

# Abacus Primary School

## Newsletter 517 2 / 2 / 24



### Number Day 2024

Thank you for helping us support this event which helps the amazing charity NSPCC

continue their work in supporting children.

We are expecting a special visitor this afternoon from the NSPCC...we will update you next week!

At the time of writing this newsletter we had received £221.50 which will all go to the NSPCC.



Next week we are on Week 1 of our revised menu.

See page 6 for details or view on our website:

<https://www.abacusprimaryschool.co.uk/school-meals>





Our school council had their second meeting this week and we discussed lunchtime food choices and activities. I met with Mrs Pasqua, our new catering manager and many of the classes favourite choices have now been added to the menu including pizza whirls and sausage and mash. **Please see the menu on our website:**

**[www.abacusprimaryschool.co.uk/school-meals](http://www.abacusprimaryschool.co.uk/school-meals). A link to the menu will also be text**

**to you for easy access.**

We also discussed portion size and will be making some changes to the potato options on a chicken nugget day.

As we are now part of the Smart School Council more children will have the opportunity to lead class council meetings.



An Alzheimer's Society initiative



Well done to our Young Leaders who have completed their 'Dementia Friends' training. They were all very excited to receive their Dementia Friend badge this week. If you're interested in becoming a dementia friend, you can find more information here: <https://www.dementiafriends.org.uk/WEBArticle?page=become-dementia-friend>



# GET INVOLVED!

Place2Be's

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

5-11 FEB 2024

#CHILDRENSMENTALHEALTHWEEK

Next week is children's mental health week Mrs Ferrari (wellbeing teacher) and Mrs Smith (PSHE leader) have planned a number of activities for the children to take part in throughout the week. The theme for the week is **My Voice Matters**, it is about empowering young people to use their voices, share what matters to them, and encourage those around them to hear their voices. Evidence shows that empowering children and young people can have a positive impact on their health and wellbeing. For example, children and young people who feel that their voices are heard - and that what they say makes a difference - have higher levels of self-efficacy and self-esteem. As a celebration of the week and to conclude the activities we invite children to come 'Dressed To Express Themselves' on Friday. This could be coloured hair or a wig, jeans and a T-shirt or full out fancy dress...we can't wait to see your creativity.

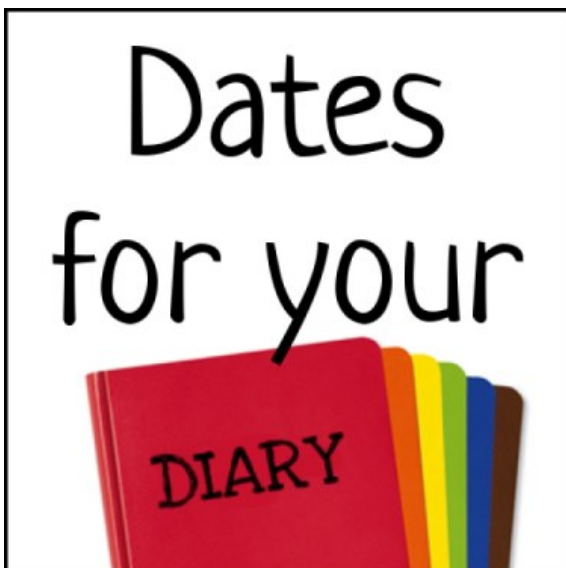




# LET'S CELEBRATE!



Well done to Kayla, Elsie and Charlie for their achievements in swimming, lifeguarding skills and football.



## Year 6 SATS meeting—Tuesday

13th February 2024 9am

Miss Mitchell will be leading a session for the parents of Year 6 children to talk through the organisation for SATS week. This session will take place on Tuesday 13th February 2024 at 9am in the large hall.

Book look— Wednesday 14th February 2024 3.15pm to 4.15pm

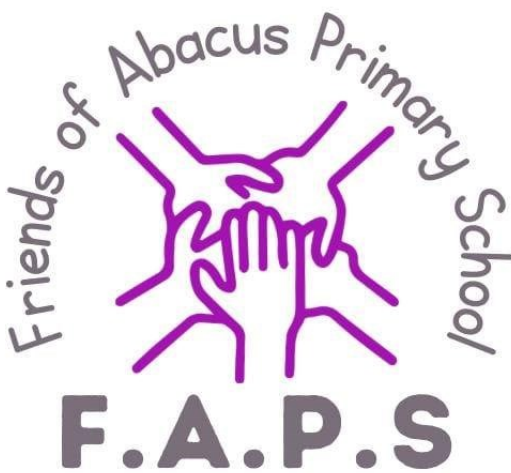
Parents are invited to come into school from 3.15 to 4.15pm on Wednesday 14th February 2024 to visit classrooms looking at work on display and in children's books.



# We love to read!



Well done Year 5 for your enthusiastic reading, our resident friends had the biggest smiles on their faces on Monday afternoon.



Thank you to our FAPS committee for all their efforts in organising the movie nights this week. FAPS is run by a group of dedicated and very committed parents, who plan and organise these events alongside working their own jobs and running their families. The number of events which they have planned recently has increased on previous years and takes a great

amount of their own time.

Events have to have cut off dates (as do all events) to enable planning and organisation and reminders have been sent. Committee members should be respected for the role that they play and should not receive abuse from parents who have forgotten to book their child a place. Please remember that this role is voluntary .



## Year 3 Buddy Boot Camp

On the 30th January 2024, our Year 3 children took part in a Buddy Boot Camp session on our school field.

The aim of the session was for the children to solve problems; develop teamwork; work on determination and perseverance skills whilst having lots of fun in the mud.

I think we can see by the photos they all had a great time.





# Our Curriculum



## Early Years Foundation Stage

This week it has been cold in foundation as in our story we have been moving from the South Pole to the North Pole and back again! We have enjoyed our story of Mr and Mrs Pilchard-Brown and their three children. We have found out lots of children have visited different countries and enjoyed sharing our adventures. We didn't quite have the 400 milk bottles needed to make a giant igloo- so made one for each class to use as part of play. We had to investigate how to construct it together- what would work best. Ask us about how it was made. We are also excited to be finding ways of making 5, 6 and 7. Ask us how many aliens are in the flying saucer and what happened when 7 arrived!

## Year 1

Another busy week in Year 1. In English we have been learning about plurals and which is the correct spelling to use. In Maths we have been finding the difference by subtracting. Science was all about discovering what transparent, opaque and reflective meant. Ask us what they mean. In History we compared Victorian toys to toys of today, we could not believe how different they were. We also finished our DT projects which look Fin-Tastic!

## Year 2

This week in Year 2 we have started to use Pirates as our writing stimulus, We began by writing pirate poems and are now beginning to look at the features of a diary which will help us to write about the daily life of pirates next week, In Maths we have continued to work on multiplication and have been exploring grouping and sharing as an introduction to division. During Science we looked at different objects and the properties of the materials from which they are made. We discussed the reasons why things are made from the materials they are - our chairs wouldn't be much use if they were made of cardboard and wooden windows wouldn't allow us to see! Yoga is always good fun - we have been practising different poses based on farm animals this week although holding the poses while breathing for 6 counts is often tricky!

## Year 3

I know we say it every week but wow - what a busy week we have had! In English, we have planned & written some animal poetry & identified the features of persuasive texts. We've been working on length in Maths, comparing/measuring lines & objects with a ruler (recording in cm and mm). Children should remember how many mm in a cm, & how many cm in a metre. Why not measure some objects at home & practise making accurate measurements in mm? We've learnt some additional homophones in spelling (same sounding words, e.g. grown and groan) - you can find these on list 17 of the Spelling Shed app. We & strength challenges. We learned about magnetic forces in Science, experimenting with different materials to test whether or not they are attracted to magnets. We used atlases and topography maps in Geography to describe the physical features of some UK regions & identify the highest mountain in each of the 4 countries of the UK - see if children can remember them! We also learnt to identify positive/negative space in Art. Active bodies & minds all round this week!

## Year 4

English: We have been looking at the key features of a discussion text. How to write a balanced argument, looking at both points of view. Maths: We are currently learning about measurement converting metres into kilometres, and calculating the equivalent lengths. History: We have been learning about Wickford and local history. Did you know that Wickford was in the Domesday book, when William the Conqueror was on the throne! Ask your child if they can recall some facts. Computing has been all about coding. French: We have learnt to say and recognise number from one to seventy. Ask your child if they remember the rule?

## Year 5

This week has been another busy week for Year 5. We have continued our unit about fractions in Maths and the children have learned how to subtract with two mixed numbers. In English, we have started a new unit about discussion texts and are thinking about how to create a balanced argument. The topic so far has caused lots of debate: Should children clean their schools? In Japan, this is common practice and is called o-soji. Ask us our thoughts! We have also been learning about portraits and using new skills in Art this week. To top it off, today is Number Day and we have helped solve a Maths mystery! What a week!

## Year 6

This week we had good fun in PE working as a team to complete challenges in order to help our communication skills. These will be important when we do 'proper' orienteering next week. We also enjoyed further developing our understanding of tennis and putting some of our skills into practice by introducing a scoring system. In Maths, we have been adding, subtracting, rounding and multiplying decimals. A secure understanding of number bonds and place value helps us with this! In RE we have created some beautiful double page spreads and recorded a news reel demonstrating our understanding of the scientific theory as to how the world began, the Christian creation story and theistic evolution. Ask us to tell you all about it!





# WE'VE LAUNCHED A LOTTERY

**BUY A WEEKLY TICKET TO SUPPORT OUR SCHOOL**

**& win up to £25,000**

## HOW IT WORKS

- Tickets cost £1 per week (minimum period 1 month).
- Easy to sign up online (Payment by debit card or direct debit).
- Every week one member of our school community will win a cash prize.
- Winners are notified by email.
- Weekly chance to win up to £25000 in the national draw.



**SPLITTING THE £1**  
40p School funds  
30p Local prizes  
6p Jackpot prize  
20p Administration  
4p VAT

## THE MATHS

100 WEEKLY TICKETS SOLD  
= £30 weekly cash prize  
+ £2080 a year for our school

To start supporting visit  
**[yourschoollottery.co.uk](http://yourschoollottery.co.uk)**  
and search for Abacus Primary



# BOOK ONTO A HALF TERM ACTIVITY CLUB WITH ESSEX ACTIVATE!

Eligible children and young people are invited to book onto **FREE**, fun-filled activity clubs who are run by a network of locally, trusted organisations across Essex, brought to you by Active Essex on behalf of Essex County Council!

## IS MY CHILD ELIGIBLE?

Essex ActivAte offer free, club spaces to primary and secondary school aged children (4-16 years), who are eligible for benefit based free school meals, or from 'low-income' working families, as well as children who may be vulnerable to inactivity or social isolation.

## WHERE WILL THE CLUBS BE RUN?

Clubs will run in Braintree, Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Chelmsford, Colchester, Epping, Harlow, Maldon, Rochford, Tendring and Uttlesford! Due to half term programmes being solely funded by Essex County Council, unfortunately there will not be any clubs running in Thurrock.

## WHAT DO THE CLUBS PROVIDE?

Clubs provide a range of different physical, enrichment and food activities to support children's physical and mental wellbeing, as well as a delicious, nutritious meal!

## HOW DO I BOOK ONTO A CLUB?

As half term programme are smaller and offer less activity days, you will not book on with your HolidayActivities voucher, but book on through the Essex ActivAte website instead. Simply find your local area and book on with the link provided or contact the club directly.

Find out more about February half term clubs and book on here.





# SEND IASS Workshops - SOUTH

## at the Essex Local Offer

The Essex SEND Information Advice and Support Service are holding **FREE** workshops for parents/carers of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities at the Essex Local Offer Roadshows.

There will be workshops in the morning and afternoon (including a free light lunch), offering knowledge and skills which you can then adapt at home.

Details of the event are: Monday 4<sup>th</sup> March 9.00-14.30 at Holiday Inn, Festival Leisure Park, Waterfront Walk, Basildon, SS14 3DG

Please complete the online Microsoft form for booking the workshops only by clicking on the link below or scan the QR code:

<https://forms.office.com/e/EM2GaZa2xA?origin=lprLink>

You will receive confirmation of your place on the workshops by email 10 days before the event.

Routine and Regulation	Workshop Aim: Learning how to promote a consistent approach between home and school to help improve relationships and communication with both your child and the school.
Self-awareness and communication for change	Workshop Aim: Learn strategies to help manage your and your child's emotions and behaviours by recognising triggers and learning techniques to balance and lessen the physical effects.
Sensory Awareness	Workshop Aim: Understanding your child's sensory behaviours and how to support them in the home
Supporting Dysregulation & Maintaining Connection	Workshop Aim: This workshop explores the impact that stress has upon on the brain and body. It also looks at ways parents and carers can become stress detectives to support their children to regulate their emotions, maintain connection and nurture their emotional wellbeing.

Please note **last day** for booking a place on the workshops is Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

### Programme of the day

09.00 – 9.50	Arrive for registration and coffee – opportunity to visit exhibition stands
10.00 – 11.30	Workshop 1
11.45 – 12.45	Free buffet lunch and opportunity to visit exhibition stands
13.00 – 14:30	Workshop 2





# What Parents & Carers Need to Know about PERSUASIVE DESIGN ONLINE

'Persuasive design' refers to the techniques that companies employ to influence our thoughts and behaviours when we're on the internet. These approaches can be spotted on websites, in apps and even as part of some video games. Persuasive design means that this content has been deliberately presented in a way that's intended to encourage you to spend your time or money (or both). These methods often prove highly effective at keeping people engaged and invested for longer than we might expect.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### POTENTIAL ADDICTION

In the digital world, persuasive design can make certain activities more addictive and harder to walk away from: some people may begin to feel anxious or irritated without access to their device or their favourite app, for example. It can also often leave users feeling isolated, as – if they spend most of their time on social media – they may start to find it difficult to talk to other people in real life.

### MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS

Scrolling online or gaming without regular breaks is proven to be harmful to our mental health. The constant bombardment of news stories (many of them negative), images and influencers' posts can create sensations of unease, uncertainty and FOMO (fear of missing out). Young people can get so immersed in this environment that they become less likely to spot misleading posts.

### PROLONGED SCROLLING

Social media can draw any of us – regardless of age – into a continuous pattern of refreshing our screen, following posts and links down rabbit holes or reading countless comments made by others. This aimless scrolling can eat up time which could have been spent on more productive activities. It could also lead younger users into areas of the online world which aren't age appropriate.

### SENSORY OVERLOAD

Repetitively scrolling, clicking on links or playing games can create an unending stream of new information and visual stimuli. Put it this way: social media isn't exactly renowned as a carefree, chilled-out environment. Such overstimulation can become too much for young people to handle, resulting in sensory overload and causing them to feel stressed, overwhelmed and exhausted.

### COSTLY ADDITIONS

Video games sometimes display offers for downloadable content or loot boxes which can be bought with real money. While these 'microtransactions' temptingly promise to improve a player's gaming experience, most of the time they are money sinks. Young people in particular, excited by the chance of enhancing their game, could spend quite a sizeable sum very quickly indeed.

### PHYSICAL CONSEQUENCES

Hours spent sitting and scrolling means far less time moving around and getting exercise: hardly ideal for a young person's physical health. Additionally, prolonged exposure to the light given off by a phone's screen can lead to eye fatigue and discomfort, especially if viewing it in the dark. Extended phone use before bed can also impact on sleep quality, affecting mood and energy levels over the following days.

# KEEP SCROLLING

# WIN TO WIN

27 new posts

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### ESTABLISH LIMITS

Talk to your child about setting some time limits on how long they can use their phone, tablet or console in the evenings or at weekends – or perhaps how often they can go on a specific app, game or website. You could also decide to involve the whole family in creating this shared screen time agreement, making things fair (and healthier) for everyone.

### NIX NOTIFICATIONS

Stop knee-jerk responses at the source by turning off push notifications and alerts. Whether it's a gaming notification or a social media update, these not-so-gentle reminders are designed to catch our attention and lure us back to our device. Switching them off – or even deleting any particularly intrusive apps – can help prevent your child from being reeled back into the online world.

### ENCOURAGE MINDFULNESS

Acknowledging any addiction is key in overcoming it – and compulsive scrolling is no different. If anything mentioned in this guide sounds familiar, it could help to have an honest, open chat with your child about how much time they spend online. Get them to think about how often they scroll through social media aimlessly or habitually open it up whenever they have a spare moment.

### MAKE A CHECKLIST

Considering a list of relevant questions can be an effective way of helping children figure out why they're scrolling on certain sites or consuming particular pieces of content. A checklist can prompt young people to ask themselves if they're learning anything or benefiting from this activity – or if they're wasting their time. Taking a step back can sometimes help us to see things more clearly.

### Meet Our Expert

Rebecca Jennings has more than 20 years' experience in the field of relationships, sex and health education (RSHE). As well as delivering workshops and training for young people, parents and schools, she is also a subject matter expert on RSHE for the Department of Education.



The National College

NOS National Online Safety® #WakeUpWednesday