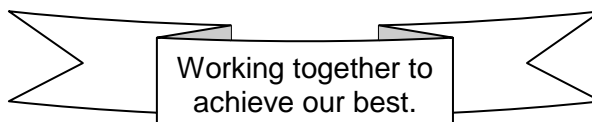




Newsletter

Issue No.5
Date 5th February, 2021
www.firslower.co.uk



Chair of Governors: Gareth Jones

Governors: Adam Campbell, Fran Sherry, Louise Haigh, Annette Anderson, John Ashley, Joanna Milne and Tom Stean

Dear parents /carers,

Visit from the High Sheriff of Bedfordshire

Today, we had a socially distanced visit outside our school with the High Sheriff of Bedfordshire, Susan Lousada. The purpose of her visit was to deliver 6 chromebooks to The Firs, to further support our children with their online remote learning.

Bedfordshire Learning Link, who grew out of Luton Learning Link, was started by the High Sheriff of Bedfordshire and has raised sufficient funds from various charities and in particular, from Bedfordshire and Luton Community Foundation, Bedford Educational Association, The Gale Family Trust and Bedfordshire Crimebeat, to enable them to help schools in this way.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks, both to the High Sheriff and Bedfordshire Learning Link for this very kind and important donation that will make a great impact on learning for a number of our children.



Booking School Meals using ParentPay, using a mobile phone

Some parents have contacted us to say that they have trouble with ParentPay when trying to book a meal when using their phones. We have attached a guide which will hopefully help you and solve any problems that you may have. The guide can also be seen on our website, by following the link below:

[The Firs Lower Website, PP Guides Page](#)

Half Term

The school will be closed to all key worker and vulnerable children during half term, Monday 15th - Friday 19th February, 2021. The school will reopen to those children on Monday 22nd February.

We will keep you updated as much as is possible to let you know when the school will be opening to all children. We know as much as you do, as to when this will be, but please be assured that we will let you know as soon as the government allow us to do so. We are really looking forward to having all the children back in school, we miss them all so much and can't wait to see them all again.

Just like at Christmas, we will need to act upon any positive Coronavirus test results for 48 hours after the end of this half term (e.g. any cases over the weekend). Please pass on any information regarding a positive test result by emailing the school on office@firslower.org thank you.

Children's Mental Health Week

Pine have been listening to stories about how our feelings can change and learning about how important mental health is.



They have also enjoyed taking part in cosmic yoga videos. It looks like they are having lots of fun!



Year 1 have been expressing themselves through dance and they have been doing mindfulness colouring activities whilst listening to relaxing music.



Year 2 have been completing the 5 day elsa support express yourself challenge and made their own worry monsters after listening to 'The Very Hungry Worry Monster' story. They have done lots of mindfulness yoga too, the children thinking about how to calm down and have their own thought bubble.

To find out more visit [elsa Support Challenge](#)



During their community time in **Year 3**, they looked at a presentation about children's mental health and discussed what mental health was and how we could look after our own mental health. They spoke about this year's theme of 'expressing ourselves', watched a video and discussed what this meant for us.

The children were then given the task of doing something to express themselves during the week which they could then share on the Google Classroom or present during the second Google Meet. The children came up with fantastic ways of expressing themselves through dancing, playing musical instruments, writing lockdown poems and creative pieces of artwork.

Year 4 children have had lots of fun exploring different ways to 'Express Yourself', the theme of Children's Mental Health Week. In Google Meets, we have been expressing our ideas, our feelings and practising mindfulness and breathing activities.

On Monday we learned about well being, expressing feelings in different ways and the importance of opportunities to be creative; we also enjoyed quick crafts that enabled us to be both imaginative and original.



On Tuesday we explored the world of dance, drama, mime and movement using our bodies to portray emotions; some of us making masks for our performances.



On Wednesday we looked at abstract art and how it made us feel, experimenting with our own drawing and paintings. Many of us also took up the challenge to create an animal from a fruit or vegetable - they were lovely!

On Thursday we created different kinds of poems to express how we are feeling about the strange times we find ourselves in at the moment; we also enjoyed drawing to different pieces of music, singing, sharing songs that made us feel positive and composing our own music to match a mood.

On Friday we 'dressed to express', wearing what makes us feel good and we spent the whole day doing whatever creative activities we enjoyed: some of us returned to things we had enjoyed earlier in the week to spend more time on them while others were planning new activities e.g. baking, gardening, inventing games, making a model or a video.

We have talked about how all these activities can be enjoyed not just this week, but every week to promote our positive well being so let the creativity continue...



Review of our Online Learning Provision

Thank you for all your responses to our online survey. The survey is now closed and we will be looking at all the responses. We will give a summary of the results of the survey in a newsletter after half term.

Some Reassurance

We have been very touched by the lovely remarks made by parents concerning the care for pupils and the remote learning provision offered this time round. The feedback concerning any possible tweaks to the system in place have also been very useful.

One of the parents on our remote learning survey commented:

'I think it's important to reassure parents, particularly those juggling careers, that they're doing their best and any learning they're managing is better than no learning.' They mentioned that sometimes parents can feel 'guilty, overwhelmed and frustrated'.

We completely understand the pressures that parents / carers are facing and we are very grateful for all the precious time you have managed to give, supporting children with their learning. At the same time, we realise that in these difficult times there can be good days... and less good days(!) and we would not want any negative feelings in our families at home. We know everyone is doing the best they can and we will work with where the children have all got to once we resume school again... keep smiling everyone!

Another issue mentioned was that:

'there may be some concerned that those in school are getting better support than those remote learning and will be ahead in terms of education - putting undue pressure on themselves and their children.'

We have based the programme in school for key worker / vulnerable children on the remote learning programme on Google Classroom for each year group, therefore the work they have covered should be broadly the same.

As another week draws to a close, I want to say well done once more, to all our children, both those at school and the children learning remotely at home.

We know it isn't always easy and that you are all doing your best. Keep up the good effort and on behalf of all the staff, we wish all our children and their families a lovely and restful weekend.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Adam J G Campbell". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name.

Adam J G Campbell