

11th March 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

Choral Speaking



Class 8 the winners of the whole school Choral Speaking Competition attended the 36th Choral Speaking Festival on Tuesday at the Oldham Coliseum. They performed 'This is England' by Hussain Manawar and 'If you catch a Firefly' by Lillian Moore. We would like to congratulate all the children and their teachers for a super performance. A super well done!

Attendance - Extended Leave

Taking holidays/extended leave in term time will affect a child's education as much as any other absence. The Headteacher and Governors expect attendance in school to be 100% (or as close to), unless there are exceptional or avoidable reasons for absence.

If an absence is not authorised, such as Extended leave, this will meet the criteria for a Penalty Notice fine to be issued from the Local Authority.

Parents and carers must be reminded that:

- Any request for leave of absence must be made to the Headteacher of your child's school in advance
- National studies have shown that there is a strong link between school attendance and attainment at school
- Poor attendance can seriously disrupt learning and is strongly discouraged especially at the start and end of the academic year and during assessment periods
- Any absence can have a real impact on the basic literacy and numeracy skills of some children
- Keeping children away from school for no good reason is a criminal offence

We thank all our families and celebrate with our children those that do have 100% attendance and those who are improving attendance. We work together to ensure the best achievement and attainment is possible for your child/ren.

The Walk to School Challenge

Well done to all our children who entered the badge design competition 2022. The challenge was to design a badge with an image 'If you could travel back in time, where would you go and what would you see?'

Well done to Husna Jamall - Class 8, Humera Jabeen - Class 10 and Umar Arshad - Class 10 who have been chosen to be sent off to the final competition. Their designs are fantastic and are pictured below from left to right.





Solihull Approach course for parents and carers

It's officially Spring!

Sparkle and shine with these fabulous PREPAID online courses from the Solihull Approach (NHS). See attached flyer for more details.

The crisis in Ukraine

Many of us are anxious about the news unfolding about the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Even if you're not directly affected, watching these events can be up-setting. Your child may not be watching the news, but they may still hear about these events in other ways, and this may cause anxiety for them too.



During this difficult time, we wanted to reach out to let you know what we are doing in school to support your child, and offer you guidance on how you can support them too.

Our school staff have dedicated time with children to share their questions and concerns about the events in an age-appropriate and sensitive way. We've included some useful resources attached to this newsletter to help families support any conversations you might have at home with your child.

We love Reading

We had so much fun during world book week last week, we saw some fantastic potato characters and costumes. Next week we are excited to welcome the poet Ian Bland into our school on Monday 14th March. He will be doing poetry workshops in each year group.



Spelling Shed Winners

LOOK at the top spellers from each class this week, they will be awarded with 5 dojo points each!
Well done if you have been practising lots at home!



Year 3

Class 1 - 'Jean Katze'

Class 2 - 'Miller Graven'

Class 3 - 'Aubrey Prague'

Please make sure your name is correctly shown and nick names are not ticked on your account.

Year 4

Class 4 - 'Ash Paylor'

Class 6 - Aleena Ali

Year 5

Class 7 - Fiza Zahra

Class 8 - Liaba Arshad

Class 9 - Khadija Y

Year 6

Class 10 - Hadid Mahmood

Class 12 - Mailha Mahmood



TT Rockstars - CELEBRATIONS!

The most accurate Class	Class 4
The most active class	Class 6
The most improved child	Amir Khan Cuevas Class 2
The most active child	Hasshim Muhammad Class 5



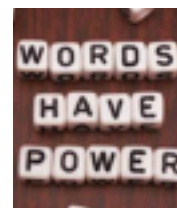
ATTENDANCE

Well done to class 10 for achieving over 96% attendance in the last week before the holidays.

Let's ensure our attendance rises once again.

Word Aware

This week's word is '**Vibrant**'. Please encourage your child to use this word when out and about and complete the activities, which Miss Varley will share on Class Dojo.



COVID UPDATE

Following the recent changes in guidance announced by the government on 21st February, we would like to clarify what you need to do if your child becomes ill.

From 24th February 2022, the legal requirement for people with COVID-19 to isolate ended. However, the Public Health and Government advice remains the same: if anyone has the main symptoms of COVID-19 or a positive test, they should stay at home and avoid contact with other people. If you have any symptoms of COVID-19 you are still advised to take a test.

The main symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- a new continuous cough
- a high temperature
- a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

We therefore remind you not to send your child into school if they have any of the symptoms of COVID-19, or if they have tested positive. If we feel your child has any of the 3 main symptoms of COVID-19, in order to protect the other pupils and staff, we will ask you to collect them. If your child tests positive they are advised to stay at home for at least five full days, and return when they have two negative LFD tests on consecutive days.

Thank you for your support in helping to keep our school safe.



COVID Test results - REMINDER

A reminder to parents to send any results to us directly regarding COVID test results.
This email is covid@alexandrapark.oldham.sch.uk

We thank all parents for the immediate responses we have had. You have certainly worked with staff to support the safety of children and staff with high levels of communication.



How to talk to your child about what's happening

No matter how calmly you manage the current environment, children are likely to be anxious. They will pick up bits of information from their friends, from the news and from listening to adults talking around them – but they can misunderstand what they're hearing. It's important to talk to them about what's happening.

Start by finding out what your child knows already

Use open-ended questions to give them the chance to tell you what they think. See page 7 of the resource '[worrying about war](#)' for examples of questions to ask (you'll find the resource at the bottom of the page.)

Tackle the news head-on and talk about it openly and calmly

Use real words and don't shy away from the truth. Be prepared to explain and define keywords they might be hearing to help them make sense of what's going on. For example, words like invasion, missiles, sanctions, refugees etc. Use age-appropriate material such as this [Newsround resource](#), which includes definitions.

Educate them about reliable sources of information

Explain how some stories on social media may be based on rumours or inaccurate information.

Use reliable news sources like Newsround, which is age-appropriate. Watch and discuss with your child this [Newsround video on spotting fake news about the crisis in Ukraine](#).

Encourage your child to ask questions and share their feelings

Remember, it's OK not to have all the answers. Tell them that you'll let them know when you know more. This will be an ongoing discussion.

Allow for repetition, you might have to answer the same thing again. Younger children in particular tend to repeat themselves when they're feeling uncertain or worried.

Reassure them that they're not the only ones feeling this way and encourage them to share their feelings with you or their teacher.

Be a role model

Recognise and manage your own worries first. If you notice you're feeling anxious, take some time to calm down before you decide to talk about the events with your child.

Be open about sharing your feelings with your child – e.g. I'm also finding the news a bit worrying, so I'm doing X (baking cakes, going on long walks, swimming etc.), which helps me to relax.

Encourage them to think about what they can do to relax.

Reassure them and let them know it's normal to be concerned

Explain that we're not at war with Russia and that they don't need to worry about it happening in their neighbourhood. Reassure them they're safe and that the UK is taking steps to help the people of Ukraine.

Encourage them to take breaks from listening to or reading the news – overexposure isn't helpful.

Do something positive with your child

Organise an aid package to send to Ukraine. For example, research local groups that are organising aid packages and contribute to these with your child.

Alternatively, [take a look at this article](#), which includes different ways you can help.

If your child struggles with higher levels of anxiety

Some children are naturally more anxious, such as those with existing phobias or obsessive-compulsive disorders. The current situation can make those anxieties worse. If you have relatives in the armed forces or in the regions (Ukraine, Russia, eastern/central Europe), your child might be susceptible to higher levels of anxiety.

- Get them to do activities such as counting, ordering and sorting tasks, which can help them calm down
- Encourage them to use relaxation techniques such as controlled breathing
- Help them stick to routines they know
- Look out for obsessive or compulsive behaviours and try to get ahead of them early by challenging unhelpful thoughts and assumptions
- If you're worried about your child's anxiety, **YoungMinds** is a charity dedicated to children's mental health. They have a [parents' helpline](#) for confidential, expert advice. You can reach them at 0808 802 5544

Helplines and websites for children and young people

If your child would like to speak with someone confidentially, there are helplines and websites specifically for them.

ORGANISATION	CONTACT INFORMATION
Shout Free, confidential support via text, available 24/7	Text SHOUT to 85258 in the UK to text with a trained crisis volunteer who'll provide active listening and collaborative problem-solving
The Mix Free confidential telephone helpline and online service that aims to find young people the best help, whatever the problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call 0808 808 4994 for free (11am to 11pm daily) • Access the online community • Email The Mix
ChildLine Confidential telephone counselling service for any child with a problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call 0800 1111 any time for free • Have an online chat with a counsellor (9am to midnight daily) • Check out the message boards



Help us tackle racism and bullying related to the events

Our school values respect, dignity and equality among children. We want to maintain these values during this difficult time.

If you hear your child saying or doing hurtful things linked to the events happening in Ukraine, such as generalising that all Russians are bad and want a war, you can use the following examples to help dispel such misconceptions:

- Explain that the decision to invade Ukraine was made by the Russian government and its leader, Vladimir Putin, not the Russian people. People don't always agree with the things their governments do
- Explain that the vast majority of people that live in Russia:
 - Want peace with Ukraine, they don't want war
 - Enjoy living in their country, much like you and I
- Talk about the Russian people who have protested in Russia against the war. Explain how many of them have been arrested and risked their lives doing this because their country doesn't allow its people the freedom to protest peacefully if it goes against government decisions. This is in contrast to the British values we have in our country
- Remind them it's not OK to say 'I don't like Russia/Russians' but instead encourage your child to think about this in terms of 'I don't like what the Russian army is doing'



UNDERSTANDING YOUR CHILD



SOLIHULL APPROACH



Spring Clean?

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