

Walsall Virtual School Newsletter

July 2021

Welcome!

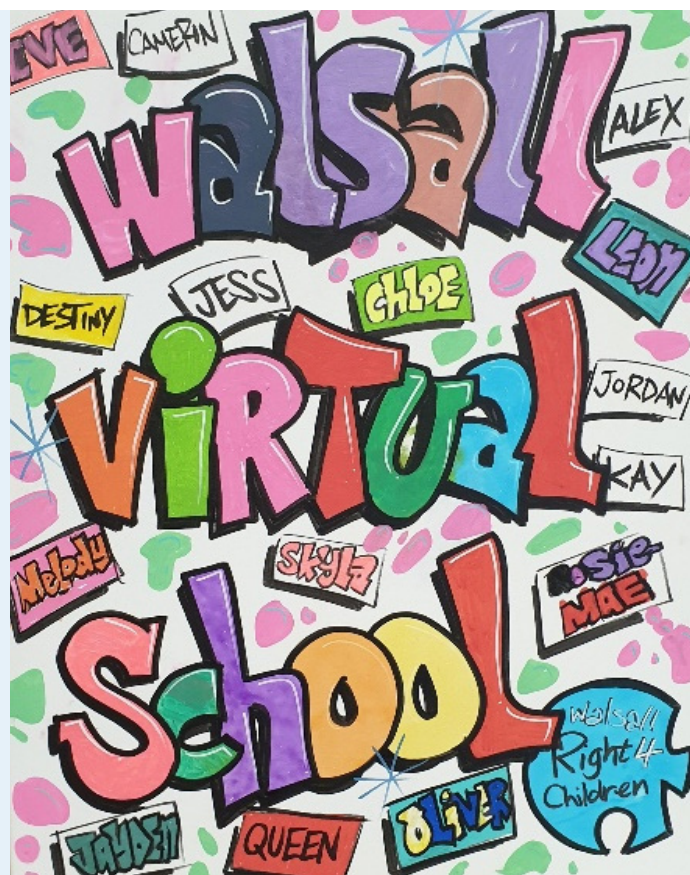
Happy summer to our Walsall Virtual School community!

We this newsletter finds you safe and well and the last few weeks of term are going smoothly.

We know this has been challenging a challenging year for many of our children, schools, families and wider community, and we would like to thank you all for the support you have put in place around our children.

This newsletter has some ideas of things you can do in the last few weeks of term and over the summer holiday.

As always, stay safe, have a lovely summer holiday and don't hesitate to contact us if you have any thoughts, questions or ideas at WalsallVirtualSchool@walsall.gov.uk



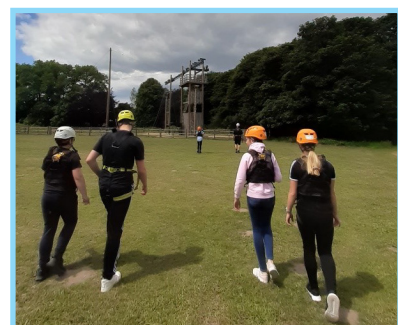
Virtual School Summer Term Projects and Updates

Good Luck!

We would luck to say congratulations and good luck to all students finishing Year 6 or Year 11 this year. You have completed what some say are the most challenging years of school, during a pandemic. We know you will have experienced disruption, and uncertainty, but you have adapted to new ways of working and gained resilience in a way that no other students in history have ever needed to do. Everyone at the Virtual School is very proud of you, and we wish you the very best of luck for your new secondary schools or post 16 provisions.

Summit to Success

Summit to Success is a project that we ran for Y8 students this term. Young people have spent sessions learning how to meditate, and work as a team in order to build their resilience, confidence and social skills. The group spent a day at an outdoors centre, where they braved canoes and high ropes. They were all very brave (even the staff) and a great time was had by all! The project is finishing on Saturday 17th July, when the group will be climbing the Wrekin and then going out for a pizza to celebrate. Well done to all the students, who have developed so much!



Walsall Council



Post 16

Our Post 16 key worker has written a booklet for all young people going into Y12. The booklet outlines the options available to them and gives them a wealth of tips and advice about how to navigate the transition from school to further education or employment. The booklet will be sent to students along with a journal, and some pens.

EYFS Enrichment Project

We kicked off our Early Years Enrichment Project with our Fine Motor Skills Pack!

We hope our early years children were excited to find playdough, threading, scissors, a whiteboard and a whiteboard pen arrive in the post addressed to them! And we hope our carers found the accompanying guidance useful to get the most of it playing and learning with the children. We had great feedback from the workshop our EYFS Key Worker, Emily, ran to support the pack.



Things to watch out for next year!

More careers help for years 9-11

The virtual school careers advisor, Hannah Yates will be helping students create action plans if they are in years 9, 10, or 11. The plans will look at their skills and interests and encourage them to start thinking early, about what they might like to do for a job, and what options would help them achieve that. As students get older, the plans will become more focussed and they will learn exactly what grades they need, and what steps they need to take to achieve their career ambitions.

Years 9-11 Careers Booklet

This booklet is being created to give all students in years 9-11 guidance on choosing options, work experience, and post 16 options that will be available to them.

Extra Year 11 help

Our year 11's will be sent a pack during the autumn term. The pack will contain a revision guide, and other revision aids, such as pens, paper, cards, and post it notes. The revision guide is full of useful tips on how best to revise and create timetables so that our year 11 students have some extra support to help them do as well as they can, in their forthcoming GCSE's

Academic Mentors

We will be trialling the use of academic mentors next year. These mentors will work with students who very capable, but unsure of what they would like to do longer term. We hope that the mentor check in and talks will help students stay focussed on their education and develop their aspirations and hopes for the future.

New Staff at the Virtual School

We have welcomed 2 new members of staff to the team this term!

They have both joined the primary team within the Virtual School and are very much looking forward to working with you all:

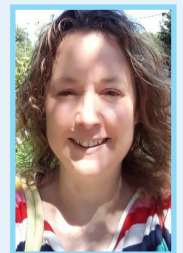
Chloe Sandel

Hi, my name is Chloe, I am the new teaching assistant apprentice within the Virtual School. I am working within a primary school in Walsall. I have really enjoyed getting to know the people around me and getting to know the people I am working with in school so far. I'm looking forward to working with more children in September, and supporting them however they need in school.



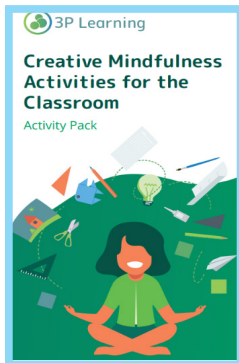
Emma Jones

Hi, I'm Emma, I am the new Key Worker in the primary team. My role will be supporting schools and pupils in Years 5 to 7. I will be able to support our young people to enjoy and prosper at primary and make a successful transition to secondary school. I appreciate how difficult change can be for many of our young people, particularly when some of the usual sources which help reduce the anxiety, are not available yet, due to Covid. I'm looking forward to working with you and finding workable solutions.



Teachers' Tool Room

Creative Mindfulness Activities for the Classroom



As we move into the final few weeks of term, schools can be a very busy place. With that in mind, please find attached to this email an activity pack created by 3P learning with Creative Mindfulness Activities for the Classroom. It is full of lovely ideas and activities to do with your children to maintain a bit of calmness and focus in the classroom.

Looking forwards... 2021 Schools Time Capsule

After a challenging year, it's vital that children and young people are given an opportunity to reflect on what they've been through. Place2Be is launching the 2021 Schools Time Capsule, a new project with BAFTA Kids and Oak National Academy.

The 2021 Schools Time Capsule is an opportunity for pupils in schools across the UK to reflect on and capture their collective experiences of life during the pandemic. We hope your school will take part in the project. Find out more and download the free pack here: **2021 Schools Time Capsule - Place2Be**

Carers' Corner

SafeToNet

We have shared this before but with the summer holidays approaching, children and young people have more free time to spend on the internet. SafeToNet is an app for parents and carers 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. More information can be found via the link.

<https://safetonet.com/en-gb/landing-pages/covid/>

NAOTP – National Association of Therapeutic Parents

NAOTP's mission statement is to provide support, education, and resources for Therapeutic Parents and supporting professionals relating to therapeutic parenting, effective interventions, compassion fatigue and the effects of early life trauma. They want to promote better outcomes for children who have suffered early life trauma by significantly improving the consistency and quality of support available to Therapeutic Parents in the UK, regardless of whether they are Foster Parents, Adopters, Kinship Carers, Special Guardians, Step Parents, or Birth parents.

Their website has a wealth of free resources and podcasts that you may find useful to support you- <https://www.naotp.com/>

Artslink

artslink
West Midlands Virtual Schools

Arts Award

Are you interested in the arts? Would you like to get an award for it?

Arts Award supports young people up to the age of 25 to discover more about the arts and grow as artists and leaders, by inspiring them to connect with and take part in artform challenges.

Any of Artslink's events or activities can be used as part of an Arts Award, and any arts activities you do at home or school can be used too! During Covid lockdowns it's possible to use online activities, resources and info to work on your Arts Award.

Check out, **Arts Award | Artslink (artslinkwm.org.uk)** for more information.

Disney

A note to let you know that Artslinks online Disney project is now available. We've created 2 show pages (Frozen and Beauty and the Beast), with filmed-live performances of the shows plus accompanying activities commissioned from West Midlands artists, including singalongs and crafting.

Disney shows | Artslink (artslinkwm.org.uk)

Literacy Lounge



Summer Reading!

A full summer programme of events and activities is planned to encourage children and families to keep reading over the summer.

BookTrust has teamed up with over 20 other organisations to celebrate a Summer of Reading.

Co-ordinated by The Reading Agency and supported by Arts Council England and the Department for Culture, Media & Sport, the Summer of Reading initiative aims to get children and families reading for pleasure over the coming months.

A full programme has been planned and new activities and events, both online and in person, will be announced every week until 17 September.

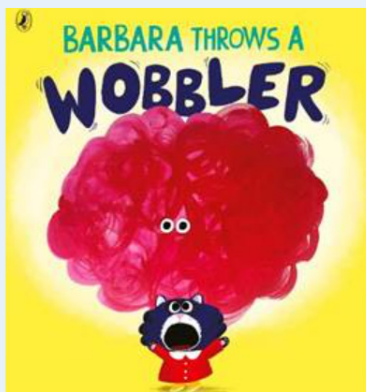
The public will be encouraged to share what they're getting up to on social media using the hashtag #SummerOfReading, and there will be free resources available to families, libraries and teachers.

The initiative has been developed to make sure that children who need the benefits of reading the most have access to activities over the summer, as the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic continue to be felt by families.

Summer of Reading | Reading Agency – Check it out and let us know! Best contributions could be in line to win an Amazon voucher!



Book of the Month



Book of the Month for EYFS - Barbara throws a Wobbler

Author: Nadia Shireen

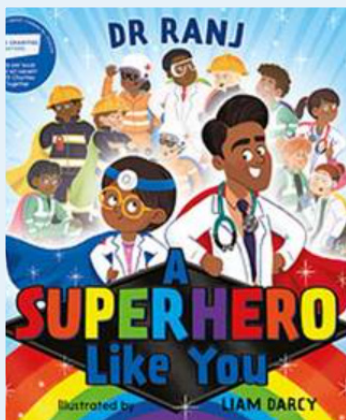
Barbara is not having a great day. First, she can't find the right sock, then there's a suspicious pea for lunch, and THEN she steps on a crack on the pavement. Her friends can't cheer her up, and then, the unthinkable happens: Barbara drops her ice-cream. It's the last straw and a full-blown WOBLER erupts. ARGHHH!

Yet, rather than just Barbara being cross, an actual red, jelly-like cloud emerges above Barbara's head and stays there, forbidding any hugs or friendly attempts at talking. The Wobbler threatens to take over Barbara altogether, until she talks to it and realises she's in control after all. With a little bit of effort, can Barbara make the Wobbler disappear?

Nadia Shireen's brilliant book about temper tantrums is a definite must-have for any parents of 3-5 year olds who may have had a wobbler or two (or a sulk, or a seethe, or any of the other temper types helpfully listed at the back of the book). As ever, Shireen's humour and empathy with little ones shines through, creating a book that totally gets exactly how frustrating life can be when you're small, but also knows that tantrums are just a part of life and – maybe – something that we can all laugh about, afterwards.

Book of the Month for Key Stage 1 - A Superhero Like You

Author: Dr Ranj



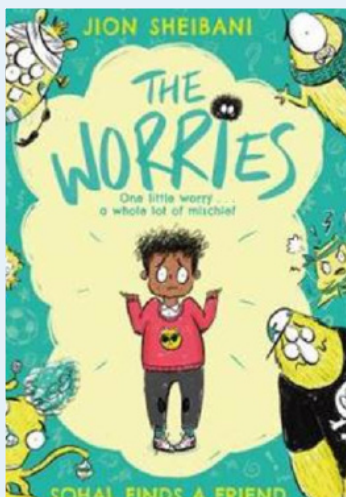
Superheroes are everywhere – you might have one living in your house, you've almost certainly passed one on the street, and you might even have stood behind one in the queue at the supermarket! But did you know it's easy for anyone to become a superhero?

Lily wakes up one day and decides she's going to be a superhero – not the kind that wears their underpants over their trousers or scales up walls, but the sort of superhero that helps make the world a better place.

This beautiful, colourful picture book shows all the different jobs that grown-ups do that help people – from being a doctor, to a recycling van driver, to a care home worker or a teacher. Simple text and a diverse range of characters encourage children to be inspired by and appreciate our amazing everyday heroes.

Book of the Month for Key Stage 2 - Emmy Levels Up

Author: Helen Harvey



Emmy lives some of the best bits of her life online and in her own head.

Emmentine, her fiery avatar, is fearless, feisty and fast, and the gamers on Islandr are in awe of her.

In real life, Emmy feels inadequate, intimidated and uncoordinated. And the cool but cruel new girl Vanessa makes absolutely sure she never gets to feel anything else. Vanessa has even got Emmy's oldest friend to turn against her.

But then along comes Geek Gang: a lunchtime computer club where the size of your house or the make of your trainers doesn't matter. And, very slowly, Emmy and the other geeks come to realise that what makes them different also gives them strength.

This is a hard-hitting yet empowering exploration of the toxic effects of bullying, not just on those who are targeted but also on those who are too afraid to challenge cruel behaviour for fear of becoming victims too.

Emmy's story will appeal to anyone who has ever been belittled by a bully or has found comfort with fellow gaming enthusiasts, either online or face to face.

Ultimately uplifting and life-affirming, Emmy's story is funny, touching and a really good read.

Book of the Month



Book of the Month for Key Stage 3– Sports Legends

Author: Rick Broadbent

This funny, touching book is filled with easy-to-read profiles of some of the most inspiring athletes in history, from all disciplines and backgrounds. From the record-breaking Olympian Jesse Owens, despised by the Nazis, who won a gold medal whilst Hitler was watching; to Sophia Flörsch, who survived a terrifying Formula One car crash aged 17 and kept racing after her recovery; to the indomitable spirit of tennis superstar Serena Williams, who has won 23 Grand Slam singles titles and 3 Olympic gold medals, the achievements and personal philosophies of these sporting heroes are fascinating to read.

Written by award-winning sports journalist Rick Broadbent and illustrated throughout by James Davies, each of these 50 incredible stories has a motivating message for young sports fans at its heart. There are champion athletes who have dealt with bullying, body image, racism, sexism and homophobia to build their own successes, whilst others have learned through failures and mistakes to accept them, learn from them, and use them to succeed.

Totally inspiring and filled with fun trivia and memorable stories to captivate sports fans of all ages, especially with the Euros, Olympics and Commonwealth Games just around the corner.



Book of the month for Key stage 4 – How Sleep Super-Charges Your Teenage Brain

Author: Nicola Morgan

This informative non-fiction book looks at the science of sleep and explores the crucial role it plays in the physical and mental health of teenagers.




The early chapters focus on a range of scientific studies, investigating what happens to the brain during different stages of sleep, how sleep – or lack of it – affects learning and concentration, and the impact of diet and exercise on sleep. The latter part of the book provides strategies to deal with a variety of sleep issues, including difficulty getting to sleep, waking up in the night and managing bad dreams.

There are quizzes to help readers evaluate their own sleep experience, along with suggestions to monitor this, for instance, keeping a sleep diary. The concept of good sleep hygiene is discussed, which involves eliminating negative factors (such as screens or excessive noise) and establishing positive practices (for example, reading a book or meditation), as well as developing a relaxing bedtime routine.

The clear layout, accessible style and excellent balance of scientific research and practical advice makes this an invaluable book for any teenager who is experiencing sleep problems. It is also an ideal resource for schools to promote discussion about health and wellbeing.

Mindfulness Moment

Why not use the summer holiday to have a go at this 30 day Wellbeing Challenge? See how many activities you can tick off!

  		
<p>Day 1 Smile and say good morning to everyone in your household.</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Day 2 Take 5 minutes to write down your feelings today.</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Day 3 Do 20 Jumping Jacks and 50 knee ups.</p> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Day 4 Visit an art gallery! Go online and explore the collections online.</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Day 5 Reply to a pen pal or to someone you have not spoken to in a long time.</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Day 6 Design a pair of trainers or shoes.</p> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Day 7 Read 20 pages from the book you are reading or start a book</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Day 8 Come up with a 10 question multiple choice quiz</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Day 9 Listen to your favourite song and dance around the room.</p> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Day 10 Go to bed 1 hour earlier tonight to wake up 1 hour earlier tomorrow.</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Day 11 Sit down and focus on your breath for 5 minutes.</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Day 12 Play a card game or board game you haven't played in a while.</p> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Day 13 Write a letter of appreciation to someone who helps.</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Day 14 Draw and paint the most colourful thing in your house.</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Day 15 Write a poem or short story.</p> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Day 16 Ask your parent/caregiver about happy things in their life</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Day 17 Research places you would like to travel to in your life time.</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Day 18 Close your eyes and visualise your future life.</p> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Day 19 Draw your favourite animal using geometric shapes.</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Day 20 Use 10 French or Spanish words today.</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Day 21 Make sure you get >8 hours sleep tonight. Note how you feel the next day.</p> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Day 22 Draw but listen to your favourite music. See what flows naturally</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Day 23 Do something nice for a sibling or parent/carer.</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Day 24 Stretch and move your body any way that feels good for 10 minutes</p> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Day 25 Clean a room in the house that is not your bedroom.</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Day 26 Design a pair of trainers or shoes.</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Day 27 Tidy your room, maybe re organise the layout.</p> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Day 28 Ensure you have >5 fruit and veg today – Write them all day</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Day 29 Do something helpful for a friend or family member today.</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Day 30 Write down 10 things you love about your life</p> <input type="checkbox"/>

Our Learning Platforms

Just a quick reminder that as part of our Virtual School Offer, children have access to the following learning platforms. We are more than happy for these to be used in school and at home.

Reading Eggs / Doodle Maths – Years 1 – 6

We have purchased subscriptions for Reading Eggs for all children in Year 1 -6 so you have these to access thousands of reading books, activities and games!

We have also purchased subscriptions for Doodle Maths for all children in Year 1 -6. Doodle Maths is a digital learning platform which creates individual work plans for children from Reception to Year 6, with curriculum-aligned questions delivered in short, fun and snappy exercises on computer, tablet or phone. Little and often works best – just 10 minutes a day is all you need to boost your child's confidence and ability in maths.

- <https://readingeggs.co.uk/>
- <https://www.doodlemaths.com/>

Please do log in to these platforms and explore them with your children. Your children's schools have also been given the login details!



The login details for the children are below, should you also wish to use them with the children in school:

Username:

All children's usernames have been changed so that they are their First names, followed by the first letter of their second names, followed by Walsall.

So a child called Joe Bloggs would have the username JoeBWalsall.

Password:

The password has been set as WalsallVirtualSchool

Secondary Learning Platform:

Mathletics - Years 7 - 11

For young people in years 7 – 11, you have access to Mathletics.

Support your students' mathematics learning at home! The best learning is enjoyable learning. Mathletics blends rewards with creative adventures to create captivating experiences that will test learners' knowledge and abilities. Built on a foundation of solid curriculum-led content and designed by a team of veteran educators, Mathletics complements and reinforces schoolwork and classroom learning.

So do remember to use your Mathletics Username and Password to log in!

