



St John's Highbury Vale C of E Primary School

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Executive Head: Mrs Tonnie Read

Head of School: Ms Hasina Khan

Friday, 11th October 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you have had a wonderful week. At St. John's, we have enjoyed another successful week of learning. The children continue to show incredible enthusiasm and passion for their education, which is truly inspiring to see. Every day, as I walk through the school, and visit classrooms, I am reminded of their dedication to upholding our school's values and striving for excellence. It is a joy to witness their consistent efforts to achieve high standards in everything they do.

World Mental Health Day

This week, we have been focusing on the importance of mental health, and understanding why it is essential to care for both our mental and physical well-being. October 10th marks *World Mental Health Day*, and we firmly believe that everyone has the right to good mental health. Taking care of our mental well-being is just as important as looking after our physical health.

I led a whole-school assembly where we discussed what we can do to support our mental health. We know that mental health exists on a spectrum. There are days when we feel happy, calm, and content, and there are also times when we may feel sad, anxious, or scared. These feelings are all valid. It is important to recognise and celebrate the days when we feel good, whilst also knowing how to manage our emotions on more difficult days.

Some of the children shared their own strategies for maintaining good mental health, which was inspiring to hear. Encouraging these conversations from a young age helps build a strong foundation for well-being.

The NHS recommends five simple steps that we can all take to improve our mental well-being. Why not try incorporating some of these into your daily routines?

1. Connect with others – Building positive relationships with family, friends, and colleagues is key to boosting our mental well-being.
2. Be physically active – Regular physical activity not only benefits our bodies but also has a powerful impact on our mental health.
3. Learn new skills – Taking the time to learn something new can be a great way to build self-confidence and improve mental well-being.
4. Give to others – Acts of kindness, whether big or small, have been shown to enhance both the giver's and the receiver's mental health.
5. Pay attention to the present – Paying attention to the present and focusing on the "here and now" can help reduce stress and improve well-being.

We also discussed our school vision, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." For many, faith in God provides great comfort and strength during difficult times.





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Black History Month

This year's theme for Black History Month is "Reclaiming Narratives," and marks a significant shift towards recognising and correcting the narratives of black history and culture.

We have been engaging in a variety of activities at school to celebrate Black History Month. Each class is participating in meaningful projects throughout the week, exploring different themes. These include creating patterns and stories inspired by artist Bisa Butler, learning about influential black leaders, musicians, and composers, reading poetry by Joseph Coelho, and appreciating the photography of Steve McQueen.

Chess tournament

On Wednesdays, our Year 5 and Year 6 pupils participate in whole-class chess lessons conducted by a professional chess instructor. This week, 20 of our pupils had the exciting opportunity to attend the Global Chess League. During this event, they engaged in various chess activities led by tutors from the Chess in Schools and Communities (CSC) organisation, competed in chess tournaments, and had the chance to observe a Grandmaster in action. Photos of the event can be found on this week's newsletter.

At St. John's, we are passionate about encouraging all of our pupils, from Reception to Year 6, to learn and enjoy chess. If you would like suggestions on how to support your child in developing their chess skills at home, or how to introduce chess to them for the first time, please let me know. We would be happy to provide you with ideas.

Key Dates for next week

Monday 14th October - Friday 18th October - Y6 PGL

Monday 14th October (Y2, Y3, Y4) - In school Forest School

Thursday 17th October - Quiz night

Friday 18th October - Y4 coffee morning

Future date

Thursday 21st November - neurodiversity coffee morning (9:00 am). This is open to all parents.

I hope you have a wonderful weekend.

With warm regards,

Ms. H. Khan
Head of School

