



4<sup>th</sup> March 2022

# High Firs Primary School

# NEWSLETTER

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Visit our school website at [www.high-firs.kent.sch.uk](http://www.high-firs.kent.sch.uk)

## Message from Mr Kilbride

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 upsetting. 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, I 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.

We have given all of our school staff tips on how to talk to children about the events in an age-appropriate and sensitive way. We've included some tips for you at the end of this newsletter to help you handle any conversations you might have at home with your child. On Monday morning, I will be giving Key Stage assemblies led by the tone of these tips we are sharing with you today, to allow the children to clarify their understanding of the situation in Ukraine.

We know that stressful events such as those happening in Ukraine can make emotions run high, and that can lead us all to say or do hurtful things. We have therefore included in this pack some guidance around how you can help tackle hurtful comments, in case it is useful to you.

We hope you find this information helpful.

Brighter news comes in the fun we had in school this week with our annual class pancake racing competitions that followed my assembly on Monday about the history of Shrove Tuesday. We greatly look forward to dressing up for our book week next week and to the other book related activities detailed below.

Children in Reception and Year 1 are now beginning a new style of phonics lessons, guided by Little Wandle, a new government validated resource that we have bought to help our children make the most early reading progress possible. We look forwards to sharing more with you about this in due course, but we anticipate the children really enjoying the very tightly structured sessions that result in maximum pupil activity in the 30 minutes available.



Next week (and a little bit more!) is our school Book Week. We have lots of class learning planned as well as some special events -



**Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> March to  
Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> March**  
After school every day to 3.45pm  
**BOOK FAIR**

Your World Book Day voucher and RRAH voucher will be valid at this event. There will also be a special assembly to show the children some of the books available to purchase.



**Tues 8<sup>th</sup> March**  
**DRESS AS A BOOK  
CHARACTER DAY**

Children can come to school dressed as a favourite Book Character! There is no cost to take part but don't forget to bring the book if you have it.

**BOOK MARK COMPETITION** We are challenging all the children to design a book mark for a celebrity, so thinking caps on everyone and try to win another token to spend at the Book Fair! Please bring your entry in to school by Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> March. One winner from each class will be announced later in the week.



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**CLASS READING SWAPS** At the end the week there will be an opportunity for all the children to choose from a story that they would like to hear read by one of the teachers.



**WORLD BOOK DAY VOUCHERS** are coming home today and are worth £1 off selected books in book stores or all books at our Book Fair next week.

## PANCAKE DAY RACES



### Pancake Day Races Winners

Congratulations to everyone who took part in our annual Pancake Day Races. Well done in particular to our Key Stage winners who were Tristan and Emily – and to our staff team too!



## SATS INFORMATION MEETING

### Yr2 SATs information meeting for parents

We are looking forward to seeing Yr2 parents at their class assembly at 10.10am on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> March. This will be followed by an information session with Mrs Ford, when she will be telling parents about the arrangements for Yr2 SATs this year.

### Register Rabbit

Congratulations to this week's winners of Register Rabbit for their excellent attendance:

**YEAR 1**  
**YEAR 3**



### Special Mentions

This week, our special mentions go to:

- Willow W – huge improvement in number recognition.
- Jonas C – great phonics.
- Natasha F – fantastic balances and rolls in gymnastics.
- Henry F – excellent work in phonics.
- Faye R & Daisy S – interesting and detailed newspaper reports.
- Alyah E – working hard on her Viking letter.
- Isabella T – working hard and trying her best all week.
- Elijah B – working hard to improve his writing.
- Sam W – fantastic learning in Maths.
- Lucy E & Evie T – for always working hard and taking pride in their presentation of all learning
- Jacob CB & Eliza RW – fantastic setting description of the rainforest using figurative language.



### Times Tables Rockstars

Well done to **BEECH** who were the winners of this week's Rockstars challenge. Don't forget to take part next week if you are in KS2.



25TH FEBRUARY - 3RD MARCH

**BEECH** 107 **ASH** 93 **OAK** 59 **CHESTNUT** 37

Our top scorers were:

|                 |                             |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>BEECH</b>    | <b>Chanelle &amp; Vidit</b> |
| <b>CHESTNUT</b> | <b>Kaiden &amp; Evie T</b>  |

## THIS WEEK'S LEARNING

### In our classes this week

- Rec – learned about instructions.
- Year 1 – created their own Tinga Tinga art.
- Year 2 – wrote newspaper reports about an alien space craft.
- Year 3 – wrote in Viking runes.
- Year 4 – learned about the destruction of Pompeii.



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|     |                  |
|-----|------------------|
| OAK | Walter & Elliott |
| ASH | Veda & Freya T   |

Year 5 – thought about what equipment they might need to keep them safe on a mountain.  
Year 6 – are enjoying their new book “The Explorer”.

|  HOUSE POINTS | This Week | Term Total | Top Scorers this week                      |
|---|-----------|------------|--|
|   | BEECH     | 96         | 997  |
| CHESTNUT  | 97        | 1012       | KS1: Bella W (1); KS2: Jake (6), Isla (6)  |
| OAK   | 86        | 925        | KS1: Eleanor (1); KS2: Skye (6)            |
| ASH   | 82        | 912        | KS1: Stanley (R), Eddie (1); KS2: Veda (6) |



## Friends of High Firs Primary School Association

Supporting Our Children’s Education  
Registered Charity No. 1137633

Tickets for this month’s Cake Raffle will be on sale for 50p each outside school at 3.15pm on Wednesday and Thursday next week, and the draw done with the children during assembly on Friday morning.. Thank you for your support and good luck!

|  | Next week in school  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  | <b>INSET DAYS</b><br><i>No children in school</i><br>Fri 27 May 2022<br>Mon 27 June 2022 | Mon 7 March  |
|  | Tues 8 March   | Dress Up as a Book Character Day   |
|  | Weds 9 March   | FHF Cake Raffle ticket sales after school  |
|  | Thurs 10 March   | 10.10am – Yr2 Class Assembly followed by Yr2 SATs meeting<br>Book Fair after school<br>FHF Cake Raffle ticket sales after school |
|  | Fri 11 March   | Book Fair after school<br>FHF Cake Raffle draw in assembly   |

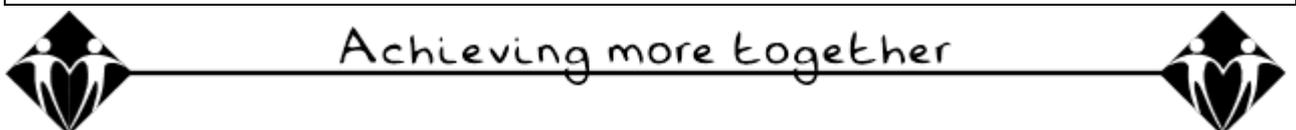
## How to talk to your child about what’s happening

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.

### **Stick to the facts**

But don't discuss everything you hear. For example, be careful about talking about speculation around nuclear warfare. Reassure them that the chance of 'World War III' breaking out is highly unlikely.

### **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.

### **Further resources on how to talk to children about the war in Ukraine**

> [How to cope with traumatic news – an illustrated guide](#)



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- > [Tips for parents and caregivers on media coverage of traumatic events](#)
- > [Talking about Ukraine with our children](#)

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

## 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.



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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'



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