

Wednesday 3 February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

As this week is 'Mental Health Week' I wanted to write to you and say well done and thank you. I know that teaching the children at home whilst also juggling your own work commitments is exceptionally challenging and can sometimes be overwhelming. I also understand that we have high expectations and that we provide a timetable of lessons and activities that reflect what we do at school, and some days, this just is not possible for you and your child to complete at home. The wellbeing of our children is always paramount and just because the majority of our children are not currently at school we want you to know that we are still here for you and your child just as much as if we were seeing you daily.

One thing to consider is that children in the Early Years of schooling are always learning and developing. If you veer from the timetable because it isn't working for you today, there are still so many other ways that your child can continue to learn. I would like to share with you some ideas for learning that are not listed on our timetable, but will still provide valuable life lessons and time for quality interactions with your child.

### **Go for a walk**

Going for a walk is not only beneficial for your mental health but also your child's. It also provides you with time for conversation and skills away from screens and home learning and can be done around your own work commitments too. Consider questions such as:

*What can you see?*

*What can you hear?*

*Look at these two flowers/trees, what is the same? What is different?*

*Can you find 5 sticks and put them in size order?*

### **Cook or bake together**

This doesn't have to be anything fancy- although it might be! Once a week you could let your child choose a meal that they would like to cook with you or they could help you to make their own lunch. You could talk about healthy foods and treats and why it is important that we drink water. Children learning to use tools in the kitchen such as a peeler, grater and knives safely are all extremely important life skills. Consider questions such as:

*What should we use to...(cut this bread)?*

*How many...(Slices of cheese)?*

*How many people are we cooking for?*

*Can you remind me how we made this meal? What ingredients did we use?*

*What could you do differently next time?*

### **Gardening**

You could give your child a small budget of £1 - £2 to buy some seeds for the garden. Discuss with your child what they can and can't afford to buy with the budget that you have set.

Allow them to make choices about what they would like to plant. Consider questions such as:

*What would you like to grow? Can you tell me why?*

*What will happen if we plant this seed?*

*What tools do we need?*

*Can you draw me a picture of what the plant will look like when it has grown?*

*How can we tell what will grow?*

There are also so many other life skills that you and your child learn together such as; how to know if something can be recycled, how to tie a shoelace and how to make their bed. Not all lessons are learnt in the classroom and supporting your child with other areas of their learning is just as beneficial. I will be adding a post to Tapestry with further questions stems and also further skills that your child may enjoy learning.

Please do speak to your child's class teacher if you are worried about your child's mental health. We are aware that some days a different type of learning may be happening at home which is completely fine. We are here to support you.

All my best,  
Verity Over  
EYFS Lead