

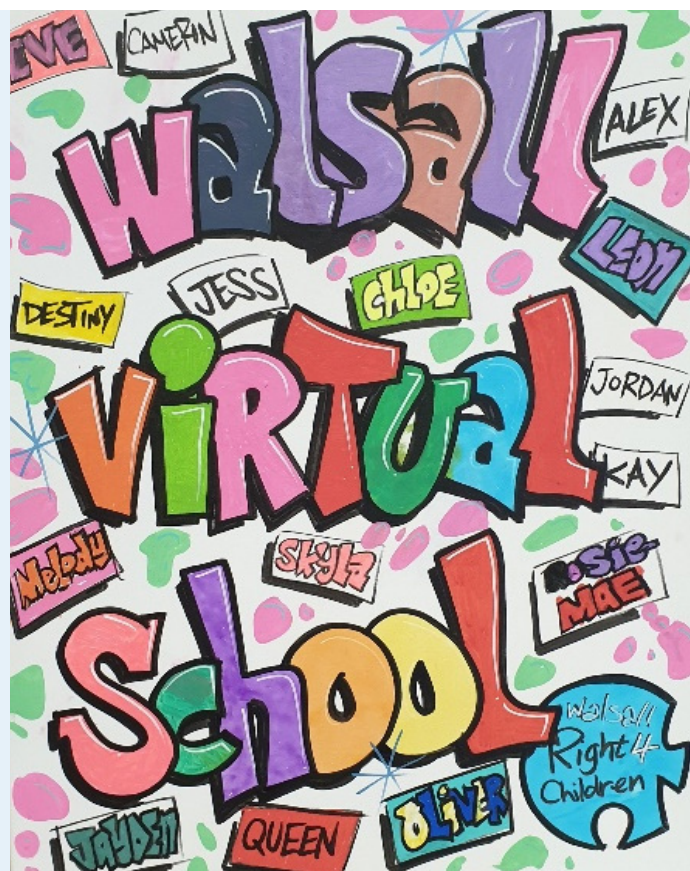
## Welcome!

Happy Easter to our Walsall Virtual School community!

We hope this newsletter finds you safe and well and the adjustment to having all the children back in school has gone smoothly.

We know this term has been challenging for some of our children and schools, and we would like to thank school staff for the important work that they continue to do. As always, stay safe and don't hesitate to contact us if you have any thought, questions or ideas at:

[WalsallVirtualSchool@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:WalsallVirtualSchool@walsall.gov.uk)



## Teachers' Tool Room

Our Educational Psychologist and Speech & Language Therapists will be running drop-in sessions for designated teachers, foster carers and social workers to provide a solution-focused chat regarding looked after children who are not currently active with the Virtual School Specialist Support Team.

The Sessions will start on Monday 15 February and will take place every Monday afternoon between 1.00pm-3.00pm and each session will last 20 minutes.

In order to optimise the sessions we will ask you complete a short form giving the reason for the consultation.

Sessions will take place on Microsoft Teams and can be booked by contacting Ruksana Kavde at [Ruksana.kavde@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:Ruksana.kavde@walsall.gov.uk)

Walsall  
Virtual School  
Drop in Sessions



# REACH2TEACH App – Attachment App

Virtual school is trialling a new App. The REACH2TEACH Awareness & Behaviour APP gives all those working with children and adolescents in (and outside school) an Attachment Aware and Trauma Informed approach to some of the behaviours that crop up and challenge us all day, every day in schools of every shape, size and age range. It has been created by 'Coursewedo' which is a company specialising in Attachment and Trauma courses and books.

The APP will guide you through the child's needs that might be driving their behaviour: give you insight into the potential attachment pattern associated with each behaviour: and provides a wide-range of instantly usable, highly practical approaches / actions all built on relationship with every pupil.

Each behaviour is linked to others that might indicate the pupil has a particular attachment style: so you get more of a sense of what might be going on for them, and how to help, backed by sound, neuroscientifically based principles.

Some of the strategies also suggest where you as the adult might need more support, and the need for all of us to better develop our capacity for reflection on needs, motivation and what support actually means in the creation of a healthy and safe environment where everyone can settle to learn.

The App is only £4.99. If you are interested please get in touch with the Virtual School or check out their website for further information - <https://courses.coursewedo.com/courses/reach-to-teach> . We are also looking at a more in depth version of the programme which enables users to assess and monitor individual students, based on suggested relational and learning interventions.

## Select behaviour

Highly anxious	Argues about rules or can't follow	Bullies the teacher	Hates & rejects praise
Denies need for support	Can't organise or forgets work	Overly dependent	Resists teacher's guidance
Continually avoids work	Clingy	Can't sit still	Rubbishes teacher's work
Rubbishes or rips up work	Doesn't want adults being close	Appears manipulative	Wants to work on their own
Rapid mood changes	Resists difficult conversations	Runs out	Misinterprets others' behaviour
Sulks if not picked	Can't follow instructions	Overly argumentative	Finds transitions & endings difficult
Appears arrogant & controlling	Does not talk about feelings	Easily distracted	Appears indifferent or uncaring
Insists on going first	Talks about feelings alot	Lies and fabricates	Angry & aggressive
Steals or gorges food	Gets upset easily	Avoids eye contact	Hypervigilant
Needs constant reassurance	Risky behaviour	Limited creativity	Attention seeking

## Use the icons to navigate

Needs constant reassurance	Can't follow instructions	Bullies the teacher	Hates & rejects praise
Home screen / Reset	Can't organise or work	Overly dependent	Resists teacher's guidance
Potential Attachment pattern	Can't sit still	Can't sit still	Rubbishing teacher's work
Ambivalent	Doesn't want adults being close	Appears manipulative	Wants to work on their own
Child's needs	Resists difficult conversations	Runs out	Misinterprets others' behaviour
Approaches / Actions	Can't follow instructions	Overly argumentative	Finds transitions & endings difficult
General principles	Does not talk about feelings	Easily distracted	Appears indifferent or uncaring
Insists on going first	Talks about feelings alot	Lies and fabricates	Angry & aggressive
Steals or gorges food	Gets upset easily	Avoids eye contact	Hypervigilant
Needs constant reassurance	Risky behaviour	Limited creativity	Attention seeking

# Free online bereavement training for schools

Winston's Wish are offering short free online bereavement training courses will help teachers and school staff to understand how grief affects a child or young person and how you can help them cope with their grief. They have two courses aimed at both primary and secondary schools. The first course is an introduction to childhood bereavement and the second course explains some of the ways you can help grieving children and young people. The courses take around 20 minutes to complete.

<https://www.winstonswish.org/supporting-you/professionals-and-training/>

Winston's Wish runs three-day bereavement training courses to teach professionals, including teachers, social workers and medical professionals, how to better support grieving children and young people. They also run a one-day course focusing on supporting bereaved children with SEND. Due to COVID-19 restrictions we are currently running these training courses online via Zoom, click the button below to see the dates available.

## Psychological First Aid: Supporting Children and Young People

Get Psychological First Aid training to support children and young people's mental health during emergencies and crisis situations. This is a free course aimed at frontline or essential workers and volunteers who come into contact with children and young people aged 0-25 years during emergency and crisis situations.

Those who may benefit from this course include parents/ caregivers, front line workers or volunteers; or for young adults to support their peers or family.

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/psychological-first-aid-for-children-and-young-people>

## Carers Corner

### SafeToNet

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/>

### Drop in Sessions

Virtual School run virtual drop in sessions every second Thursday. These sessions are for carers to speak to a member of staff from the Virtual School, about any challenges, concerns, or queries that you may have regarding the education of your young people. For further information please email [Debbie.woolfe2@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:Debbie.woolfe2@walsall.gov.uk)

### HappyMaps

HappyMaps is an online resource full of reliable resources to support mental health in children and young people. We hope you find HappyMaps useful, whether you are a parent or a professional working with young people. Almost all of the resources are relevant for parents and carers wherever they might live, though there is a small (but growing) section of local UK resources. There is also a self-help page for children and young people. All the books, websites, Apps and videos have been drawn from those already currently recommended by experts and parents. These include the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), the Royal College of Psychiatrists or leading mental health charities and research groups such as MindEd, Childline, Family Lives, YoungMinds, The Charlie Waller Memorial Trust, Relate, Brook, NHS.UK and many more, as well as from parents and young people themselves.

<https://www.happymaps.co.uk/>



# Artslink

**Artslink ensures that all children & young people connected with a Virtual School in the West Midlands can access great arts & cultural activities, opportunities and information.**

Please do check out the flyers attached to this newsletter for details about what Artslink can offer your children and young people! Or check out <https://www.artslinkwm.org.uk/>

Thank you to all of those children/ young people/ parents and carers that attended our Check It Out Challenge online sessions over the February half term! We had children and young people attending the Breakdancing session and the Rapping and Beating sessions, which is great! We would love to hear feedback about these events!

Also on offer was Animal Mask Making, Drawing With Everyday Objects, Story Play & Poems, Writing for Social Media and Graffiti Drawing!

Keep an eye out for further information about our next event, which will involve a little more rapping since that was so popular in half term! We will let you know as information for this is confirmed!



# artslink

West Midlands Virtual Schools

PRESENTS

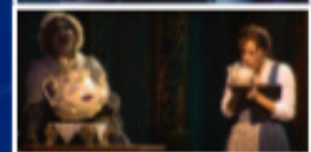
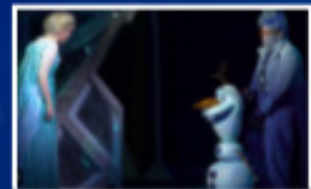
# Disney



## WATCH FILMED-LIVE SHOWS FROM YOUR LIVING ROOM!

We've collected two of Disney's best loved shows - *Frozen* and *Beauty and the Beast* - filmed at the Disney Cruise Line Theatre (yes, on a ship!), and combined them with some extra activities so you can lose yourself in the wonder of Disney - something for the whole household to enjoy together.

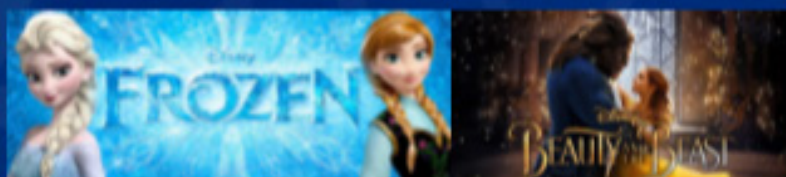
- Enjoy *performances* filmed live
- Watch *behind-the-scenes* clips to see how the shows were put together
- *Sing along* with some of your favourite songs
- Get *crafting* using ideas from the shows



AND IT'S ALL FREE OF CHARGE! NO BOOKING REQUIRED

Just go to [www.artslinkwm.org.uk/disney](http://www.artslinkwm.org.uk/disney) to take part

*(N.B. this is a private page, as it's only available for care experienced young people linked to a Virtual School in the West Midlands and the people they live with)*





# Literacy Lounge

We are very excited to let you know that we have subscribed to a range of reading materials for children or young people in Years 1 to 9.

## Year 1 – 4 – Storytime!

For the children in Year 1– 4. We have chosen to purchase subscriptions to StoryTime!

When kids read for the sheer pleasure of it, it improves their reading, writing, spelling and vocabulary, but best of all it's just fantastic fun!

Each month, Storytime magazine is packed with brilliant tales for boys and girls of all ages. Storytime gives you a quality children's magazine that actually helps to improve literacy with great content you can keep forever. And, unlike most magazines for kids, Storytime has no adverts and no throwaway plastic toys.

- Wonderful stories for kids every month, including fairy tales, myths, fables, stories from different cultures and tales from new authors.
- Specially commissioned, full-colour illustrations.
- Puzzles, activities, games and colouring.
- Printed on quality paper so you can read it again and again.
- Kids' competitions every month, win books and much more.
- Beautiful tidy files to store them in.

Reading for pleasure is so important it's now part of the national curriculum, and magazines for kids play an important role in that, as well as books. With Storytime magazine, kids can enjoy an engaging and magical world of stories every month.

Please do explore the Storytime website to find out more: <https://www.storytimemagazine.com/>



## Years 5 – 9 – First News

We are very excited to share with you a new subscription for the children in Years 5 – 9. We have chosen to purchase subscriptions to First News!



First News is a weekly newspaper aimed at 7 to 14-year-olds that aims to get kids talking about the news in an easy to understand and non-threatening way. It covers issues which are relevant to children and which specifically affect them. Inside you'll find a mix of world news and UK news, but also loads of fun stuff, such as entertainment, games, animals, sport and puzzles.



We will post the newspaper to your child weekly. It is a great starting point for discussions at home! Please do explore the First News website to find out more: <https://www.firstnews.co.uk/>

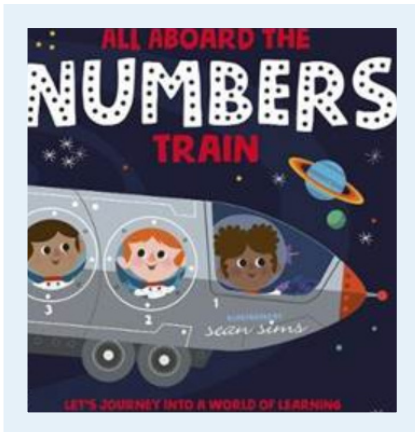
### British Library Resources

Explore centuries of stories, poems and illustrations with Discovering Children's Books. For children, teachers and book-lovers of all ages. A partnership between British Library Resources and Seven Stories.

<https://www.bl.uk/childrens-books/themes/all-activities>



# Book of the Month

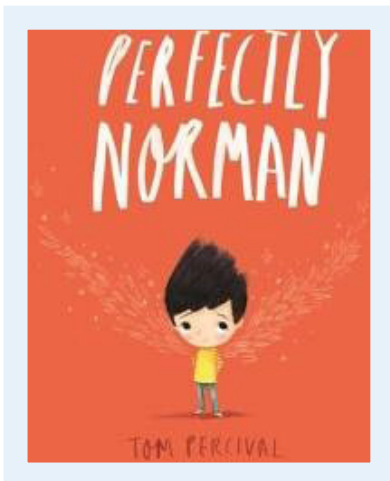


## Book of the Month for EYFS - All Aboard the Numbers Train

It's time to board the intergalactic numbers train! Six friends and their dog climb aboard and blast off on a mission to space, counting all the incredible things they see from one to ten. There's one brightly coloured sun in the sky, two rockets shooting through outer space, and three faraway planets to explore.

Inside the train, lots of fun buttons and dials encourage little ones to identify numbers by memorising them and then by reading them, before counting all the way backwards from ten to blast home again past hundreds of glittering stars. 3, 2, 1, lift off!

This bright, bold picture book is filled with all kinds of fun things to spot – from googly-eyed aliens to gorgeously colourful planets - as the six diverse astronauts go on their cosmic journey. A double spread at the back lists the numbers we saw as well as how to spell them (“1 is one”, “2 is two”, and so on). A fabulous trip to space for young children getting to grips with their first numbers.



## Book of the Month for Key Stage 1 - Perfectly Norman

This term we have chosen a very uplifting and beautifully illustrated fiction book for our Year 1 Book in a Bag to read with your parent or

This is a great book to read together and talk about what happened to Norman and what we can do to help each other when we feel worried. Feeling worried is normal, everyone feels it sometimes, but what helped Norman? When he talked to people who cared about him! It is also a great book to start a conversation about celebrating our differences and what makes us special.



## Book of the Month for Key Stage 2 - The Worries: Sohail Finds A Friend

Sohail's worries dominate his life. He carries them with him all day, which prevents him from making friends, and they crowd into his head at night, even chasing him in his dreams. One day, he draws a picture of his worries and realises they seem far less scary when he can see them. He is alarmed, however, when the small, furry creatures come to life. Hurt, Anger, Big, Fail, Alone and Babs (the Worry-in-Charge) are very chaotic and rather needy. When they sneak into his school bag, Sohail spends a stressful day trying to keep them hidden.

This light-hearted tale tackles a serious subject in an accessible manner and provides children with an opportunity to discuss their own anxieties. The key message is that worries must be acknowledged and managed, rather than suppressed and ignored, or they will grow and become much harder to deal with. The book also suggests that everyone is anxious about something, which should encourage children to develop feelings of compassion and empathy.

Short chapters and lively blue illustrations, which animate every page and bring the eccentric characters to life, make this an ideal book for confident young readers.

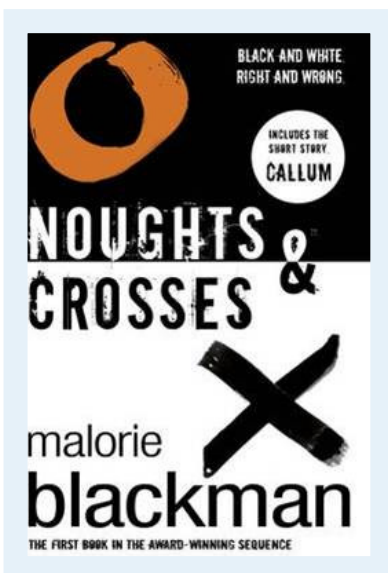




### Book of the Month for Key Stage 3 – The Kite Rider

Haoyou's father is dead - his spirit lives among the clouds above Ancient China. Feeling powerless when the man responsible for his father's death demands to marry his mother, Haoyou determines to follow in his father's footsteps and joins a travelling circus. The Jade Circus offers him the chance to escape his enemies and perform: strapped to a kite, he takes to the skies, and soon amazes audiences across the land - including the infamous Kublai Khan himself. But is the circus master leading him into even greater danger?

Set in thirteenth century China, this is an outstanding novel from critically-acclaimed author Geraldine McCaughrean. A fascinating and exciting tale exploring greed, loyalty and friendship, it is a highly original story that will capture readers' imagination



### Book of the month for Key stage 4 – Noughts and Crosses

In Malorie Blackman's groundbreaking novel, the population is divided into two: the white Noughts are second-class citizens, and the black Crosses are highly-revered and perceived as the superior race. 15-year-old Callum is a Nought, and his best friend, Sephy, as well as being a Cross, is also the daughter of one of the most influential politicians in the country.

The story focuses on their relationship, which is frowned upon by society, and explores the discrimination they encounter at every turn. By reversing traditional racial stereotypes and presenting the White population as the oppressed race, Blackman has cleverly shown racial prejudice from a different perspective.

As well as being a compelling tale of love and friendship, this is an outstanding and thought-provoking exploration of the futility of prejudice. A contemporary classic.



# Mindfulness Moment



## Mindful Moment



Take some time to pause and breathe. Use these stages to a Mindful Moment and give your mind a break.

### 1. "Be still and Take Zen"

**For 10 Seconds:**

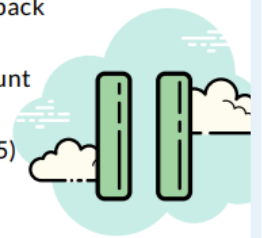
- Be still (arms by side, legs uncrossed, back straight)
- Deep breath in through your nose (count to 5)
- Exhale through your mouth (count to 5)
- Focus on remaining still



### 2. "Pause for a Mellow Minute"

**For 60 Seconds:**

- Be still (arms by side, legs uncrossed, back straight)
- Deep breath in through your nose (count to 5)
- Exhale through your mouth (count to 5)
- Repeat x 3
- Focus on the feeling of your chest expanding and relaxing
- Return to normal breathing but remain still for the last 30 seconds



### 3. "Have a Neutral Ninety"

**For 90 Seconds:**

- Be still (arms by side, legs uncrossed, back straight)
- You may wish to close your eyes
- Deep breath in through nose (count to 5)
- Exhale through your mouth
- Repeat x 3
- Focus your mind on the feeling of the chest expanding and relaxing
- Return to normal breathing but remain still for the remaining time, focus attention on the chest expanding and relaxing



### 4. "Just Be for Three"

**For 3 Minutes:**

- Be still – feet flat on floor (not crossed) hands by side or resting on lap
- You may wish to close your eyes
- Deep breath in through nose (count to 5)
- Exhale through your mouth
- Repeat x 3
- Focus your mind on the feeling of the chest expanding and relaxing
- Continue to breath normally
- Maintain focus on rise and fall of chest



### 5. "Come alive for five"

**For 5 Minutes:**

- Be still – feet flat on floor (not crossed) hands by side or resting on lap
- You may wish to close your eyes
- Deep breath in through nose (count to 5)
- Focus your mind on the feeling of your chest expanding and relaxing
- Continue to breath normally
- Maintain focus on rise and fall of chest
- If your mind begins to wander, just bring it back to the motion of breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth
- At the end of 5 minutes:
  - Open your eyes
  - Wiggle your toes and fingers
  - Roll your sholders





# Free Resource From Big Life Journal

**“I’m sorry I was angry,”  
“I’m sorry for being scared,”  
“I’m sorry I didn’t want  
to play.”**

From a young age, we’re taught that if we make a mistake, we should apologize. There is this idea that being a nice person requires you to say “I’m sorry”. A LOT.

Some children tend to over-apologize (for their feelings, actions, moods) and grow up overly concerned with what other people think and not wanting to upset or disappoint others.

The good news is that you can help re-wire your child’s brain so they can stop automatically jumping to “I’m sorry” and forever carrying this habit of meaningless apologies.

Big Life Journal have created this free printable that will help your child practice replacing saying “I’m sorry” with “Thank you.”

**HOW TO SAY "THANK YOU"  
INSTEAD OF "I'M SORRY"**

Practice replacing saying sorry by saying thank you!  
Cut out the response shapes on page 2 and glue them to the spots below.

I'm sorry for embarrassing you.	→	Thank you for allowing me to have my big feelings.
I'm sorry for taking so long.	→	Thank you for being patient as I'm learning.
I'm sorry for being scared.	→	Thank you for comforting me.
I'm sorry, I don't want to play.	→	Thank you for giving me space.
I'm sorry for not liking the gift.	→	Thank you for being so thoughtful.
I'm sorry I got angry.	→	Thank you for keeping me safe.

Big Life Journal  
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# 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!

