



Welwyn St Mary's Primary School



Newsletter - February 2022

Value

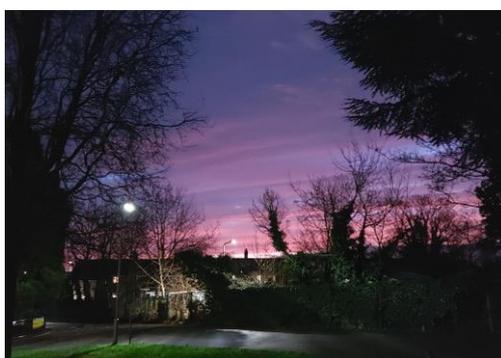
Our value for this half term is: **Perseverance**

"By perseverance the snail reached the ark."

Charles H. Spurgeon

"Be persistent in prayer, and keep alert as you pray, giving thanks to God."

Colossians 4:2



A beautiful winter sunrise over our Garden Room

Technology in our school

We are delighted that we will shortly be in the position of having one class set of chromebooks for each year group from Year 1 to Year 6. This is a result of investment since September 2020 from our school budget, from the fundraising efforts of our School Fund and PTFA, allocation from the Department for Education, and a successful application to a scheme from the Daily Mail.

We hope you agree that this is a fantastic provision, giving children the opportunity to develop their computing skills and enhance their overall learning experience.

Potential Plus

Please remember our school has membership to Potential Plus. This is a charity that supports children, families and schools that have children with a 'higher learning potential' (HLP). They offer parents advice and run courses for children and parents. There are many courses for parents this term including 'Dealing with Feelings and Behaviours of Young People with HLP'. They also offer courses for children including 'Beginners Chess' and 'Making a Mythical Monster'. Please see the attachment for more details.

Considerate and safe parking

Please be reminded that the disabled parking bays in the Ottway Walk carpark should only be used if you have a blue parking permit. We do have members of our school family who need to use these, so please be considerate in keeping them clear.

We also ask you not to park on the double yellow lines on Ottway Walk, as this significantly impacts the safety of pedestrians on this narrow road.





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Attendance cup

Despite the challenges that Covid is having on our children's attendance, we continue to celebrate with them to encourage a commitment to coming to school when they are well and in line with government guidance.

Our January attendance cup was won by class DM1.

| | | |
|-----------------|-----|-------|
| 1 st | DM1 | 98.9% |
| 2 nd | LR | 96.5% |
| 3 rd | S3 | 96.2% |
| 4 th | O4 | 95.6% |
| 5 th | MN2 | 95.4% |

Music exam success

Congratulations to Om D on passing his initial grade piano exam with merit, Elisa M passing with merit her Grade 1 piano practical, and Anaiah who passed her grade 3 piano.

January birthdays

Happy Birthday to all who celebrated in January:

Penelope, Elsie-Mae, Riaan, Thomas, Florence, Danny-Lee, Nancy, Orla, Amara, Harriet, Oliver, Mollie, Joseph, Mia, Bailey, Lyra, Ethan, Daniel, Sophie, Jenson, Ruben, Samuel, Jake, Ethan, Charlie, Scott, James, Olivia, Timur, Hollie, Freddie, Max, Alexa, Troy, Mrs Bradshaw, Mrs Castiglione, Mrs Moate and Mrs Soppett-Moss.

Online games

Please check carefully what games your child is playing online. There are minimum age limits, for example seven years old for Minecraft. It is also possible to end up playing with strangers and some games expect money payments for status or rewards. Parental controls are advised. Additionally, many have the potential to become addictive.

Fortnite - Click [here](#) for a useful guide to parental controls.

Appropriate use of communication apps

Modern communication is amazing and it continues to evolve quickly. There are many communication apps on the market and sometimes we can forget that there is an age rating on them for a reason. It's worth noting that the following apps have the following age rating on them:

WhatsApp - 16+ in the UK. Click [here](#) for a helpful parent guide

Houseparty - 13+. Click [here](#) for a helpful parent guide

Snapchat - 13+. Click [here](#) for a helpful parent guide

TikTok - 13+. Click [here](#) for a helpful parent guide

With many social communication apps, social bots are used to masquerade as humans. Whilst most pose no risk, others are designed to extort, sell products, spread propaganda or bully human users. Click [here](#) for a handy parent guide that tells you all about social bots.





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We can do many things to protect our children, sometimes the simplest approaches are the most effective. We highly recommend that you put the following things in place at home if your child has a mobile device:

- Do not allow your children to have a communication app that is not appropriate for their age.
- Ensure that when your children communicate they are polite and respectful. Quite often conversations on social communication apps can quickly become misunderstood. If they don't like something that is said, they should speak with an adult.
- Limit the amount of time your child has on their mobile devices and have an evening curfew. No primary age child should be on their mobile device after 8pm in an evening.
- Don't allow mobile devices in your child's bedroom at night. Have a central charging point in your house and be very clear about the rules.
- Check your child's device regularly. It is important that you check how your child interacts with others and how others are interacting with them.

World Book Day

As part of our World Book celebrations on Thursday 3rd March we would like all children to dress-up as a book character of their choice. When choosing the character, please discuss with your child the book the chosen character has come from and the characteristics of the character. What are they like as a person? How do you know?

We would prefer children not to come as footballers.

We look forward to the children sharing their costumes/characters with us.

Covid-19

Please continue to follow all the latest guidance and any restrictions in place.

If your child develops Covid-19 symptoms please keep them at home and book a PCR test. Please notify the school at the earliest opportunity - admin@welwynst-marys.herts.sch.uk - and also notify us of the results of tests.

As restrictions are eased, we will return to following national guidelines with regard to attendance. All children are expected to attend school unless they have tested positive for Covid, have Covid symptoms or are otherwise unwell.

If you have a positive Covid case in your household, or your child has been identified by NHS test and trace as a close contact of a Covid case, you should follow the guidance below:

- Notify the school that your child is a close contact of a positive Covid case on admin@welwynst-marys.herts.sch.uk. Please give the date that they were in contact with the positive case.
- Test your child daily using lateral flow tests for 7 days before sending them to school each morning.
- Report your child's lateral flow test to school on admin@welwynst-marys.herts.sch.uk
- If you child develops symptoms of Covid, please arrange for a PCR test and keep them at home until you receive the results, even if they test negative via a lateral flow test.





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Foodbanks help

We have links with local foodbanks so, if you are struggling financially at the moment, please contact the school office in confidence and we can refer you.

Pupil Premium and Free School Meals

For every child registered for Pupil Premium, the school receive additional funding which is spent on raising the attainment of those pupils. If you are entitled to Pupil Premium funding, your child could access a range of additional benefits, including extra help in class, additional resources, items of uniform, free school trips and visits and one free club per term. If you think that you might be eligible for free school meals and are not currently registered, please complete the simple online application form which can be found at:

www.hertsdirect.org/freeschoolmeals Once you have registered your child, please inform the school office.

Term Time Absence and Penalty Notices

A reminder that Hertfordshire County Council issues Penalty Notices which meet the Hertfordshire Code of Conduct regardless of the overall level of the pupil's attendance. Please be advised that the Governing Body has agreed that Welwyn St Mary's will be following this guidance.

This means that unauthorised absence exceeding 15 sessions (each day is two sessions) over 2 consecutive terms risks a fine of up to £120 per parent for each individual child. The Local Education Authority may issue you with a Penalty Notice under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, for failure to secure your child's regular attendance at school. One session is equal to a morning or an afternoon.

So that parents are aware of the risk of receiving a Fixed Penalty Notice, Welwyn St Mary's will issue warning letters to all parents who request term time holiday, regardless of the length of holiday.

Please note that:

- Even brief term time holidays can affect children in school adversely for some weeks. Both before and after the actual vacation.
- Very few children can afford to miss aspects of the school curriculum.
- Staff are unable to provide activities for your child to complete during unauthorised absences from school.
- It is also highly unlikely that your child will be able to 'catch up' on the work undertaken by classmates whilst your child is on holiday.

We appreciate your understanding and thank you for supporting us in maintaining our high attendance record.

Diary Dates

| | Spring Term 2022 |
|--------------------------|--|
| 1 st February | Chinese New Year lunch |
| 2 nd February | Year 3 multi-sports at Monks Walk School |





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| 3 rd February | Key Stage 1 Festival of Words |
| 4 th February | Year 5 rugby event at WGC rugby club |
| w.b. 7 th February | Child mental health week |
| 8 th February | E-safety day |
| 9 th February | Year 6 rugby event at WGC rugby club |
| 9 th February | Parent consultations |
| 10 th February | Year 4 indoor athletics at Ridgeway Academy |
| 14 th - 18 th February | Half term holiday |
| 28 th February | Year 6 K'NEX Challenge |
| 3 rd March | World Book Day - come to school dressed as a book character |
| 4 th March | Year 2 assembly |
| 10 th March | Year 2 Great Fire of London day |
| 11 th March | Year 1 assembly |
| 14 th - 18 th March | Science week |
| 16 th March | Year 5 Moving Toys workshop |
| 18 th March | LR assembly |
| 22 nd March | Year 6 trip to RAF Hendon |
| 23 rd March | Year 5 Dance Festival at Campus West |
| 25 th March | MR assembly |
| 28 th March | Decorated egg entries in |
| 9.30 am 31 st March | Whole school Easter service at St Mary's Church |
| 1 st April | Term ends at 1.20 pm |
| Summer Term 2022 | |
| 19 th April | Summer term commences |
| 30 th May - 3 rd June | Half term holiday |
| 24 th June | INSET day - school closed |
| 27 th June | Occasional day - school closed |
| 14 th July | Secondary transition day |
| 22 nd July | Term ends at 1.20 pm |
| Autumn Term 2022 | |
| 5 th September | Autumn term commences |
| 24 th - 28 th October | Half term holiday |
| 18 th November | INSET day - school closed |
| 21 st December | Term ends at 1.20 pm |



Welwyn St. Mary's Wellbeing Newsletter

Letting go

How to let go of an anxious child is so important. That saying goodbye bit in the mornings, or at clubs, is key to how they then respond. It is natural to want to wait until you see them disappear from view or even accompany them right up to the gate, but that can make their anxiety worse. Children feed off your body language. If you are earnestly watching them until the very last minute they may feel that they need to alleviate your worries by coming back to you and saying goodbye again or not wanting to go at all.

The best thing to do is to normalise these feelings. Say a really comforting, but brief, goodbye and send them into school as positively as possible, being optimistic that they will have a really good day. It sets them up, helps them to learn to manage their emotions better and to be able to look forward to school in a different way. Often as parents, it is managing our own worries and anxiety that can be an added challenge so that we do not transfer our emotions on to our children. They are so perceptive and will pick up on how we are feeling without us even realising it.

If your child is struggling with anxiety, give them something to look forward to at the end of their day. Maybe some time with you to do something together, a small treat and then work towards something more at the end of a positive week - such as a movie night on Friday or a playdate. Letting go well is something that is vital to try to encourage as it teaches your child another life skill and one that will be so helpful for them in all areas of life to come. It will make them feel happier, more secure and have a more positive outlook.

Nicky Jackson
Wellbeing lead

Useful websites

<https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/guides-tools-and-activities/five-steps-to-mental-wellbeing/>

