



CURIOSITY, COMPASSION, COURAGE

October and November 2022

Firstly I feel that I should apologise that I didn't send out a newsletter closer to the end of October as I usually would, but I hope that you will have seen lots of the news and updates on Seesaw and Facebook over the last few weeks.

Kennet Valley continues to be the vibrant and creative place that we all know and love - something that I am immensely proud of as the head of the school. Although Ruthie and Suzanne can find it slightly frustrating, as they often can't locate me in my office, I love walking around the school and joining the children in class to find out what they are doing. It is one of the joys of my job - talking to individual pupils about their learning and their experiences of the school.

This is also echoed by staff and governors, who as part of their subject leadership or links visits, regularly talk to the children to find out what life is like if you are a pupil in the school. These conversations help to highlight what we are doing well within the school and what else we could add to make the school an even better place.



Over the next two weeks we will be holding the Autumn Parents' Evenings, so that you can come in and find out more about how your child/ren have settled into their new year groups, what they are getting on well with, what their next steps are and how else you could help them at home. While you are in the school, I will be asking you to complete a quick informal survey - all about what else we could help you with. It will be a minute of your time as all you will need to do is stick stickers onto a chart as 'votes', and possibly write a sentence or two.

As we move into the Christmas period the school will become increasingly busy (and hopefully glittery). You should have received a copy of the dates list last week. As a team we will endeavour not to make any changes from this list, but would ask you to keep your eyes on Seesaw, Parentmail and the Community Page, as we will post any additions or changes on all of these platforms. I would ask that when you see any date additions or changes, that you also post them onto any class WhatsApp groups that you may have to ensure all are kept in the loop.

While writing about the communication platforms that we use, please could I remind everyone to check all sections of these - especially the Forms and Payments/Shop sections as this is how you can give permission for your child to attend activities and trips. Without your permission, and possibly payment, we can not take your children out and about. This means that they will miss out on opportunities that will extend their learning in new and exciting ways.

As you will have seen on the Dates list, this year the Reception, Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3's nativity production will be held at Sarah and Mark Hues' Barn, while the Year 4, 5 and 6's Carol Service will be held in West Overton Church. We will send out more information about these in a week or so.



I am looking forward to seeing as many of you as possible over the term and at the various events we are running. Kind regards - Mrs Russell

A few Reminders

While writing please could I send a few reminders to you ...

As the weather gets colder, please can you ensure that your child has a warm wet-weather coat in school everyday, with a hat and gloves. They also need their High-Viz jackets every day - if your child has lost theirs, please pop into the office who will be able to provide you with a new one.

Please could you also ensure that you put your child's name into ALL of the coats that they wear to school. We have a huge amount of un-named lost property at the moment.

Finally, please could I remind everyone not to send products into school which have peanuts/nuts in them - we have had several children bringing in peanut butter sandwiches and snack bars with peanuts or nuts in.

Winter Illnesses and Attendance

As part of my job as head, I regularly look at the attendance of every child in the school. AT the moment we have a large group of children whose attendance is well below the national average of 96%. This is a concern to us as it means that children are missing out on vital education.

But I also know and understand that there are lots of horrible bugs/illness going around at the moment, and that there are times when children should be at home rather than in school ...

- If they have been sick or have diarrhoea, they should be at home for 48 hours AFTER the last time they are sick.
- If they have a raised temperature (over 37.8°) they should stay at home for 24 hours after the temperature drops. This does not include temperature dropping due to medications like Calpol.
- If they have tested positive for Covid. In this situation the current guidance suggests that children should stay at home while they are feeling unwell. They do not have to stay at home for a set period of time.

If your child is generally under the weather with a cold/cough, you can send them into school. We will, of course, contact you during the day if we are concerned that your child has become more poorly, if their temperature becomes raised or if they are struggling to cope with a cough. It is important that they are then picked up from school as promptly as possible.

Anxiety in children.

One of the main things that is currently being discussed more in all school settings, especially since the Covid-19 lockdowns, is the high level of anxiety and worries that some children are feeling. At Kennet Valley this is a concern to us, and all the staff are in agreement that one of the things that we must all help with is how to ensure that children have the right tools to help themselves with these feelings, which can be very distressing to them and their families. It is simply not enough for any of us to try to take away the anxiety - we can't - but we can (working with them and you) help them to understand their feelings more and what they can do about it. Unfortunately there is no 'magic wand' to stop anyone feeling worried, I wish there was, but there are lots of helpful tips that children (and adults) can use when they need to.

Worries at school can often be linked to learning, especially when children are finding a new concept more tricky to learn. It is really important to remember that learning is hard - if it is easy then you are really just practising what you already know. While reading this newsletter think about the last time you had to do something new ... hard wasn't it! You may have had to practise and practise, making mistakes along the way, before it was easy to do and you felt more confident. This is what our children might feel on a daily basis ... and this is good! This means that they are working hard to learn and grow, and although they may feel uncomfortable while doing this, it doesn't mean that it is wrong. This concept of celebrating the struggle may feel counter-intuitive but it is the right thing to do - celebrate the small steps in your child's journey not just the big successes.

To help with this I am currently talking to several organisations to try to organise a parents workshop on how to help children when they are feeling anxious, low or worried. In the meantime, I have found the following information (which I have included at the back of the newsletter) that may help you as a parent when talking to your child. It comes from [Supporting A Child With Anxiety | Tips & Advice | YoungMinds](#)

We are always here to help as much as we can - please come in to talk to us when you need to. Some worries or issues can take time to work through and help with, but I know that all the staff are committed to helping every child in the school. We will also signpost you to other organisations to support and help as well.

Reading Champions and School Council News

As you will hopefully have seen, the Reading Champions (and Mrs Byford) were amazed and delighted to receive a letter from Camilla, the Queen Consort. This letter was in reply to the wonderful letters that the Reading Champions had sent to her. We are still crossing our fingers that she may be able to come and visit the school one day.

Mrs Byford is meeting with the Reading Champions regularly to talk about how we can further increase the love of reading within the school. She has been looking at the library and reading scheme closely and will be announcing some changes in the coming weeks - these will include a change to the non-fiction books that are in the library so that they are updated.



Mrs Byford has also been developing the reading areas around the school. One of the newest additions to these is a 'Reading Timeline' in the back corridor. This shows the books that the children have been reading in class and also extra information such as examples of the letters sent to the Queen Consort. Please pop in to have a look.



The school council have been extremely busy this year, running two charity events already which have raised over £400. I know that Mrs Hues and Mrs Bushnell, who work with the school council, are tremendously proud of how this group of young people work together.

The next projects for the school council will include running a stall at the Christmas Fayre and more fund raising in the spring terms.

Parent Basic

First Aid Evening



We are delighted to be offering a Parents' First Aid Evening on

Monday 23rd January 2023 at 6pm.

The evening will be run by Georgie Morse from Little Soldiers First Aid and will cover

- Baby & Child CPR
- Choking
- Common Injuries



Georgie has led several first aid days with our Year 6 children in the summer terms. She is a trained Paediatric Nurse with over 12 years experience in the Emergency Department. Georgie set up Little Soldiers First Aid with the aim to empower parents and child carers with the knowledge and confidence they need, should an emergency arise.

There are 14 places available for this evening.

Tickets cost £13 including tea/coffee and biscuits.

Please book through Parentmail (PAYMENTS then SHOP)

CHRISTMAS CAROLS

MINCE PIES & MULLED WINE

WEDNESDAY
DEC | 7 | 7:30pm

THE FARM AT AVEBURY

SHARE OF PROCEEDS TO KVS

FOR TICKETS
WWW.THEFARMATAVEBURY.CO.UK/UPCOMING-EVENTS
KVS DISCOUNT CODE: KVS-TICKET

Nativity / Church Service Dates

Don't forget that the Reception/Year1/Year2/Year3 Nativity is on Thursday 8th December (at Sarah and Mark Hues' Barn in West Kennett). Year 4, 5 and 6 will be hosting a traditional Carol and Storytelling Church Service on Tuesday 13th Dec at West Overton Church. ALL Welcome.

stay & play

At

Kennet Valley C of E VA Primary School

Lockridge, Marlborough, Wiltshire, SN8 4EL

Children aged 2, 3 or 4 years old are welcome to join our current Reception / Year 1 class to stay and play!

9.30 - 10.30am

Thursday 1st December '22

Tuesday 13th December '22

Monday 9th January '23

Wednesday 1st February '23

Monday 27th March '23

While your children are playing, please join other parents to have tea and cake.

For More Information please call Mrs Russell or Mrs McQue on 01672861202 or email office@kennetvalley.wilts.sch.uk

Trips and Visits

Firstly I would like to say a HUGE thank you to everyone for all your help with the transport for trips, visits and sports events. I absolutely understand that this can be very difficult to organise around work.

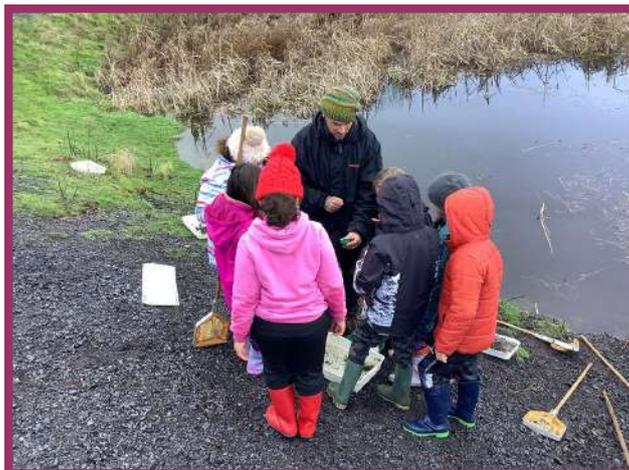
One of the main reasons that we ask for your help is the huge cost of coaches. An example of this is the Advent Trip to Avebury. When we asked for coach quotes to get the children in years 3-6 to Avebury and back, the cost would have meant that we would have been asking families for almost £12+ per child - something which we know that many of our families could struggle with in the current climate.

Having listened to feedback for a group of parents we will be changing the procedures for trips in Term 3 and 4. From January we will be asking you for permission (and payment if needed), and asking you if you can take your own child plus how many extra children you could help to transport. Ruthie will then sort the children out so that we can get children to the event/venue. I hope that this will alleviate some of the concerns and worries about transport to trips and make it easier for all.

Charterhouse Residential

I am sure that many of you will have seen the wonderful photographs from the Year 3 and 4 residential trip to Charterhouse near Cheddar. These children went away for 3 days with Mrs McQue, Mrs Alexander and Miss Hogan, and took part in some amazing adventures, which included caving, gorge walking, pond dipping, rocket building and a talent show. I know, from feedback from parents and children, that they had a tremendous time away.

The next residential is in March when the Year 5 and 6 children will set off to Kilve Court in Somerset.



What is anxiety?

Anxiety is a feeling of worry or fear that is experienced as a combination of physical sensations, thoughts and feelings.

All children and young people feel worried sometimes, and this is a normal part of growing up. At certain points, such as on their first day of school or before an exam, young people may become more worried, but will soon be able to calm down and feel better.

Anxiety can become a problem when a young person feels stuck in it, or when it feels like an overwhelming, distressing or unmanageable experience. If this kind of worrying goes on for a long time, it can leave a young person feeling exhausted and isolated, and limit the things they feel able to do.

If your child is struggling with anxiety, there are things you can do to help them – including providing emotional support, working on practical strategies together and finding the right professional help if they need it.

What makes young people anxious?

A young person may feel anxious for a number of different reasons, depending on the individual. If your child is feeling unmanageable amounts of worry and fear, this is often a sign that something in their life isn't right and they need support to work out what the problem is.

The following kinds of things can make some children and young people feel more anxious:

- experiencing lots of change in a short space of time, such as moving house or school
- having responsibilities that are beyond their age and development, for example caring for other people in their family
- being around someone who is very anxious, such as a parent
- struggling at school, including feeling overwhelmed by work, exams or peer groups
- experiencing family stress around things like housing, money and debt
- going through distressing or traumatic experiences in which they do not feel safe, such as being bullied or witnessing or experiencing abuse.

How to help your child in an anxious moment

When your child is in the middle of a very anxious moment, they may feel frightened, agitated or worried about having a panic attack. The important thing to do in the moment is to help them calm down and feel safe.

These strategies can help:

 <p>Breathe slowly and deeply together.</p> <p>You can count slowly to five as you breathe in, and then five as you breathe out. If this is too much, try starting with shorter counts. If it works for them, gradually encourage your child to breathe out for one or two counts longer than they breathe in, as this can help their body relax.</p>	 <p>Sit with them and offer calm physical reassurance.</p> <p>Feeling you nearby, or holding your hand or having a cuddle if it's possible, can be soothing.</p>	 <p>Try using all five senses together.</p> <p>Connecting with what they can see, touch, hear, smell and taste can bring them closer to the present moment and reduce the intensity of their anxiety. You might think together about five things they can see, four things they can touch, three things they can hear, two things they can smell and one thing they can taste.</p>
 <p>Reassure them that the anxiety will pass and that they will be okay.</p> <p>It can be helpful to describe it as a wave that they can ride or surf until it peaks, breaks and gets smaller.</p>	 <p>Ask them to think of a safe and relaxing place or person in their mind.</p> <p>If you haven't tried this before, agree with them when they're feeling calm what this place or person is. It could be their bedroom, a grandparent's house, a favourite place in nature or somewhere they've been on holiday. Sometimes holding a memento of a relaxing place, like a seashell or pebble, can help.</p>	 <p>Encourage them to do something that helps them to feel calmer.</p> <p>This could be running, walking, listening to music, painting, drawing or colouring-in, writing in a journal, watching a favourite film or reading a favourite book.</p>

Remember that everyone is different, and that over time you and your child can work together to find the things that work best for them in these moments.

How to help your child manage their anxiety

Outside of moments when your child is feeling particularly anxious or panicky, there are things you can do over time to help them manage their anxiety and feel better.

A lot of these strategies are about helping your child to understand themselves and find out what works for them. The more confident they feel about helping themselves when things are hard, the more they will believe in their ability to cope – helping to reduce feelings of panic.

- ① In a calmer moment, talk with your child about their anxiety. 
- ① Think together about whether there's anything in particular that's making them feel anxious. 
- ① Help your child to recognise the signs that tell them they're getting anxious. 
- ① Think together about the activities that help them to express themselves and reduce their anxiety. 
- ① Try activities that help them to relax, such as mindfulness, yoga or meditation. 
- ① Make a worry box or self-soothe box. 
- ① Help them do the daily things we know are important for our mental health. 
- ① Encourage them to cut out stimulants. 
- ① Spend quality time together and talk about other things. 
- ① Seek professional help if you're worried about your child's mental health and things aren't getting better. 