practice and always being a happy, smiley face in the class.

Ellie (Willow class) - for consistently working hard in phonics.

Yahya (Oak class) - for trying so hard with his independent writing this week.



Class Accolades

Hazel Class - Miss Morris was impressed with your use of new vocabulary to explain answers.

Cherry Class - Miss Startin is proud of your perseverance with our innovated writing - the adults were so impressed.

Maple Class - Mrs Bolter was impressed with your understanding of directional language in maths.

Oak Class - Miss Cotter and Mrs Brown are proud of your independent writing this week.

Each class was presented with their Class Accolade certificate and earned two class ticks. Well done everyone!

WHAT'S ON NEXT WEEK (Spring 2 Week 5):

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| Monday 25th | - Rock Steady Concert 9.15am
- FOTAS Easter Raffle - Facebook Live approx.4pm |
| Tuesday 26th | - Year 2 P.E
- Easter bonnet competition |
| Wednesday 27th | - Reception trip to Chester House
- Play & Perform club 3.15 - 4.15pm |
| Thursday 28th | - Year 1 P.E.
- Reception treat day (Pj's and teddy bears)
- Singing Group to local care home
- END OF TERM. Pupils return to school Monday 15th April 8.50am |

LETTERS / EMAILS HOME THIS WEEK:

Reception Trip
information letter

Reception Class treat
letter

Values
tokens total
this week:
157



As part of our commitment to safeguarding, it is important that we ensure that parents/carers are as informed as possible. This week we will be focusing on another wider aspect of safeguarding.

Top tips for: Encouraging open conversations at home

Cultural and technological changes have made the experiences of today's children vastly different to our own childhoods; it can be challenging to engage youngsters in open, honest conversation – especially about more sensitive topics. This, combined with many children's instinct to avoid “rocking the boat”, can make it difficult to stay up to date with the goings on in their lives.

However, it's hugely important that trusted adults still offer an empathetic ear and feel able to encourage young people to open up about their day-to-day activities. This guide provides ten top tips for promoting open conversations with children – helping to make sure there's someone they know they can turn to in times of need.

A larger version of these guides can be downloaded from our school Facebook page. <https://www.facebook.com/TheAvenueInfantSchool/>

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.



#WakeUpWednesday®

The National College



@wake_up_weds



/www.thenationalcollege



@wake.up.wednesday



@wake.up.weds