



ELMWOOD SCHOOL NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2021 – NO. 163

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MORE FUN IN THE SNOW



Pupils enjoyed their out and about lesson with Mr Whittaker, Head of Outdoor Learning, on Tuesday 26th January. They were able to take



advantage of the snow, having fun on sledges with some pupils overcoming their fear.

MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD

Following the government announcement w/c 4th January 2021, we have continued to work in collaboration with parents/carers, social care and the Local Authority to provide as close to a full functioning in school provision for those pupils who we believed to be the most vulnerable and, in accordance with parental request, to attend on site educational experiences. I would like to thank all leaders for their work in securing a curriculum which was purposeful, supportive of children's mental health and well being and arranging weekly purposeful activities. This leadership and direction has enabled staff to focus on our Elmwood Community (in school and home learning).

During Spring Term 1 we were able to provide 57% of the school population to access at least 1 day of face to face educational experiences, this has increased to 78% for Spring Term 2. This increase is due to the positive experiences and reassurances to parents/carers, and the pupils, that we have reduced risk to the lowest reasonably practicable level.

Pupils and staff have also demonstrated the schools value of "Care for Others" by providing consent to LFD Testing meaning, alongside our current systems of control, we have an added level of reduction of risk.

All those (who are eligible) have received FSM High Street vouchers (of a supermarket of their choice) and this will continue until full school opening.

There will be further announcements of returning to full school opening w/c 8th March 2021 in the coming days.
Report by Mr Cross, Headteacher

SIGNS OF NEW LIFE



As we continue to face the challenges that are around us at the moment, a reminder that School is still here for those self isolating.



The annual rituals (like bulb planting) and landmarks that take place during the year are happening and will happen again when pupils are all able to return.

Report by

Mr Whittaker, Head of Outdoor Learning



TIME TO GET MOVING

With Easter not too far away and having enjoyed lots of goodies at Christmas, Mr Bullock, PE Teacher, is encouraging pupils to get active. He has produced a keeping fit at home booklet for pupils to take part in whilst they are home learning. On completion of the activities pupils can get the certificate signed off by a member of staff during safe and well weekly visits which, in turn, will lead to a prize on their return to School.

HOME LEARNING SKILLS



Dilan in Year 7 has been enjoying some of the home learning activities such as making a yummy looking pizza and bird feeder. With food being harder to find for birds during the colder weather, the feeder will be a popular item in Dilan's garden. Very well done Dilan and thank you for sharing.



Another pupil who has shared photos of his results from one of the outdoor education tasks is Mark in Year 10.

As you can see the bird feeder has turned out brilliantly and it looks like Mark enjoyed making it too. Well done Mark—a great result.

Photos of home learning are on the school website, photo gallery page.

GOVERNOR NEWS PARENT GOVERNOR VACANCY

On the 16th March 2021 the term of office for Suzanne Hill, one of our parent governors, will come to an end.

Suzanne became a governor when her son Tom attended Elmwood and has remained an active member of the team since he moved onto College a couple of years ago. Suzanne has supported the school by not only attending and contributing to meetings but also through coffee mornings where she has been a great advocate; even managing to persuade another parent to become a governor. In addition Suzanne has raised a fantastic amount of money for our school fund account over the years with the amount of raffle tickets she has sold—this has been very much appreciated. We wish Suzanne and Tom all the best for the future and hopefully she will be able to pop along to a future coffee morning.

As a result of the above a vacancy will be available for a new parent or carer to join the Governing Body. Details are on the Governor page of the school website or from the Clerk to the Governors, Dawn Canham on dcanham@elmwood.walsall.sch.uk.



CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

The week was an opportunity to shine a spotlight on the importance of children and young people's mental health. The week raised important awareness as well as vital funds to help more children and young people get the emotional support they need.



We know that many children and young people's mental health has been affected over the past year. According to one survey, 85% of the young people we support have been negatively affected by the pandemic.

Here at Elmwood school we decided to organise a "dress to express" day whereby children could dress in something which is expressive, vibrant or colourful. A special mention to Ricky from year 9 whose outfit wowed us all. There were some fantastic outfits from staff also; notable outfits were worn by Mr Holmes, Mrs Francis, Gail Smith and Michelle Davies. During our Feel Good Friday sessions pupils were also learning the importance of expressing yourself and strategies on how to do this.

Overall the school raised £94 in total which is an amazing sum considering we still have some of our school population on home learning. I would like to say a big thank you to all those who donated to this great cause.

Report by Mr Hawkes, Assistant Headteacher



STAFFING NEWS

After working on supply at the school for some time, teacher, Cindy Millerchip, ended her time at Elmwood on Friday 5th February. As well as being the form tutor for Year 9b, and assisting in drama lessons, Cindy has also been taking good care of our chickens. Cindy has forged good relationships with both pupils and staff and we wish her every success for the future. A big thank you also to Cindy for the lovely thank you cards and goodies she kindly dropped off for pupils and staff (as well as a treat for the chickens) to enjoy, which were very much appreciated.

A big thank you to Carol Bratt, cleaner, at the school who is doing a brilliant job of keeping the school clean in the absence of her fellow cleaner, Julie Burnell, who is still recovering from a fall. We look forward to welcoming Julie back when she is fit to do so.

SUPER WORK



Tom in Year 11 made this stunning piece of work during DT lessons with Mr Francis. His 'tree of life' was carefully crafted using a laser cutter which he chose to give to his nan as a birthday gift. We are sure she will treasure this special creation. Very well done Tom.

HOME COOKING SKILLS



Joseph in Year 11 recently told staff that he had made some bread at home and offered to bring some in for us to try. True to his word, Joseph arrived with a round loaf that he had made. It looked fantastic and feedback from staff included Mr Bowen saying 'hot buttery toast, utterly amazing', Mr Damms said 'mmmm, its lovely' and Michelle Davies commented that 'the crusty bit is the best part'. Joseph said that he glazed the loaf with an egg to give it that farmhouse effect. I agreed 'real comfort food with melted butter oozing, yum' Well Done Joseph! He is trying flapjacks and shortbread over the half term.
Report by: Jo Hughes, Teaching Assistant

HEALTH AND SAFETY DAYS

Unfortunately the health and safety days that were scheduled for the 10-12th February 2021 have had to be rearranged.

The new dates for this to take place is Monday to Wednesday 29th-31st March. Thursday 1st April is a training day.

This means that pupils will break up for the Easter break on Friday 26th March and return to school on Monday 19th April 2021.

Apologies for any inconvenience this may cause and thank you for your support.

WALSALL PREVENT PROGRAMME

The newly developed Walsall Prevent Programme – A Guide for Parents and Carers provides useful and relevant information around the dangers of radicalisation. This guidance is clearly directed towards the parents and carers of children and young people. The information sheet contains the following information:-

1. Overview of radicalisation.
2. Why do people become radicalised?
3. How are young people radicalised?
4. How can parents keep young people safe?
5. Tackling the issue: a step by step guide.
6. Where else can I find support?
7. What can I do if I have a concern?

A copy of the programme is available on the SAFEGUARDING INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/CARERS page on our school website.

FACE SURVEY

FACE Walsall, Walsall's local parent carer forum, is inviting all families in Walsall who have children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to complete a short survey. FACE Walsall is an independent organisation; they work in partnership with Walsall Local Authority and education, social care and health services to ensure the views of parents/carers and young people are represented and, to ensure, that local services meet the needs of local children, young people and their families. A copy of the survey is available on the parents/carers area of the school website.

MAGIC MOMENTS



During outdoor learning lessons prior to half term, bird spotting was on the agenda which was mirrored with the bird feeding and spotting project for home learners.

This was programmed for the last week of this half term, in the hope that COVID statistics may have been lower allowing a longer duration in the minibus as a possibility. As this hasn't proved the case, the latest Ranger was asked if he could find a more local site than our usual Sandwell Valley Park. He came up with Fibbersley nature reserve, which was a 15 minute journey

and, with windows lowered, was chilly having more ventilation than most classrooms but was worth it.

We arrived prior to each of our visits to open the barrier for our bus and the volunteer guided us each time.

Anyhow, the snow made it quite magical and more Christmassy than Christmas was and we had a wow experience of the robins coming to feed off our hand!!



Report by Mr D Whittaker, Head of Outdoor Learning

In addition to the above, Kerry Bowen, Teaching Assistant also had a lovely wildlife day when out on safe and well visits to pupils on 11.2.21. Logan in Year 7 filled two big bags of rubbish around Fibbersley nature reserve while feeding the birds whilst Sennen also in Year 7 was lucky enough to spot six female does at Chasewater Country Park—a beautiful sight.



SAFEGUARDING UPDATES

Last year schools across the UK were warned about a well known chat room, Omegle. Content from Omegle is now being shared by popular influencers which could encourage young people to visit this platform. We are aware of instances where popular influencers are livestreaming reaction videos of them using the platform.

Young people are likely to use these chat rooms and chat room apps because they seem fun, and the randomisation of people can be exciting. As young people spend so much more time online due to ongoing restrictions there is an increased chance that they will come across these sites.

The risks are:-

Young people are at risk of seeing distressing or highly sexualised imagery without warning
They may be asked or pressured to remove clothing or reveal personal information
They may be asked to have private conversations on other apps or platforms
They may be sent malicious links or spam

Please be mindful of this site and further information on other sites of concern are on the safeguarding information for parents and carers on the school website.

SafeToNet is an app for parents to help them safeguard their children from online risks like cyberbullying and sexting, whilst always respecting their child's rights to privacy. The SafeToNet Foundation is providing UK families with free-for-life access to the SafeToNet safeguarding solution during coronavirus.

Using the code: SAFE, parents can get free access to the app which has wellbeing activities and adds a safeguarding keyboard to the child's phone.

Further details are available on their website, <https://safetonet.com>

COOKING UP A TREAT



Nurture pupils had a lovely morning making valentine cakes discovering different ways to decorate fairy cakes using food colouring in butter icing to create a marble effect then stamping out heart shapes out of coloured roll out icing.

Year 9 pupils got creative with pancake art. It takes a lot of skill to create a batter that is the consistency to enable you to pipe it through a nozzle to create pictures. Nothing went to waste if it didn't quite go to plan the pancakes were demolished ready to have another attempt.



Year 11s have been very busy working their way through their BTEC Level 2 home cooking skills assessments. All have completed their practical assessments. Very nearly there now—come on year 11s you've got this!

Report by Ms Shaw, Food Technology Teacher

