



## Ox Close Federation Newsletter Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2024 – Volume 23

### Farewell and Happy Retirement to Mr Bewick

At the end of March, Mr Bewick, our amazing Handyperson, has decided to retire. Mr Bewick has been an amazing member of Team Ox Close and we thank him for going above and beyond to ensure that our site is safe and the different areas look great. We wish him well and hope that he enjoys his retirement – please come back and visit Mr Bewick.

### Marie Curie – Go Yellow Day

Huge thank you to everyone with your support for raising money for the fabulous charity. Across the Federation, we raised a spectacular £365.58.

### Reception Easter Egg Decorating – Monday 25<sup>th</sup> March

On Monday 25<sup>th</sup> March, parents and carers of Reception children are invited into school to decorate an egg with your child. You are welcome to join your child in the school hall from 2pm where there will be a selection of paper, paints glue which you will be able to use with your child. Please remember to bring along a hardboiled egg and any other accessories your child will need to create their design. There is no charge for this event but if you are able to attend, please do book your place through the School Shop on Arbor. Staff will bring all children who have an adult booked onto the event over to the school hall at 2pm. Any children who do not have an adult booked to attend with them will be given the opportunity to decorate their egg in the classroom at some point throughout the day.

### Nursery Easter Bonnet Parade – Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> March

We are really looking forward to welcoming you all for our annual Easter Bonnet Parade on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> March and look forward to seeing the wonderful Easter bonnets that children have created with you. Please remember that there is no charge for this event but you do need to book your place if you would like to attend. We currently have a small number of places left for the 2pm session and several places available for the 11am session. These can be booked through the School Shop on Arbor. If you have any queries about this event, please do not hesitate to contact a member of the nursery team.

### Non-Uniform Day – Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> March

To celebrate the end of term, children are invited to come to school in non-uniform. There is no donation required.

### Weekly Class Charts Top Scorers

<b>Reception</b>	Harry W	<b>Year 4</b>	Patsi H
<b>Year 1</b>	Sienna R	<b>Year 5</b>	Blaike R
<b>Year 2</b>	Bentley R	<b>Year 6</b>	Elliott S
<b>Year 3</b>	Megan L		

### Attendance

Overall attendance for the week is 95.8% and the Year Group with the highest attendance is Year 5 with 99.7%. The overall school attendance for the academic year is 95.1%.



### Punctuality

The Primary starts at 8:45am, with the gates opening from the new time of **8:35am**. Please ensure that your child is at school on time so that they do not miss out on any learning. This week, we have had 401 late minutes – this is a huge amount of lost learning time and we are really hoping to reduce this with the extended gate opening time.

## Dates for the Diary

W/C 25 <sup>th</sup> March	Easter Activities
Monday 25 <sup>th</sup> March	2pm - Reception - Egg Decorating
Thursday 28 <sup>th</sup> March	Non-Uniform Day
Thursday 28 <sup>th</sup> March	11am and 2pm - Nursery Easter Bonnet Parade
Thursday 28 <sup>th</sup> March	3:15pm – Close for Easter Break
Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> April	8:35am – Children return to Nursery and School
Thursday 2 <sup>nd</sup> May	Federation Closed – Polling Station

## Class 1/2B

### This week in 1/2B

In Geography, we have been learning to name the 7 continents. We listened to a song and practised singing it.



We have all done our Eggsfactor auditions today. It was lovely to see so much talent in 1/2B.



In Science, we have been learning about why it is important to wash ourselves and how it can reduce the spread of germs. We did an experiment to see how far germs travel. We used glitter as the germs and we shook hands with other people. We found out that they spread far and wide. We talked about how important it is to wash our hands with soap and water.

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit [nationalcollege.com](http://nationalcollege.com).

# 10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

## ENCOURAGING OPEN CONVERSATIONS AT HOME

With tricky topics and occasional clashes of opinion, it can be challenging to maintain an environment where children feel able to talk candidly and honestly. However, encouraging such conversations helps to develop trust – making it easier to unpack even sensitive subjects as children get older. Here are our top tips for promoting open conversations at home.

### 1 CREATE A SAFE SPACE

Criticism, blaming or shaming can all prevent children from feeling emotionally safe – while showing affection, positive attention and an interest in what a child has to say builds their sense of security. These formative years are when children's opinions and values begin to take shape, so it's important to provide a non-judgmental environment in which to discuss them – especially if their opinions differ from your own.

### 2 CONSIDER OTHER OUTLETS

Some children may find it easier to talk while they're participating in another activity such as drawing, writing, walking or sport. If it's possible, taking part in these activities together presents you with an opportunity to communicate while doing something side by side. A child may feel less pressure that way and can be more inclined to open up of their own accord.

### 3 NORMALISE CHATS ABOUT FEELINGS

Incorporate mental health and emotional wellbeing into everyday conversations, using age-appropriate language and examples to help children understand their emotions. Ask questions like "How are you feeling today?", "What was the best and worst part of your day?", "If you could start today again, what would you do differently?" and "Is there anything you want to talk about?"

### 4 LISTEN ACTIVELY

When children express themselves, make it obvious that you're listening closely and giving them your full attention. Maintain eye contact and validate their feelings without immediately trying to solve the problem. It's not helpful to dismiss their issues as childish or 'teenage angst' – or to assume that they'll simply 'get over' whatever they're feeling. Children don't have your life experience; their resilience is still developing as they learn to push through difficulties and handle problems.

### 5 ASK OPEN QUESTIONS

Encourage children to share their thoughts by asking open questions about their feelings and experiences. Closed questions (such as "Did you enjoy school today?") are more likely to elicit a simple "yes" or "no" response. Instead, you could ask things like "Who did you spend time with at break?" or "Who did you sit with at lunchtime?"

### 6 RESPECT THEIR BOUNDARIES

If a child isn't ready to talk about something yet, respect their boundaries: this reinforces that their feelings are important and worthy of consideration. Ideally, you're aiming to let them know you care without smothering them, so just make it clear that you're there for them whenever they're ready to chat. Gentle, regular check-ins can sometimes be the best form of progress.

### 7 LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Model open, honest and healthy communication in front of children and young people. Try to demonstrate kindness when talking about others and yourself, because if children hear adults being overly harsh, critical or judgmental, or see them having unrealistic expectations of themselves, it makes them more likely to adopt and repeat this behaviour themselves as they grow.

### 8 HAVE REGULAR CHECK-INS

Check in with children periodically to discuss how they're feeling and what's going on in their lives. This could be a weekly or monthly conversation, where the child has an opportunity to share whatever's on their mind. For parents and carers, getting away from the house and other distractions might be productive here: you could consider regular trips to a coffee shop or a café, or just a weekly walk.

### 9 PROVIDE RESOURCES

It's often beneficial to let children know about other support that's available to them if they're struggling to talk to you specifically. Encourage them to talk to school counsellors, trusted adults or even a therapist, if necessary – while normalising this route and dispelling the harmful stigma around asking for help. Older children could engage with resources such as Kooth or YoungMinds.

### 10 CELEBRATE EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION

It's beneficial to praise children for expressing their feelings honestly – emphasising how important it is to talk about their emotions and how proud you are of them for doing so. This can be especially pivotal for boys, who often experience more of a stigma around talking frankly about their feelings and their mental health – a barrier that can be overcome, with enough love and support.

### Meet Our Expert

With 30 years' experience as a teacher, trainer, consultant and interim executive board member, Anna Batesman has a superb understanding of what works in pedagogy, school improvement and leadership. She has also advised the Department for Education on their mental health green paper.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College