

12 February 2021

## MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

**“When the facts change, I change my mind.” - John Maynard Keynes**

Dear Parents/Carers,

I have come to the realisation that the sense of family has never been more important in our corona-coaster filled lives. We can all relate to the concept of family; whether that is family who live close by, are scattered around the world or our work family, in my case, the children, parents, governors and colleagues at William Murdoch Primary School. I am so intensely grateful to my WMPs family colleagues. In all honesty I have seen more of them than my extended family and friends outside of work. There is intense frustration when government messaging refers to schools as being closed! My colleagues have been working hard, adjusting, creating, managing, adapting, to deliver remote learning and to make well-being checks, deliver food parcels, distribute digital devices etc. With staff also coming into school as part of the critical worker rota, I have been fortunate to have socially distanced face-to-face interactions.

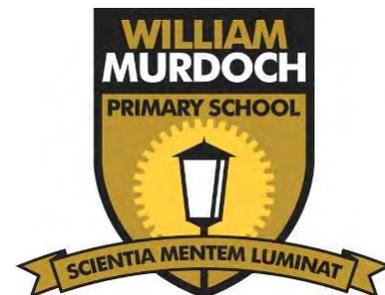
Our pupils are the beating heart of the school and one of the many joys of the job is the interactions I have with them, and their parents, on a daily basis. I miss them very much. So many of you have expressed your gratitude during weekly telephone calls and emails to specific staff, the entire school and to me personally. We are grateful for your support. I know many of the conversations in the media about lost learning and the future impact of this creates unnecessary anxiety. Making time for each other is a key part of looking after your own and your family's well-being. Family look out for and after each other. Family - whatever yours looks like at home or work - never has it been more crucial to recognise how important it is to us all.

### **Digital Devices**

The school has sourced and distributed over 150 digital devices to support the remote learning of the children. We are actively working on obtaining more devices to loan out as there are still children who urgently require a device to access their learning. We constantly monitor the amount of work completed by each pupil. In the small number of cases where a device has been issued and no work has been submitted, that device will need to be returned and will be re-allocated to another child.

### **Arts and Crafts Pack**

A huge thank you to all parents who braved the freezing temperatures and ventured out to collect the arts and crafts packs on Thursday and Friday of this week. A special mention to the school staff who helped distribute the packs on those days.



I do hope your children enjoy using them. They have been given to help support children in being creative over the half-term break and to spend time away from the screen. We would, however, like to see any of the creative work that children are particularly proud of and these pieces are best shared by uploading them to Class Dojo.

### **BCC Half-Term FSM Vouchers**

Birmingham City Council will be providing FSM vouchers for the half-term holiday next week, via Sodexo. The vouchers will be to the value of £15 per child, and you will receive your voucher(s) by email on Friday 12 February 2021. Within the email you will receive both a Cheque Number and a Validation Code which you will need to redeem your voucher(s). Please see the attached document for further guidance on redeeming your voucher. If you have more than one child who is eligible for FSM, then you will receive one voucher for each child, i.e. if you have two children who are eligible, you will receive two vouchers.

The national voucher scheme, via Edenred, will run once again after the half-term holidays. You will receive your voucher(s) for the weeks commencing 22.02.21 and 01.03.21 at some point during the week after half-term.

If your circumstances have changed and you believe your child may now be eligible for Free School Meals, you can check at: <https://www.cloudforedu.org.uk/ofsm/birmingham>

### **Text Messages**

The school will always look to send notices and information via email in the first instance as fundamentally this means of communication is the most cost effective and time efficient. There are times when we do need to send a text although we try to limit this as the cost can be prohibitive. When the school sends a text, it will show up on your phone as the following number:

**+441212850427**

The next time you receive a text message from the school, please save this number as William Murdoch Primary School for future reference.

### **Joy of Winter Games**

We know that being active is good for our physical health, but it can also improve sleep, concentration, our mood, social skills and ability to learn. Therefore, it has never been more important for children to be physically active for the recommended average of 60 minutes each day. To provide some inspiration the EFL Trust, a charitable arm which supports the English Football League (EFL), have created a pack (see attached) filled with simple games and activities for you and your family to play at home during the winter months – Joy of Moving Winter Games! Whilst all the games have been designed to be suitable for all abilities, the key thing they have in common is that they encourage children to get moving whilst having fun.

### **Go Fizz Free for February**

Birmingham City Council is encouraging everyone to go Fizz Free for February. Fizzy drinks are the largest single source of sugar consumed by children. With more time spent at home due to the



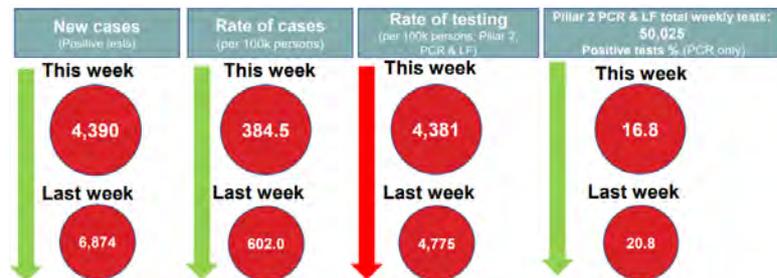
pandemic, you and your family may be reaching for the fizzy drinks more often than usual. By going Fizz Free for February, you can help reduce your intake and lower your reliance on the sweet stuff. [Click here](#) to get involved. Please [click here](#) to watch a special message from Dr Justin Varney, Director of Public Health Birmingham.

## COVID Champions Update

Almost 12.3 million people have had their first vaccine dose in the UK. In Birmingham, more than 175,000 have had the vaccine, with over 80 per cent of those aged 80+ years, and over 95 per cent of care home residents, having had the first dose. Following the discovery of the South African variant in the city, however, it is vital that we do not become complacent. It is important to remember to stay at home and keep following the correct advice from the right sources, and to get tested if you are from the affected areas.

All wards in the city have seen case numbers fall between this week and the week before, but the scale of this drop varies a lot between wards. Case rates take account of the different population sizes across different wards so is a more useful way of looking at differences between different areas than just looking at case numbers. The wards with the highest case rates (cases per 100,000 residents) in the last week were:

- Ward End (646)
- Birchfield (573)
- Alum Rock (564)
- Handsworth Wood (558)
- Yardley West & Stechford (535)
- Bromford & Hodge Hill (526)
- Balsall Heath West (523)
- South Yardley (513)
- Lozells (500)
- Perry Barr (500)



Case rates have fallen slightly in all age groups but remain highest in the 30 to 44 age group. Although case rates are high across all ethnic groups, they are highest in the Asian communities.

## Current Lateral Flow Testing Sites

Below is a list of the current lateral flow test sites. No booking is required before visiting. [Click here](#) for more information.

- Sheldon Community Centre, Sheldon Heath Road, B26 2RU
- Kingstanding Wellbeing Centre, Dulwich Road, B44 0EW
- Handsworth Wellbeing Centre, Holly Road, B20 2BY
- Shard End Wellbeing Centre, Packington Avenue, B34 7RD

## Pharmacy Testing Sites Available Across Birmingham

There are now 56 pharmacies across Birmingham which offer lateral flow testing to those who do not have symptoms. [Click here](#) to find your nearest site and to share the link (sites taking appointments are in blue).

## Class Dojo

We have developed a number of useful instructional videos for parents on how to use Class Dojo. There is a version in English which has also been translated to Bengali, Punjabi and Urdu as these are the main language groups in school. The videos are available using the following links and will play on YouTube:

Class Dojo Guidance in Bengali: <https://youtu.be/zktwmOCwYMU>

Class Dojo Guidance in Urdu: [https://youtu.be/Twl\\_oqMi4eE](https://youtu.be/Twl_oqMi4eE)

Class Dojo Guidance in Panjabi: <https://youtu.be/tSPsau7gYDM>

Class Dojo Guidance in English: <https://youtu.be/qCnYNDtNQJM>

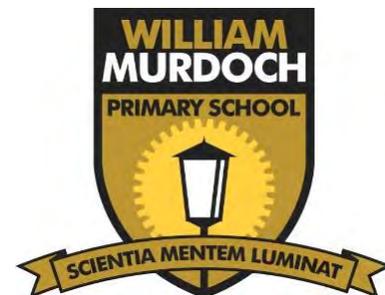
## Art Competition

The theme of our third competition is 'Dreams and Ambitions'. Children should think about what they would like to do in the future. You could consider things which you hope to achieve in the future such as getting into a particular job or doing something special. Once you have an idea, use materials within the home to create a piece of artwork. After the work has been created, a photo should be taken and then uploaded onto Class Dojo. The deadline for this competition is 24 February 2021 and the winners shall have their work appear in the weekly newsletter, on the school's Twitter page and showcased in the Friday Celebration Assembly.

## Way-out Wednesday

This Wednesday we had the third of our creative afternoons where all children were tasked to create a model of an Ox to mark the Chinese New Year celebrations happening today. There have been some excellent pieces of work, some of which have been shared below and others will be included in my weekly Friday Celebration Assembly and posted on Twitter:





The task for the first Wednesday after the half-term break will be shared in the Wednesday assembly in that week.

## Live Lessons

Live lessons are held on Zoom three times a week - Monday, Wednesday and Thursday. The timings can be found in the table below.

	Nur	Rec	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
<b>Mon</b>	2.45pm	2.00pm	1.15pm	12.30pm	11.45am	11.00am	10.15am	9.30am
	- 3.15pm	- 2.30pm	- 1.45pm	- 1.00pm	- 12.15pm	- 11.30am	- 10.45am	- 10.00am
<b>Wed</b>	10.15am	10.15am	10.00am	10.00am	9.45am	9.45am	9.30am	9.30am
	-10.30am	-10.30am	-10.15am	-10.15am	-10.00am	-10.00am	- 9.45am	- 9.45am
<b>Thurs</b>	2.45pm	2.00pm	1.15pm	12.30pm	11.45am	11.00am	10.15am	9.30am
	- 3.15pm	- 2.30pm	- 1.45pm	- 1.00pm	- 12.15pm	- 11.30am	- 10.45am	- 10.00am

Live lessons will be used to address misconceptions from previous learning – any common misconceptions which have been picked up by the class teacher when approving work on Class Dojo. Pupils are also given the opportunity to share anything they may not be sure of and that requires further explanation. The Wednesday morning live lesson will focus on outlining the Way-out Wednesday task to pupils. Occasionally the Monday and/or Thursday live lesson will be based on a particular subject or topic.

## People in History/Our Local Area Projects

Before the Christmas holidays, pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 were set our annual *People in History* project. The aim of this project is to raise pupils' awareness of their own background and culture, as well as the culture of others. Pupils in Reception meanwhile were also set a project titled *Our Local Area*, which has been designed to build on what they learnt during the Autumn Term. Projects have been a long-standing tradition of the school and provide an opportunity for pupils to develop their research, analysing, organisation and presentation skills. It also provides a chance for parents to get involved by helping their child complete their project.

I would like to remind you that the deadline for the projects to be handed in is **Monday 29 March 2021**. The upcoming half-term holiday would be an ideal time for your child to work on the project, so that it is ready to be handed in at the end of March. Please see the attached documents for further details about these projects.

## **Window to the School**

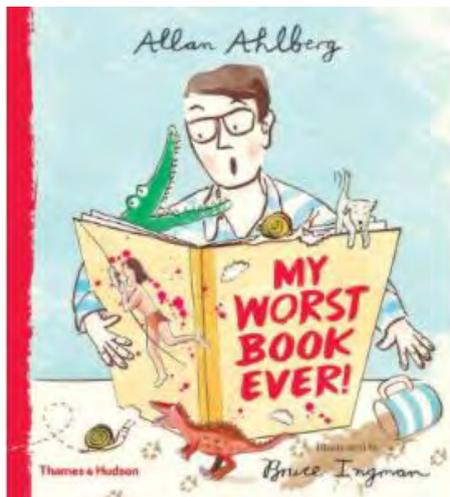
Each week in my newsletter I will be sharing a photo of a view from a room within the school (see right). Please share this with your child and ask them to work out the room it was taken from. They should message their teacher on Class Dojo with the answer. Again, it is intended as a fun activity to maintain your child's connection with school.

The photo last week was taken from Training Room, also known as the 'Hut'. Can you guess which room this week's photo was taken from?



## **Mr Panichi's Book of the Week**

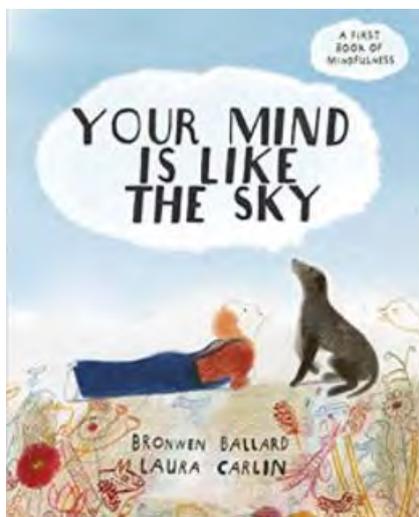
### **Lower School**



### ***My Worst Book Ever! – Allan Ahlberg & Bruce Ingman (Illustrator)***

Allan Ahlberg describes the journey of a story from the glimmer of an idea in an author's head to a fully-fledged published story in this unique picture book. Children will be fascinated by the inner workings of an author's mind as he shapes his story and delighted by the influences - and chaos! - which affect the final production. Lots of lovely detail and humour is provided by Bruce Ingman's illustrations. A great book to share during bedtime.

## Upper School



### **Your Mind is Like the Sky – Bronwen Ballard & Laura Carlin (Illustrator)**

*'Your mind is like the sky. Sometimes it's clear and blue. Sometimes it's fizzy and stormy and black and crackly.'*

And so begins Bronwen Ballard's narrative exploration of feelings: the explicable and the inexplicable; the feelings we can talk about and those that remain unspoken.

Your Mind is Like the Sky treats children's everyday worries seriously; the tone is unpatronizing and unsentimental. The poetic text avoids mention of specific worries and is consequently universal and provides space for individual response. Bronwen Ballard's professional understanding informs this reassuring text which acknowledges the child's worries and negative feelings, then turns to practical ways to encourage healthy thinking habits. Carlin's illustrations

introduce character into the narrative, which makes what could have been an abstract subject, approachable.

Thank you for all that you have done and continue to do to support your children and the school. There will be no remote learning set next week. Have a restful half-term break. Stay safe. Stay well. To all those celebrating the Chinese New Year:

**新年快乐 / 新年快樂 (xīn nián kuài lè) "Happy New Year!"**

Yours sincerely



Mr M Singh  
Headteacher

### **Dates for the Diary**

School closed to all pupils during week commencing 15 February 2021

# NATIONAL LOCKDOWN STAY AT HOME



<p><b>SOCIAL CONTACT</b></p> <p>No household mixing, aside from support bubbles, childcare bubbles, to provide care for vulnerable people, to attend a support group, or for respite care.</p>	<p><b>EDUCATION</b></p> <p>Early year settings are open. All other schools and colleges will learn remotely. Schools will remain open for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers.</p>	<p><b>SHOPPING &amp; RETAIL</b></p> <p>Essential shops can open. Non-essential retail must close and can only open for click-and-collect (not alcohol) and delivery.</p>	<p><b>WORK</b></p> <p>You can only leave home for work purposes where it is unreasonable for you to do your job from home.</p>
<p><b>ENTERTAINMENT</b></p> <p>Closed.</p>	<p><b>INDOOR</b></p> <p>Closed.</p>	<p><b>HOTEL &amp; ACCOMMODATION</b></p> <p>Closed (with limited exceptions).</p>	<p><b>PERSONAL CARE</b></p> <p>Closed.</p>
<p><b>OVERNIGHT STAYS</b></p> <p>You must not stay overnight away from home. Limited exceptions apply.</p>	<p><b>RESIDENTIAL CARE</b></p> <p>Visits to care homes can take place, but close-contact indoor visits are not allowed. No visits will be permitted in the event of an outbreak.</p>	<p><b>BAR, PUBS AND RESTAURANTS</b></p> <p>Hospitality closed. Takeaways can open, but no alcohol can be served.</p>	<p><b>WORSHIP</b></p> <p>Open for private prayer and communal worship, but cannot interact with anyone outside household or support bubble.</p>
<p><b>TRAVEL &amp; TRANSPORT</b></p> <p>You must stay at home and only travel for work or other legally permitted reasons. If you have to, you should stay local and reduce the number of journeys you make. Do not travel abroad unless an exemption applies.</p>	<p><b>EXERCISE &amp; OUTDOOR LEISURE</b></p> <p>You can leave your home to exercise by yourself, with your household or support bubble, or with one person from another household once a day only. Organised outdoor sport is closed unless for the disabled.</p>	<p><b>WEDDINGS &amp; FUNERALS</b></p> <p>Funerals of up to 30 people permitted. Wakes and other linked ceremonial events can continue in a group of up to six. Weddings of up to six can continue in exceptional circumstances.</p>	<p><b>CLINICALLY EXTREMELY VULNERABLE</b></p> <p>If you receive a shielding letter you must shield. Those who are clinically extremely vulnerable should not leave home unless it is for a medical appointments, exercise or if it is essential.</p>

For more information and detailed guidance visit: [gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)