



# Aston St. Mary's Newsletter

*Our value this half term is Hope*

[www.astonmarys.herts.sch.uk](http://www.astonmarys.herts.sch.uk)

20<sup>th</sup> January 2023

*Every child is a treasure - small in size, growing in God's love.*

## Diary Dates

**Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> January:** School nurse visit (Shackadell)

**Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> January:** Year Four visit to Bayfordbury Observatory (5pm)

**Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> February:** Year Five and Six visit to Bayfordbury Observatory (5pm)

**Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> February:** Non-uniform day to raise money for ASD.

**Friday 10<sup>th</sup> February:** PTFA Valentines Discos (KS1 5-6pm, KS2 6:30-7:30pm)

**Monday 13<sup>th</sup>-Friday 17<sup>th</sup> February:** Half term break

**Monday 27<sup>th</sup> February:** Shackadell Class to Gordon Craig Theatre.

**Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> March:** World Book Day

**Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> March:** PTFA Aston's Got Talent (Village Hall)

**Monday 13<sup>th</sup> March:** Parent Teacher Consultations 3:30pm-6:00pm

**Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> March:** Parent Teacher Consultations 3:30pm – 7:20pm

**Friday 24<sup>th</sup> March:** Reward Day

**Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> March:** Easter Breakfast

**Friday 31<sup>st</sup> March:** Easter Service. Egg rolling and decoration competitions. Term finishes at 1:00pm. PTFA Easter Egg hunt after school

**Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> April:** Children return to school for the summer term

**Friday 28<sup>th</sup> April:** PTFA Non-uniform day – Coronation Hamper Donations

**Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> April:** Choir to sing at The Royal Albert Hall

**Friday 5<sup>th</sup> May:** PTFA Non-uniform day. Coronation Jolly Jars and Rainbow Raffle Hamper Draw

**Monday 8<sup>th</sup> May:** School Closed – Coronation Bank Holiday

**Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> May – Friday 12<sup>th</sup> May:** Year Six SATs assessments

**Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> July:** PTFA Summer Fete

As this is our first newsletter of 2023, we would like to wish all our families a happy and successful new year. A new year brings with it the hope and optimism of new beginnings; we will be exploring the value of hope in our class and school worship over the coming weeks. Towards the end of this newsletter, we have included some ideas which you may find helpful should you wish to explore the value of 'hope' and have fun together with your child at home.



As you will see from the dates list, we have a busy and exciting term ahead - including trips and extra-curricular opportunities. Years Four, Five and Six are soon to spend an evening at Bayfordbury Observatory and Shackadell Class are heading to the Gordon Craig theatre for a performance of 'Tales from Acorn Wood' by one of their favourite authors – Julia Donaldson. Stevenage FC are now offering after school football coaching to children in Years One – Six. Netball club starts after school this Friday for pupils in Years Four – Six. Cookery club continues to be very popular and is always well-attended by all classes. Early in February, a team of Year Five and Six pupils will be representing Aston St. Mary's at the Hertfordshire Cross Country Championships; they are currently training for this every morning with Miss Avis. Good luck to the team.

We wish all of our families a happy and relaxing weekend.

## ACADEMIC YEAR 2022/2023

### SPRING TERM

Thursday 5th January 2023 to Friday 31st March 2023

**HALF TERM Break** - Monday 13th February 2023 to Friday 17th February 2023

### SUMMER TERM

Tuesday 18th April 2023 to Wednesday 19 July 2023

**Monday 8<sup>th</sup> May: SCHOOL CLOSED Coronation Day**

**HALF TERM Break** - Monday 29th May 2023 to Friday 2nd June 2023

### **INSET DAYS – SCHOOL CLOSED**

Monday 17th April 2023

Thursday 20th July 2023 and Friday 21st July 2023

## School Meals

To order school meals, please log onto your School Gateway account via the website or the app.

**DINNER MONEY FEES £2.90 per meal**



**Merit Certificates** were awarded to:

Finley, Isadora, Cotis, Ben, Jack, Kyra, Izzy, Oliver, Eli, Ellis, Pixie, Jadon, Vaaris, Flynn, Lucas, Ted, George, Azariah, Orlagh, Jack, Darcie, Nathaniel, Liam, Daniel, Teddy, Paris, Harry B, Evie



**Shining Stars** were awarded to:

Alfie, Jessica, Ollie, Vaaris

## A Thought from Reverend Jenny:

Jesus assures us God is with us in all the change and uncertainty of life, giving hope and purpose to all who are willing to listen and follow his way of love. The baby born in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago comes into our lives as we pray and worship and share the bread and wine of Holy Communion...

*The Maker of the stars and sea becomes a Child on earth for me.  
God was man in Palestine and lives today in Bread and Wine.*

(John Betjeman)

May God deepen our faith in Him.



**"The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, you more places you will go."**

**- Dr. Seuss**

At Aston St. Mary's, we work hard to instill a passion for reading in all our pupils. To put it simply, reading increases life chances. This is why reading is always prioritised in our school. It is a skill that most of us take for granted and is essential for being able to get on in life. As a child grows up, being able to read well not only enables them to discover new facts and to learn at school, but also opens them up to a world of new ideas, stories and opportunities.

Research shows children who read for pleasure will achieve more than those who don't in later life. Studies have proved that an early love of reading can have life-long benefits resulting in academic success at GCSE level, 'A' level and beyond as well as higher income earning potential in adult life.

On starting school, higher achieving pupils already understand an average of 7,100 root words whilst others may know 3,000 or fewer. The importance of spoken language cannot be underestimated; if a child aged five has poor oral language, the reading gap widens by an average of five years by the time the child is fourteen. Pupils who come to school with a reduced vocabulary find it more challenging to access meaning from reading and therefore read less because they find it challenging. As a result, they learn fewer words. On the other hand, pupils with wider vocabularies read more because it is less challenging and as a result further increase their vocabularies.

To truly learn new words in the course of reading, children need to:

- Read widely enough to encounter a lot of unfamiliar words,
- Read texts complex enough to contain a number of unfamiliar words,
- Have the skills to infer meaningful information from the context,
- Encounter the word(s) a number of times.

*"You can't build a vocabulary without reading. You can't meet friends if you...stay at home by yourself all the time. In the same way, you can't build up a vocabulary if you never meet any new words. And to meet them you must read. The more you read the better..." Rudolf Flesch*

We are proud of our well-stocked library and class book corners at Aston St. Mary's; these are being continually updated with new titles and authors for our pupils to enjoy. Please do encourage your child to read daily at home and to talk about their reading.

**You really cannot give your child a greater gift in life then finding time to enjoy books together – no matter how busy our family lives can be, a few minutes with a book is absolutely key!**

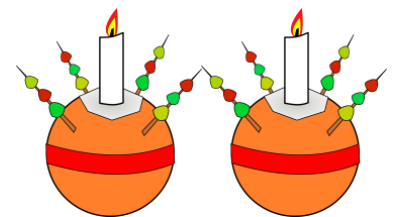




# Celebrating Christingle at Aston St. Mary's



We enjoyed our Christingle celebration on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> January. We made our own Christingles in the morning and learnt about the symbolism of each part. In the afternoon our Christingle worship was led by Mrs Bird.

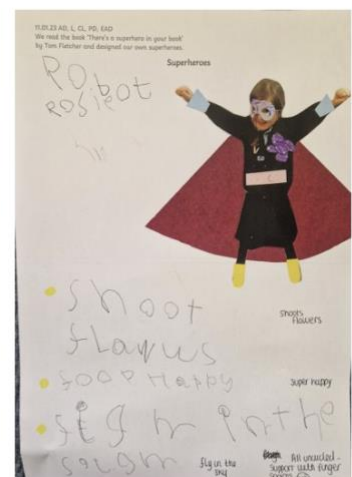
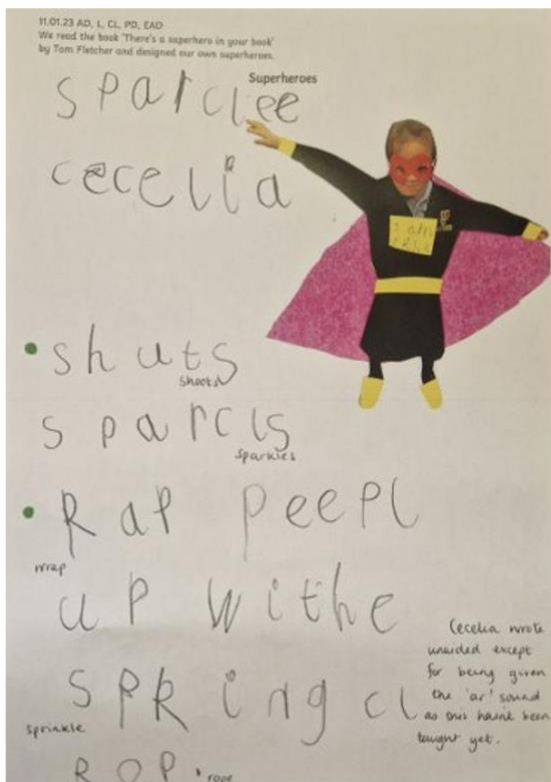
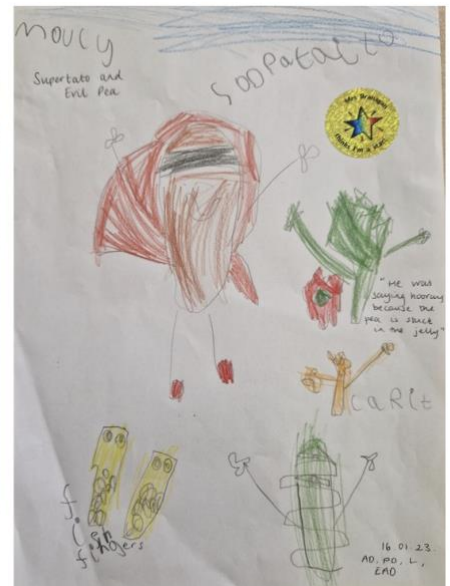




# Class News

## Shackadell Class

In Shackadell Class, we have come back to school with a bang, a crash and a wham! We are learning all about Superheroes and have been creating our own mini-me heroes! We chose a super name, made masks, shared costume ideas and decided what kinds of powers we would have. We have also been creating costumes during child-initiated learning by using large pieces of fabric and pegs. We have been enjoying 'There is a Superhero in your book' by Tom Fletcher and 'Supertato' by Sue Hendra and Paul Linnet. We made 'Supertato' story maps to help us to remember the story and even drew our own ideas.

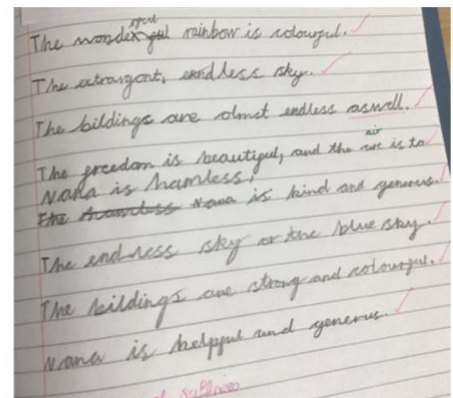
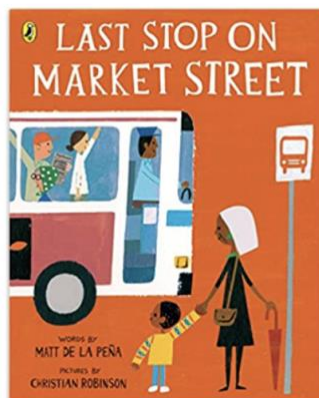
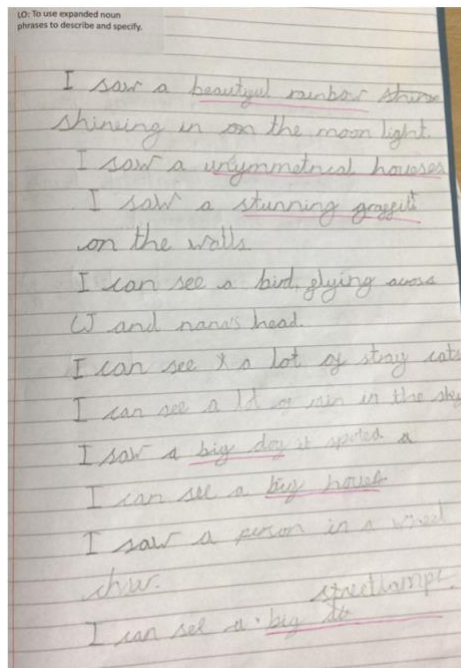


# Class News

## Peartree Class

In our English lessons this half term, we have been reading the book 'Last Stop on Market Street' by Matt De La Pena. We felt empathy for characters, used role-play, learned about past tenses, spotted and created expanded noun-phrases and looked at suffixes and how they change the meaning of the root words. We then made a story board and wrote a diary recount as if we were the main character. We will be creating our own version of the book in context to our own life experience.

In History, we have been learning about how historians use objects to help them find information about the past. We had some mystery objects and had to think about what they told us about Queen Elizabeth I. We learned that she banned her courtiers from wearing cloaks so they could easily get out their swords if she was attacked; she passed a law that you had to wear woollen hats on Sunday to support the wool industry; she rode horseback rather than in a carriage. She was famous for her public speaking to her subjects; she spoke six different languages and William Shakespeare was one of England's most famous playwrights who wrote and performed for the queen.





# Class News

## Haffydown Class

It has been lovely to have Haffydown back after the festive break and we have dived back into our learning.

We are continuing our learning about Antarctica. Last week, the children created their own glaciers and icebergs from playdough to understand how they are formed. Below are some pictures that show the different models they have made.

Our book 'The Emperor's Egg' has tied in with our learning about Antarctica and the class have been imagining what it would be like for the male emperor penguins, who cannot eat (for 2 months!) whilst they look after their egg.

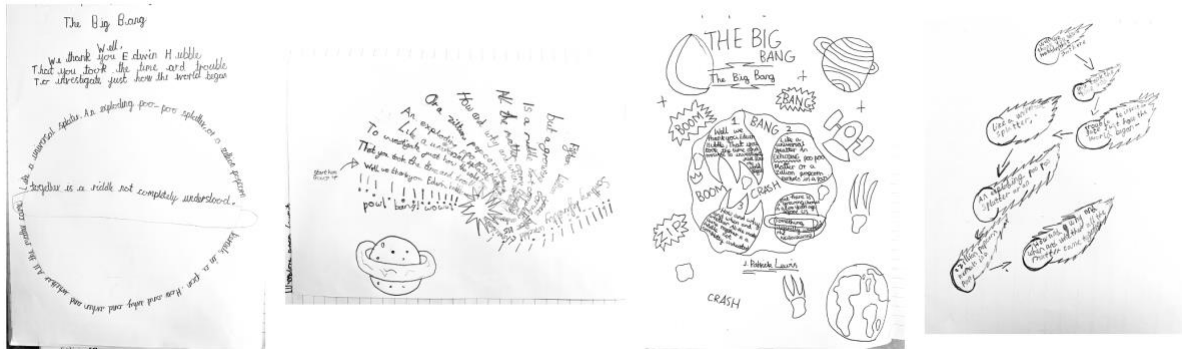
This half term, the children will be doing forest school which will be a wonderful experience for them. They started off forest school by listening to different bird song and how to identify the different birds.



# Class News

## Puddlebridge Class

In English, we are enjoying our new poetry unit, based on the anthology *Spaced Out* by Brian Moses and James Carter. We have looked at a range of different poems already and have considered their organisation and structure. We were inspired by some of the shape poems and had fun re-designing the poem, *The Big Bang* by J. Patrick Lewis.



Year Five have already shown an impressive understanding of equivalent fractions in Maths and are looking forward to building on this to deepen their understanding. We have also been impressed by Year Four's understanding of measuring, estimating and calculating with different measures.

In Science, Year Four have started learning about the digestive system. In our first lesson, we learned all about the purpose of our teeth! We used mirrors and plasticine to build models of our own incisors, canines, premolars and molars. We built on this this week and can now describe the journey of food as it travels through our bodies.





# Class News

## Danes Class

We have had a busy start to the term and have made lots of progress in our learning already. This term is a very important term for Year Six as they prepare for Secondary transition in September and their SATs assessments in May. The children have a fantastic attitude to learning and are always keen to achieve their very best.

Dear Diary 11/1/98

Today was our day! Ma and Spike had had enough. The blazing sun has been beating down on us for too long. We were setting out with a plan to go up to the water tower.

We set off and Spike led as usual. I didn't really want to go because everyone in town had been the fattest talking about it. Nobody knew who made it or where it came from. We climbed up the sweltering surface. The view from the top was amazing. I could see the whole town.

Spike got up there first than me. I opened the hatch and looked down. A terrible sensation shivered through my body. There was greenery a mossy green and liquid. Spike started then climbed down and I stayed on the ladder in my hand. We climbed back up but I couldn't find my t-shirt, Spike's clothes were washed behind the door so mine must have flown away.

Spike returned for me back to my house and got another t-shirt. Whilst I stayed on the ladder. The swirling surface took my back so I climbed down the water tower and sat under a tree in the shade. I saw Spike running back with a t-shirt in his hand. I put on the shirt and walked back, never wanting to go back.

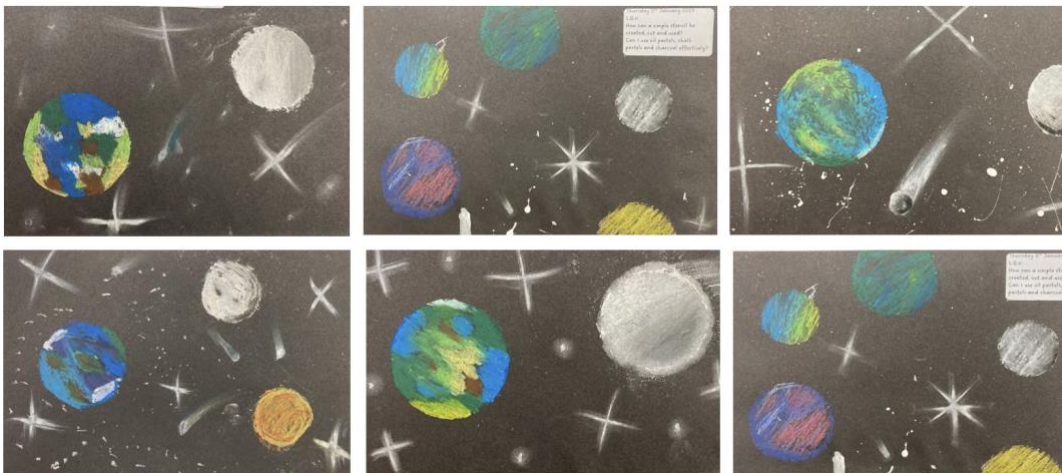
At the start of the book, Ade wishes it was a Monday instead of Saturday - he says he wishes it was a "cold grey Monday" when he would have to force himself out of bed. In the book, it also mentions the name blutchers. We don't know who this is, or what this is. The author uses a range of pronouns like they and them, this makes the reader question. Whos they? Whos them? What are they going to do? In the book Polly Ho-Yen talks alot about before and after, this leaves the reader questioning. Before what? After what?

In English, we are focussing on mystery and suspense. We began by reading 'The Watertower' by Gary Crew. The children wrote diary entries as if they were one of the boys in the story. We have now moved on to the longer book 'Boy in the Tower' by Polly Ho-Yen. We have been analysing how the author builds mystery and suspense at the beginning of the book.

Algebraic reasoning is the focus of our learning in Maths. We have been using Cuisenaire to model abstract calculations and build upon our understanding of the order of operations (BODMAS/BIDMAS).

In Science, we have begun our learning about the Earth in Space; we are very excited about our forthcoming trip to Bayfordbury Observatory.

In Art, we are learning about the work of Peter Thorpe who created space-themed pictures on an abstract background. We began by experimenting with oil pastels, chalk and charcoal to create these fantastic pictures!





This term we will be focussing in school on the value HOPE.  
We hope your family will find these ideas helpful as you explore the value and have fun together.

## TALK TOGETHER about Hope

The value **hope** is about much more than just wishing as hard as we can that things will be different. It is about believing that the world can be better and being prepared to do something!

The character Noah in the story opposite, was willing to look silly in front of his neighbours by building a huge boat even though he lived miles from the ocean, because he **hoped** and believed that God had a plan. As a family you may want to talk about:

- your **hopes** and dreams for the future
- what you can do to make them happen
- what others need to do

## THINK TOGETHER Words of Wisdom

"Learn from yesterday, live for today,  
**hope** for tomorrow"

*Albert Einstein*



## READ TOGETHER... God's Special Promise

The world that God had made was a beautiful, colourful place – brimming with life and bursting with good things. It was his precious gift given with all his love. God **hoped** that people would care for it and care for each other but now they were doing just the opposite! They were quarrelling, fighting, and spoiling everything. God saw that there was only one thing to do; to begin all over again.

But God also saw that not everyone on the earth was wicked. There was one man and his family trying to do their best to look after the world and to look after each other and to listen to him. The man's name was Noah. God told Noah to build an ark – a huge, magnificent boat. Noah was mystified because he lived miles from the ocean and was not sure why he would ever need a boat. As word got around about the enormous boat Noah's neighbours made his life miserable with their taunts and jibes. Sometimes Noah was tempted to lose **hope**, but he knew from experience that he could trust God for the future, so he and his family kept on building.

When the work was finally finished God told Noah to gather two of every kind of creature as well as all his family together and set up home in the ark. It took a long time but Noah had to just keep on trusting God. And then the first raindrops began to fall, followed by showers, then torrents and finally floods. On and on it rained for forty days and forty nights. When Noah was beginning to lose **hope** of ever seeing the sun again, the rain suddenly stopped. Noah sent out a dove and when it did not return he knew that the bird had found dry land on which to build a nest. They were safe at last!

And then a wonderful thing happened. God sent a rainbow - a beautiful, colourful bow in the sky. It was a sign of **hope** and promise. The world had been washed clean, and was all ready for a new beginning.

Bible story based on Genesis 6:1-9:17



## QUIZ Word Search

Find the words from the story of Noah.  
12 creatures are also hidden in the word search. They were on the boat!

- |       |          |         |
|-------|----------|---------|
| NOAH  | CREATURE | FORTY   |
| ARK   | DAYS     | HOPE    |
| BOAT  | DOVE     | NEST    |
| BUILD | FLOODS   | PROMISE |
|       | GOD      | RAINBOW |
|       |          | WORLD   |

P	R	O	M	I	S	E	T
A	A	C	G	K	D	U	P
R	I	B	F	R	O	G	J
R	N	J	H	G	O	D	D
L	Q	R	O	B	O	A	T
G	O	A	T	O	U	A	M
D	L	R	O	W	Z	I	H
P	M	K	C	A	M	E	L
O	L	I	O	N	E	V	O
E	R	U	T	A	E	R	C
V	X	A	Y	G	I	R	A



## The Basket of Dreams

This beautiful sculpture is on the hills overlooking Lake Wakatipu in New Zealand. It is called the Basket of Dreams and is made from a spiral of steel. Spirals can remind us that we have a choice about the way we live. We can either travel inwards towards self-centredness where we only try to think of ourselves or we can travel outwards towards the world and other people.



## FAMILY FOCUS

### Spiral of Hope

Start with a circle of paper or light card and draw a spiral. On the spiral write a **hope** or dream that you have that will make the world a safer, cleaner or more healthy place to live. Cut along the lines until you get to the centre, leaving a circle in the middle. Make a hole in the middle so you can hang your spiral from a thread. (You may want to practice drawing a good spiral on some scrap paper before you start.)



## FASCINATING FACTS

### Rainbows

After a shower of rain we sometimes see a magnificent rainbow arched across the sky.

- rainbows are the reflection of the sun in the rain droplets in the sky
- they are curved because raindrops are round
- they are multi-coloured because each raindrop splits the sunlight into a spectrum of colours
- the colours of the rainbow are always in the same order – red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet – and red is highest in the sky
- an easy way to remember the order is using the mnemonic '**R**ichard **O**f **Y**ork **G**ave **B**attle **I**n **V**ain'. The first letter of each word is also the first letter of the colour.



## HALL OF FAME

### Sir David Attenborough

Sir David Attenborough is best known as a natural history film maker. He has made expeditions all over the world to watch and film wildlife in its natural habitat. His many TV documentary programmes have allowed us all to understand the wonder of nature and the importance of conserving the natural environment if species are to survive.

Sir David has shown us the impact humans have too often made on the natural world and the consequent struggle of wildlife to survive. His **hope** is that we leave future generations a planet that is healthy and inhabitable by all species.



## HOME-SCHOOL CHALLENGE

### Make a 'hopes and dreams' catcher

Dream catchers are traditionally made from a looped willow branch onto which a net or web is woven. The net is then decorated with feathers, beads and other decorations. According to American Indian folklore, as we sleep, dreams are caught in the net and with the first rays of sunlight any bad dreams are burned away.

Find a long twig that can be bent and tied to make a hoop or frame. Use natural string or thread stretched across the frame to make the net and then decorate it creatively to catch all the **hopes** and dreams you can!



# MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING

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**1 DAY CHAMPION COURSE  
FOR PARENTS & CARERS OF  
8 TO 18-YEAR-OLDS  
FREE TRAINING  
09:30AM - 16:00PM**

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## WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

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- AN UNDERSTANDING OF COMMON MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES AND HOW THEY CAN AFFECT YOUNG PEOPLE
- ABILITY TO SPOT SIGNS OF MENTAL ILL HEALTH IN YOUNG PEOPLE AND GUIDE THEM TO A PLACE OF SUPPORT
- KNOWLEDGE AND CONFIDENCE TO ADVOCATE FOR MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS
- SKILLS TO SUPPORT POSITIVE WELLBEING

## COURSE STRUCTURE

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SESSION 1- ABOUT, WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH AND MENTAL ILL HEALTH, STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION, DEPRESSION AND SUICIDE.

SESSION 2 MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS: ANXIETY, SELF-HARM, EATING DISORDERS, PSYCHOSIS, RECOVERY, RESILIENCE

## **BOOK YOUR PLACE HERE**

For further information please contact:  
[hweicbhv.schoolsmh@nhs.net](mailto:hweicbhv.schoolsmh@nhs.net)





# “Play and Learn”

How to support children with additional needs and young children in the Early Years to develop independent play skills to support learning



**When:** Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2023

**Time:** 4.00 - 5.30pm

**Where:** Woolgrove School, Pryor Way, Letchworth SG6 2PT

**Led by:** Vicky Litchfield, Deputy Head and EYFS Lead

**Cost:** £10 per person which includes a sample pack of resources

*Suitable for parents and professionals*

PDF resources will be available on the day to order at an additional cost. These cover a range of EYFS topics such as weather, celebrations, colours, toys etc. and the 7 areas of learning.

Book your place by emailing [training@woolgrove.herts.sch.uk](mailto:training@woolgrove.herts.sch.uk)

**Reference - PAL**

Payment can be made via Bank Transfer

Account name – Woolgrove School

Sort code – 77 05 04

Account number - 30689968