

12.2.21

Dear Parents and Carers

Message from Mrs Rawlins – 12.2.21 update

I hope this finds you well at the end of this first half of the Spring Term. It has certainly been a challenging time, and we are so grateful for all that you are doing to support your children with their learning at home. A slightly longer letter from me today to update you as we go into the half-term holiday – sorry!

Taking part – whole-school events:

- **'Be The Rainbow'**: This week, we would normally be inviting you to come and be part of our 'Be The Rainbow' photograph, as February is LGBTQ+ History Month. Last year, we had a wonderful parade in the school playground with a fantastic samba band! This year, Mrs Whiting is inviting you instead to take a photo to be part of our 'Be The Rainbow' gallery; you could wear something colourful, or perhaps make a rainbow cake, some rainbow knitting, a rainbow flag – whatever you feel inspired to do! Please send any photos to Mrs Whiting at kwhiting@arbury.cambs.sch.uk to add to an online celebration gallery.
- **PE – Panathlon**: If you have been having a go at the PE Panathlon challenge, please send in any scores to Mrs Oram if you can. You can message her on eSchools or email to me to pass on to her.
- **Reading at home**: If you have any photos of children enjoying reading at home, please send them to Mrs Dowdall via eSchools, or email to me to pass on to her.
- **Keeping children safe online**: You may find the guides on this link helpful to be aware of how to continue to support your child to stay safe online:
<https://nationalonlinesafety.com/training/search?search=parents&sort=new&cat=&type=resource>

New resources to support learning:

We have bought subscriptions for the following new resources to further support remote learning:

- **Oxford Owl eBooks**: A letter will be emailed to you today with information about this site. Login details for the class are also on your child's eSchools page and also on the 'Reading at Home' page on the Remote Learning Hub of the school website (link here: https://www.arbury.cambs.sch.uk/website/reading_at_home/468025)
- **Numbots**: This site is linked to the TT Rockstars site used by children in KS2, but is aimed at securing early Maths knowledge and skills for children in EYFS and KS1. It is suggested that 3-4 minutes daily on this site can really help to practice and reinforce that key knowledge in a fun way. The login for this site is the same as your child's Education City password. Go to the TT Rockstars site (<https://trockstars.com/>), login and then scroll down to the Numbots link on the left-hand side of the page. Information is also on the EYFS/KS1 class pages.
- **Seesaw**: This app, which can be used easily on a phone, tablet or laptop/desktop PC, enables children's work to be shared easily with their teachers (and for teachers to give feedback) through the use of an online journal of work. We have posted out details from Mr Tull on how to use Seesaw, and your child's login information is also included with the letter. Mr Tull has also set up a page on the school website to explain how to use Seesaw (link here: https://www.arbury.cambs.sch.uk/website/how_to_use_seesaw/542298). We hope that the children (and you) will find it much easier to complete and submit work through Seesaw.

Especially for those of you with young children: Ms Evans sent me some information from a researcher at Cambridge University Faculty of Education, which we thought was worth sharing with you. The researcher's focus is on parenting in the pandemic, and she is working from home with a 2-year-old and 4-year-old at home with her. She noted that amidst all of the problems and expectations to support children with their learning, it is important not to forget that children, especially young children, learn through play. She passes on 5 basic principles for the kinds of play that parents can do to promote healthy child development:

1. **Maximise love and minimise stress.** Considering what we know about the toxic stress the pandemic could be causing, this is particularly vital.
2. **Talk, Sing, and Point.** Singing and conversing with young children boosts language development and builds strong neural networks.
3. **Count, Group, and Compare.** Early numeracy is important for starting in Reception, but these simple tasks won't feel too hard for parents or children.
4. **Explore through movement.** This is especially important as physical freedoms have changed for many children during lockdown.
5. **Read Stories.** The linkages between reading to children and their healthy development are extensive. Reading to children under-5 soothes and calms, boosts communication, powers up imagination, and reinforces love.

The researcher also notes that '*Research indicates that parent-child play acts as a buffer against stress, and a protective mechanism in the face of a life shock. It's also a big part of fostering resilience in children.*' So you definitely have permission to spend time playing!

Half-term activities: With play, and half-term in mind, I am grateful to Liz, one of our parents, for sending me these links to online half-term activities for children: <https://www.list.co.uk/events/kids/online-events/page:1/#results>

London Symphony Orchestra concert (suitable for all, but of special interest to Year 4, who learn about sound as one of their Science topics):

<https://iso.co.uk/whats-on/icalrepeat.detail/2020/11/18/1960/-/online-event-space-but-not-as-we-know-it.html>

Drawing the moon and constellations (suitable for all, but of special interest to Year 5, who have been learning about Earth and Space as one of their Science topics):

<https://cranbornechase.org.uk/events/star-art-activities-for-kids-moon-sketching-and-constellation-making-with-mary-mcintyre/>

Apologies for this long letter! Please do contact Mrs Whiting (KS1 – kwhiting@arbury.cambs.sch.uk) or me (KS2 – drawlins@arbury.cambs.sch.uk) if you have any questions or there is anything we can help with. Wishing you and your family a restful half-term, hopefully with some brighter and warmer weather too. Thank you for your support over the past weeks. Stay safe!

Kind regards

Diane Rawlins
Deputy Headteacher

