



MALDON COURT

PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Spring Term 2021

Weekly Newsletter

29th January 2021



Headteacher's Award

Nursery	Harry Vaughan
Pre-Reception	Madison Lopez
Reception	Ernest Mays
Form 1	Teddy Stevenson
Form 2	Elizabeth Neall
Form 3	Isabelle Procter
Form 4	Scarlett Abrehart
Form 5	Florence Mee
Form 6	Mathilda Cowell

Dear Parents,

I hope that you have all had a good week. It has been lovely to speak to many of you on the phone or via email. I am delighted to say that the children have all been working so hard with their online learning this week and I really do applaud them for their commitment to continuing to learn in such different times for us all. Their resilience and the way that they take everything in their stride is humbling to see. This goes for all of the parents too. Thank you for your continued support of the children to ensure that they get the maximum possible from the online learning provided by the teachers; I do appreciate how hard it can be.

This week, many of the children have participated in the RSPB National Birdwatch. This has had many benefits for the children; they have been able to have a bit of time away from their screens to count and tally all the different species of birds but also it has been linked into their Maths, English and Science curriculums where information collected will be used in these lessons next week.

Next week is Children's Mental Health Week and the theme this year is Express Yourself. We are very conscious of everyone's mental health and well-being at the moment and next week our Nursery and Pre-Reception children will be wearing their own clothes in school to express themselves. This is to encourage the children to think about how expressing themselves can support positive mental health and well-being. We have some exciting plans in the pipeline to promote children's mental health and we will share these with you shortly.

Thank you to those who have sent in photos or videos of the children learning or exercising at home. There is a fantastic compilation video for you to watch on the 'News' section of the school website. Please also remember to participate in the ongoing Netball Challenge and send in your videos. There are some wonderful prizes for those who get involved. Please see the 'News' section of the school website for the [video instructions](#).

Welcome to Ella Barum who starts in Reception on Monday, we know you will be warmly welcomed into the Maldon Court Family.

Finally, MCPS Wishes George, Samuel, Alice, Blake, Sophia and Isabelle a very Happy Birthday!

Have a lovely weekend - Mrs Mason

NURSERY - As part of Birdwatch week, the Nursery children have been busy and made some bird cake for the many birds that visit the Nursery garden. They all took turns to add the ingredients, mix it together and then filled their yoghurts pots with the cake. We hung them outside and watched to see if the birds liked their cake! This week, for Expressive Arts Week, the children have been expressing themselves through art and craft activities. We set up a collage station at the tuff tray and the children were able to freely choose from a range of materials to create a picture. The children also painted whilst listening to classical music, the children created some wonderful paintings and also discussed how the music made them feel. We have also been excited to make some rainbow pictures, which will accompany some 'Thank you bags' that are being put together for the NHS team at Broomfield Hospital. Next week our topic is 'Food Week'. We will enjoy discussing our favourite foods and what we should eat to keep healthy. This runs alongside 'Mental Health Week'.

The children will have the opportunity to discuss their feelings and how they express themselves.
Mrs Kim Callaghan



PRE-RECEPTION - Our topic in Pre-Reception this fortnight is numbers and colours. The children have enjoyed taking part in lots of colour and number activities. This week we introduced a new interactive board to our morning welcome each day, where the children can choose a colour and shape for the week, and a question and number for the day. The question for the day has been a fantastic way to help the children understand what a question involves and gives them the opportunity to discuss their interests. The number for the day has been brilliant at encouraging children to recognise their numbers and count out objects to reach that final number.

We have also enjoyed some rainbow making, where Pre-Reception have drawn their own rainbows for our 'NHS thank you bags' and used their fine motor skills to fingerprint the different colours onto a rainbow.

This week we also explored a sensory tuff tray. The tray contained lots of coloured pasta, feathers, pom poms and had some colour and number flashcards. This was an exciting way to explore our topic.

Finally, Pre-Reception have enjoyed some music lessons. During these, we discussed 'volume, tempo and pitch' and how we use these in music. The children have loved expressing themselves through their own choice of musical instruments and songs.

Our optional home activity for next week is to create and play a game of colour and number bingo. We would love to see any photographs of you completing and playing these!

Miss Washbourne and Miss Denyer



Next week is National Children's Mental Health Week and this year's theme is Express Yourself. The children will be completing some activities as part of their lessons next week.

Please see below some information about Children's Mental Health Week.



www.childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk

DEAR PARENTS AND CARERS,

1-7 February 2021 is Children's Mental Health Week. The week is run by children's mental health charity Place2Be to focus on the importance of children and young people's mental health. This year's theme is **EXPRESS YOURSELF**.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

When children are able to find creative ways to share their feelings, thoughts or ideas it can help them feel good about themselves and who they are. Children can do this through art, music, writing and poetry, dance and drama, photography and film, and doing activities that they enjoy.

It's really important to remember that being able to express yourself is not about being the best at something or putting on a performance for others. It is about finding a way to show who you are, and how you see the world, that can help you feel good about yourself.

Given that the past year will have left many of us feeling out of control and helpless, supporting children and young people to express themselves is arguably more important than ever.



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Here are a few simple ways you can encourage your child to express themselves.

1. Could you build on existing interests or passions? Think about what has helped them get through the past year. A love of dancing? Baking? Drawing? Fashion? Encourage your child by noticing their unique interests and praising their efforts.
2. Trying new things can be a great way to find a new creative outlet. There are lots of online tutorials and video demos that you and your child could be inspired by... could you try out something new together? Or perhaps ask someone you know to share their creative hobbies and give them a go.
3. Some children may not think of themselves as being creative. Try to focus on the importance of the process and the way it can make them feel, rather than the end result. Try not to judge their efforts and remember to give encouragement for trying rather than for doing something well.
4. Listening carefully can help children feel more comfortable and confident when expressing themselves. Try to minimise distractions and give your child your full attention when you're spending time together, being aware of your own body language and eye contact. You might want to try summarising what they've shared and acknowledging their feelings.
5. Children are expressing themselves all the time but not necessarily with words. 'Listen' to everything they are trying to tell you with their behaviour, or with their play and creativity or with their silence. It's all self-expression.
6. Remember – you don't need a lot of expensive equipment to get creative at home. Recyclable materials or older items you no longer have a use for can provide amazing inspiration, and of course there's no limit to your imagination!

Let your child know that if they are worried about something, they should always talk to an adult they trust. It could be you, someone in your family, a teacher or someone else in their school.

If you're worried about your child's mental health you can talk to your GP or someone at your child's school.

You can also find a list of organisations that provide support and advice on our website: place2be.org.uk/help

www.childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk



OMEGLE - Although this is aimed at 18+ there are no restrictions on children accessing this website. It is important that you as parents communicate the dangers of online live streaming. Live streaming can be recorded, saved and shared amongst other internet users without the knowledge of the person in the video. Children will innocently live stream videos not realising the dangers of who is viewing the videos and engaging in online chat. Children can often come across OMEGLE while using apps such as Tik Tok.



Omegle is a website that pairs random strangers for live text or video chats. It first launched in 2009 and its slogan is "Talk to strangers!" There is an option for adult (18+) content and a section for people aged 13+ with parental permission. Anyone can use the site. Users simply go to Omegle.com and then choose 'Text' or 'Video' chat and the page states how many users are currently online. Depending on the time of day this can be hundreds of thousands. Omegle markets itself as a great way to meet new friends however has been known to feature pornography and inappropriate content within chats, so it's important parents are aware of the risks associated with the site.



What parents need to know about OMEGLE



NO AGE VERIFICATION MEASURES

Omegle is completely free to use and allows users to communicate with others without the need to register, supply an email address or create a profile. This means users can remain anonymous and it's hard to trust who your children are talking to. Furthermore, there are no age verification measures and other than agreeing to the terms and conditions, your child can easily start online engagement with strangers and potentially access more adult themed content.



RISK OF CYBERBULLYING

The anonymity of Omegle can increase the risk of cyberbullying on the site. Engaging in chat with strangers means that topics of conversation can lead almost anywhere including discussions about looks, body image or the sharing of other personal information. With the availability of video chat as well, this could lead to children being coerced or forced into carrying out activities online which could then be used against them.



UNMODERATED CHAT

Omegle encourages video chat as much as it can, prompting users during their text chat to activate their web cam. Whilst text chat has a degree of moderation, the content in Omegle's video chat rooms is not moderated by administrators and, at any time of the day, there can be thousands of users online. This means that your child could easily come across illegal, unacceptable or inappropriate images or media. Omegle currently offers no function for reporting online abuse or inappropriate behaviour on its site and instead only offers advice to 'please be careful'. It also advises to 'Use Omegle at your own peril. Disconnect if anyone makes you feel uncomfortable.'



PRIVACY RISK VIA FACEBOOK

Omegle can be linked to a user's Facebook account to match their interests and likes with other users. This means that Omegle can access your child's basic Facebook information, and Facebook friends may potentially view Omegle activity. In addition, users can save the chat log and share the link without the other user's knowledge. It is not uncommon then for users to request being added to Snapchat, Instagram or WhatsApp for further interaction, moving the conversation into a more personal setting.



RISK OF EXPLOITATION

Omegle chat picks another user at random and there is very little way of verifying who your child may be chatting to. This can lead to a number of risks including catfishing (users pretending to be of similar age), identity theft (users eliciting information to commit fraud) and sexual/psychological grooming (users coercing others to act in a way or do something they wouldn't normally do).



ADULT THEMED CONTENT

Unfortunately, Omegle is infamous for its pornographic content and it is not uncommon for users to expose themselves or engage in sexual acts. If a user selects video chat, then the other user's webcam will automatically be switched on before the action to 'end chat' can be selected. There is also no 'preview' in smaller thumbnail windows. As video chat is so easy to access, it means that unintentionally viewing more mature, inappropriate or even illegal images can't always be avoided.



Safety Tips For Parents



DISCUSS RISKS WITH YOUR CHILD

It is important to speak to your child about the dangers of Omegle. Guiding and educating young children is far more useful than ignoring the possibility of Omegle being accessed. Explain to your child that Omegle is not completely anonymous and that other users will and do use Omegle to exploit others. Try to emphasise the risk of speaking to strangers and that engaging online is no different to engaging offline.



PROTECT PERSONAL INFORMATION

Omegle does not provide advice about how to protect your personal information so it's important that children are aware of what they should and shouldn't share online and with whom. If they use Omegle, always advise against sharing any personal information such as their real name, age, phone number, address or any other personal identifiable information. This also includes details of their social media accounts or gaming ID's. You should also adjust your child's Facebook settings to control what information is shared with Omegle.



REPORT CONCERNS

If your child comes across any inappropriate content or something which upsets them on Omegle, then it's important that they are able to discuss it with you and that you provide them with the support they need. If you think the content is illegal, then it must be reported to the police.



DISCOURAGE VIDEO CHAT

Try to discourage your child from using video chat on Omegle. Not only is there no filters or moderation in place, but children may be coerced into sharing intimate images or videos of themselves, which is illegal if they are under 18 and may be used against them. Omegle text chat has a degree of moderation controlled by Omegle through software and several actual moderators. The software moderates, identifies and prevents certain words and sequences of words to try and prevent bullying and grooming however is still not a 100% failsafe.



TRY OMEGLE YOURSELF

It's always an excellent idea to get a feel for the website or app your child is using so that you can see and understand the issues and risks for yourself. More importantly, it will also provide you with first-hand experience of the risks and dangers if/when you decide to speak to your child about Omegle and what they need to be aware of.



USE PARENTAL CONTROLS

Omegle is a website chat service. Children can only access the text chat on their phone and would need access to a PC or laptop to engage in video chat. If you have genuine concerns over Omegle and don't wish your child to access the site, you can add www.omegle.com to the list of banned websites and URLs. However, it's important to remember that Omegle can still be used via a web browser on an iPad, tablet, smart TV or gaming device and similar controls would need to be implemented on each of these devices separately.

