

Walsall Virtual School Newsletter

May 2022

Welcome!

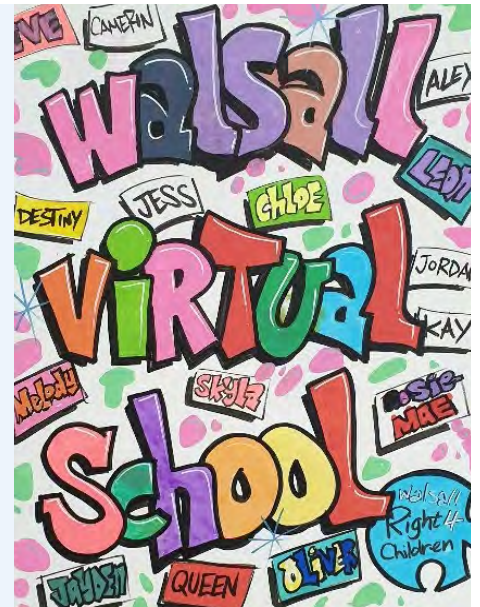
Happy Summer to our Walsall Virtual School community! The summer term is now under way!

We know this is always a very busy term in school, so we hope this newsletter finds you safe and well, and that you have had a positive start to the term.

In this newsletter please find updates on Virtual School projects, training dates for this term and other information we think you will find useful.

As always, don't hesitate to contact us if you have any thoughts, questions or ideas at:

WalsallVirtualSchool@walsall.gov.uk



Virtual School Spring Term Projects and Updates

Easter Enrichment Projects

Over the Easter holiday, we ran a number of activity days for children from Reception through to Year 11. We are pleased to say that these were a huge success and we have had really positive feedback from the young people about the activities.

Please see below for some photos, quotes from young people and an idea of what we got up to!

Day at Woodlands Outdoor Adventure:

We had a very busy day doing monkey climbing in trees, an assault course, archery and canoeing. The children all shared that they had a great time and there was quite a mix on most popular activity!

"I would definitely recommend this activity day because this place is so much fun!"



Walsall Council



Circus Skills

During the Circus Skills workshop, we learnt how to juggle bean bags and scarves, spin a diablo, spin plates and how to make balloon animals! The children had lots of opportunity to practise their new skills.



Dino Day!

On Dino Day, we had an adventure at Wren's Nest to hunt for fossils (although not dinosaur ones!). We had a great time, even though we got caught in heavy heavy rain! All the children came home with pockets full of fossils!

In the afternoon, we then went to the Dinosaur Adventure Live! show at Walsall Arts Centre, where we watched dinosaurs on stage.



"I learnt lots about fossils and nature!"

On seeing the Dinosaur Adventure Live show, "I TOLD YOU THEY WERE REAL! The T-Rex is a bit creepy isn't he..."

The Edge

In the second week of the Easter holiday, we took an older group of young people to The Edge. The activities included sniper shooting, clay pigeon shooting and orienteering with clues. There was some healthy competition with the young people trying to beat their own scores and each other's' in the different events!



Clay Pigeon Shooting Champion – Harlow, didn't miss a shot!

Speed Sniper Shooting Winner – Arun in an incredible 5.8 seconds!

RAF Cosford STEM Event:

The final activity day of the Easter holiday was a trip to RAF Museum Cosford for a STEM event run by Tablet Academy. The children were really engaged with the science and used an online system to design their own aircrafts and then test if they could fly. We had a couple of crash landings before we got them all right, but all a learning experience!



Interventions for Schools



Following a visit from Andrea Perry and Lucy Witton from 'Course We Can' last term, our team have started to use the Reach2Teach App. The app has enabled us to provide consistent advice to schools with common challenges they may be facing. The app has (and advice) has received a positive reception with staff and schools finding it useful. Our CAMHs worker has found it especially helpful, and will be starting to use another app from the same company called AFIT. This app is a more detailed version that will let her write reports and monitor the strategies that she suggests.

If you would like any further information on this, please don't hesitate to speak to your Key Worker or visit: <https://courses.coursewedo.com/courses/reach-to-teach>

Teacher's Tool Room

Training so far

Last term we ran post 16 PEP training.

The post 16 PEP training received great feedback and we have already noticed an improvement in the PEP quality of the organisations that attended.

If there is something that you think is a particular training need, please let us know by emailing:

WalsallVirtualSchool@walsall.gov.uk

Until then, please see below for our upcoming training that you can find on our website.

Training Calendar

Date and Time	Training	Description
11/5/2022 All Day	Loss and Grief in Care	This is a session that will be run by our educational psychologist, Marnie Aston.
18/5/2022 9.00-12.00	Attachment Aware Schools Project Cohort 3-CPD 2	For schools in Cohort 3 of the Attachment Aware Schools project
6/6/2022 2.00-3.00	Induction Training for Designated Teachers	This session covers the fundamental parts of being a Designated Teacher, including your role, how to complete a PEP, and your statutory requirements
8/6/2022 All Day	Executive Functioning for Designated Teachers-Part 1	This is a session that will be run by our educational psychologist, Marnie Aston.
15/6/2022 9.00-12.00	Social, Emotional and Well Being Plans-Uncovering Behaviour-Part 3 for Designated Teachers	This is a session that is a follow up to sessions run in the autumn term, and will be run by our educational psychologist, Marnie Aston.
29/6/2022 9.00-11.00	Executive Functioning Part 2 for Designated Teachers	This is a session that will be run by our educational psychologist, Marnie Aston, following on from part one on 8.6.22.
5/7/2022 9.00-11.00	Designated Teachers Briefing Session	Updates relating to Care Experienced Young People and the Virtual School. Nurture UK will be delivering a session on how to becoming an accredited nurture provision

Please find all upcoming training on our website - <https://wvs.sch.life/Page/Calendar>

We will send an invite closer to each event asking people to email **WalsallVirtualSchool@walsall.gov.uk** if they would like to attend.

Attachment Aware Project

This term a number of schools have achieved new awards. Delves Infants and Delves Juniors achieved their Platinum Award, Pool Hayes Primary achieved their silver award and Abbey Primary Achieved their Bronze Award.

We are pleased to have Laura Kirven join us in September to lead the 4th cohort of schools. If you are interested in joining the Attachment Aware and Trauma Informed school programme please email:

lorraine.thompson@walsall.gov.uk

Carers' Corner

The National Day of Play 2022

Right now 1 in 6 children are likely to have a mental health condition (Children's Society, 2022). One way to promote good mental health is to create positive opportunities for children and young people to play. Play has been shown to relieve stress, improve brain function, develop positive relationships and the skills needed to build them, and make people of all ages feel good. The first Wednesday in August is the UK's National Play Day. On this day there are play events being set up across the country. For more information about how you can get involved please go to:

www.playday.org.uk



Year 11 Transition

If you have a young person in year 11, now is the time to be supporting them to think about what they will be doing when they leave school and start year 12. They may have already seen our careers advisor, but they will also have one within their school. If you are worried that they don't know what they want to, you can contact their school and ask for them to see the school careers advisor.

By the end of May we would hope that all our year 11 students have applied to a school/college/apprenticeship/training provider and been offered a conditional place.

We have a booklet to help to information and guidance during this important time, so get in touch if you would like a copy (you should already have received this via email).

It is important that you support your young person to visit colleges, find out about courses, and apply for their next educational step. If you have a young person with an EHCP, this process needs to be completed by March.

It gives a checklist on what students and carers need to do during years 9, 10 and 11, to make sure they are fully prepared for their P16 education.

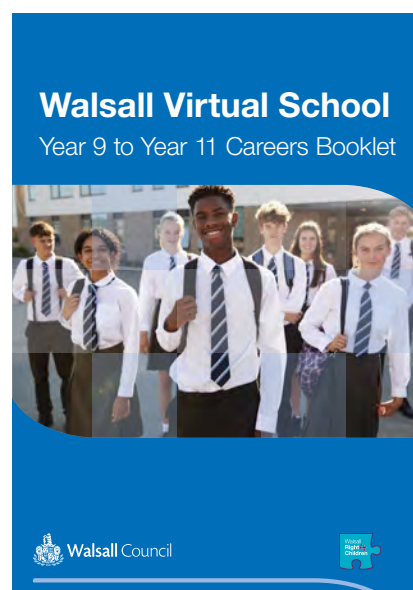
Secondary Transition – Year 6 to Year 7

If your young person is in Year 6, they will be moving to Year 7 and their next adventure in secondary school in September. You should have received a booklet and letter from your young person's key worker, Bethan McGarrie or Emma Jones after school places were received. This booklet is a great tool to work with to open conversations with your young person.

Bethan and Emma are also having conversations with schools and social workers to arrange additional transition support. If you think your child would benefit from this, please don't hesitate to contact them.

Reception Transition

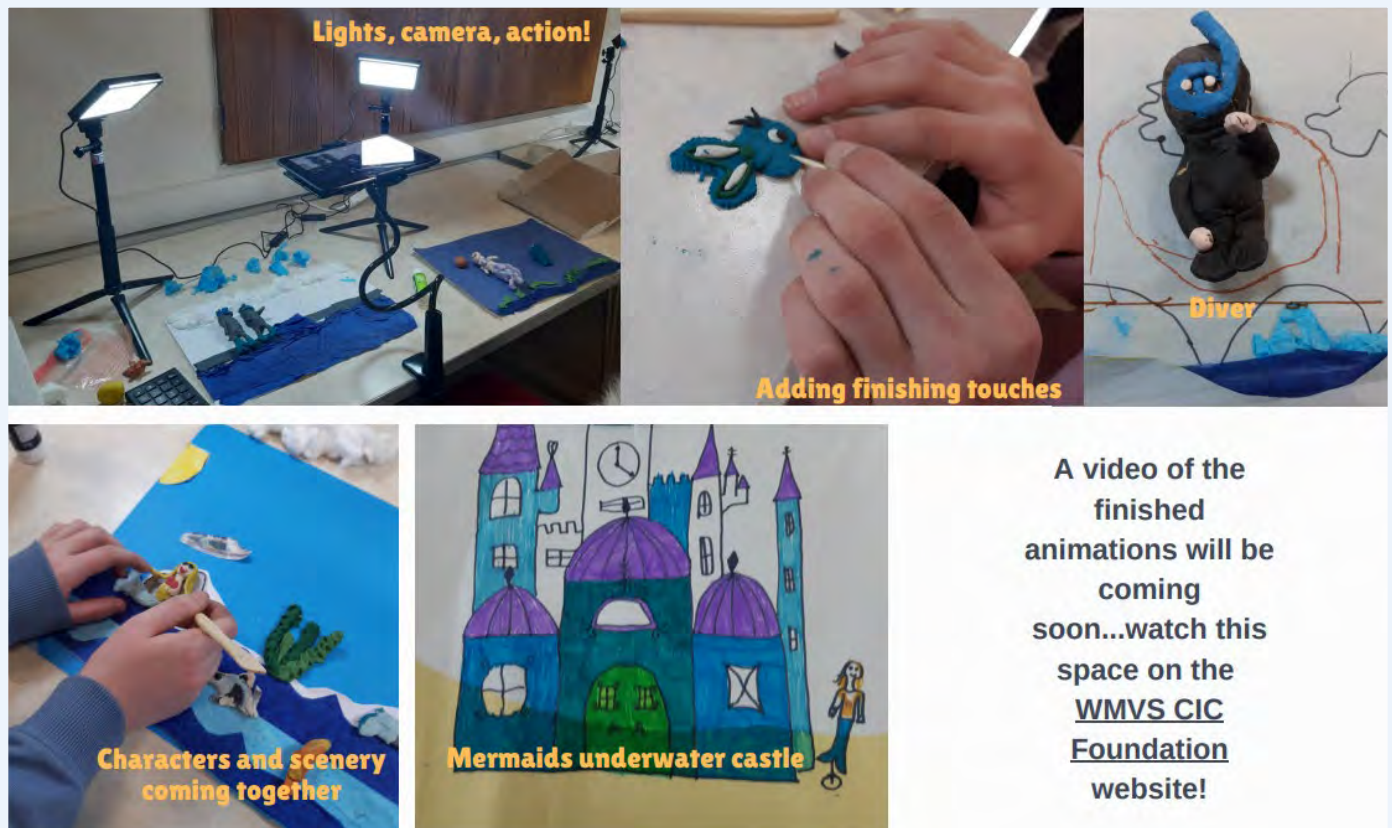
If you applied for a Reception place for September 2022, you will have received your offer. If you applied through Walsall admissions there is no need to respond to the offer. However, if you live in a different local authority, please make sure you check if you need to respond to the offer to accept it.



Animation Project

Across 7 online sessions and 1 in person workshop in Birmingham, 15 people from Walsall, Birmingham, Sandwell and Wolverhampton enjoyed taking part in bringing their characters and stories to life.

The online sessions helped them prepare their story development and creation of characters, props and scenery with the theme 'under water'.



<https://www.wmvscicfoundation.org.uk/who-is-artslink/about-artslink>

ACTIVENOW

Working in partnership with sports professionals from around the country, WMVS Children in Care Foundation is delivering sporting events and workshops that spark an interest in sport and physical activity, to develop the life long skills embedded within young people.

For more information, please go to <https://www.wmvscicfoundation.org.uk/activenow/about>

Upcoming Sports Events

Bloxwich hockey club are hosting a 6 week free hockey course for children aged 5-18 years.

They are a local club with a wealth of coaching experience. Coaches currently host the Staffordshire Hockey Academy, and have had experience getting junior teams to national finals.

This is a great pathway for existing hockey players to improve their ability, or for kids that are complete novices but have an interest in trying a new sport.

This is a collaboration with the Queens Jubilee Platinum Fund, getting the community involved in sport, and so is fully funded and is completely free to all participants.

For anyone wishing to come along please e mail kateyeoman1971@icloud.com to confirm so we can cater for the numbers.



6 WEEK HOCKEY COURSE

FREE COURSE!
SUPPORTED BY
SPORT ENGLAND
PLATINUM JUBILEE FUND



FROM SATURDAY 7TH MAY
9AM TO 10AM

**Getting kids active again and
meeting new friends**

**Both girls and boys welcome from
ages 5-18**

Qualified hockey coaches
All abilities welcome!

BLOXWICH HOCKEY CLUB
SNEYD ASTRO, VERNON WAY, WS3 2PA



BLOXWICH HOCKEY CLUB



www.bloxwichhockey.co.uk

Please register by Thursday 5th May
Contact: kateyeoman1971@icloud.com

Literacy Lounge

Letterbox



We would like to take this opportunity to let you know that we have signed children in Reception and Year 1 up for Letterbox Club through the Walsall Virtual School Offer! Each child will receive their own colourful parcel of books, maths games, stationery and other high quality materials once every month for six months, from May to October.

We have chosen to take part in Letterbox Club for a number of reasons, some of which are below:

Key benefits:

- Children feel 'remembered' and are excited about receiving their parcels
- Carers/families and their children spend more time together reading and playing games
- Children read to others and share books
- Children have increased confidence in reading and number
- Parcels are delivered despite placement moves and give continuity to the child

Letterbox Club parcels include:

- Story and picture books by a range of authors
- Non-fiction, poetry and joke books
- Fun number games (your child might need some help to set these up!)
- Stationery items, such as felt tips, notepads, pens etc. to encourage writing and drawing
- Letters, bookmarks and more...!

If you would like further information, please visit:

<https://www.booktrust.org.uk/what-we-do/programmes-and-campaigns/letterbox-club/>

Book Trust also have a hub full of further resources that can be used at home:

<https://www.booktrust.org.uk/books-and-reading/have-some-fun/> The HomeTime resources are regularly updated and we will include a letter to the children in every parcel, encouraging them to visit this hub. Here they can find other great books to read, and also try the activities available.

If you would like to opt out of the Letterbox Club project, please let us know by emailing Walsall Virtual School (WalsallVirtualSchool@walsall.gov.uk) with your child's name and the reason you would like them to be withdrawn from the project.



Storytime

We have also signed up children in years 3,4 and 5 to **Storytime magazine** through the Walsall Virtual School Offer!

When children 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/>

If you would like to opt out of the Storytime project, please let us know by emailing Walsall Virtual School (**WalsallVirtualSchool@walsall.gov.uk**) with your child's name and the reason you would like them to be withdrawn from the project.

We hope you enjoy the Storytime magazine subscription! As always, we welcome feedback from our young people and the adults around them so please let us know how the children get on with the parcels and send any photos/ completed activities to us at **WalsallVirtualSchool@walsall.gov.uk**.



Literacy Lounge- Books of the Term



Book of the Month for EYFS – Time to Go to Bed

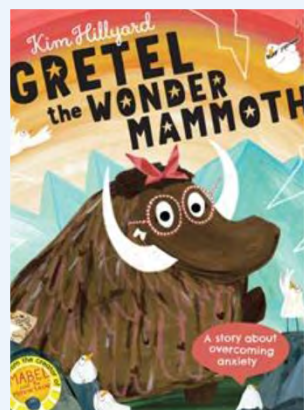
Author: Marvyn Harrison

Two young siblings look into the mirror with their Daddy and begin each day with a different positive affirmation.

Monday is for feeling Brave and as the day unfolds, the brother and sister demonstrate how brave they can be – pretending to be superheroes, sliding down the big slide and trying something new. Tuesday is for Smart, Wednesday they feel Strong, Thursday they discuss what it means to be Kind and Friday they spread their happiness. On the weekend, they show how Loving they can be on Sunday is dedicated to feeling Beautiful.

Brimming with positivity, I Love Me! is an adorable and empowering book of affirmations to help little ones stand tall. Written by Dope Black Dads founder Marvyn Harrison, the picture book includes joyful, uplifting statements for each day of the week and demonstrates how they can be used in every day experiences. The affirmations are teamed with Diane Ewen's adorable and vibrant illustrations that perfectly portray the cheekiness and energy of the youngsters.

The backmatter includes a message from the author plus handy tips for parents and carers on how to incorporate positive affirmations into a daily routine.



Book of the Month for Key Stage 1 – Gretel the Wonder Mammoth

Author: Kim Hillyard

Gretel – who has been hibernating inside an iceberg for quite some time - is the last mammoth left on earth, and everyone loves her. She's kind, understanding and strong and has plenty of new friends. Still, the world that Gretel wakes up to is rather different to the one she remembers, and although she tries her hardest to fit in, Gretel starts to feel sad.

Rather than bother her new friends, Gretel goes off to be on her own, but she soon finds that makes her feel worse. How can she get the hang of living in this new world, where she feels she doesn't belong? Fortunately, her friends are there to help Gretel find herself – and stroke her woolly feet to make her feel better.

This utterly delightful picture book by Kim Hillyard, author of the empowering and sweet Mabel and the Mountain, is all about finding the confidence to be ourselves in what sometimes seems like a scary world; sometimes, we can feel that we don't fit in, and that everyone else is different to us.

Gretel's anxiety is aided by her friends being there for her and reassuring her that she has a place in the world, despite being one of a kind, and Gretel herself is a very cute and appealing (and rather Moomin-like) animal character that children will love.



Book of the Month for EYFS – I Love Me

Author: Marvyn Harrison

Two young siblings look into the mirror with their Daddy and begin each day with a different positive affirmation.

Monday is for feeling Brave and as the day unfolds, the brother and sister demonstrate how brave they can be – pretending to be superheroes, sliding down the big slide and trying something new. Tuesday is for Smart, Wednesday they feel Strong, Thursday they discuss what it means to be Kind and Friday they spread their happiness. On the weekend, they show how Loving they can be on Sunday is dedicated to feeling Beautiful.

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The backmatter includes a message from the author plus handy tips for parents and carers on how to incorporate positive affirmations into a daily routine.

Literacy Lounge- Books of the Term



Book of the Month for Key Stage 3 – The Secret Sunshine Project

Author: Benjamin Dean

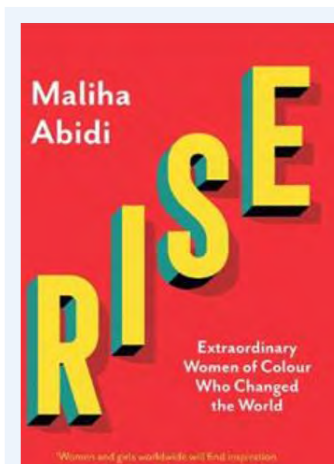
When Bea's big sister, Riley, plucks up the courage to tell Mum and Dad that she likes girls, Dad has the best idea. He takes them all to London Pride where, amidst a dazzle of rainbows, glitter and confetti, Riley feels she has found her tribe.

But that was last year, when Dad was still with them. Things are different now; they can't afford to stay in their home and have no choice but to move to the countryside and stay with Gran. At least for the summer.

While Bea quickly makes new friends, Riley is living under a cloud; she's missing Dad, and Pride, and can't feel positive about anything. Until Bea has a radical idea: if Riley can't go to Pride, Bea will bring Pride to her.

With a magnificent cast of diverse, inclusive, fully formed characters this is a story of pain, joy, loyalty, courage and love.

To balance a story of grief with the positive, and often hilarious, escapades of a brilliantly belligerent grandmother, a gloriously flamboyant drag queen and a quietly understated eleven-year-old confused by her feelings is not easy. But, in this heart-warming celebration of individuality, it seems effortless.



Book of the month for Key stage 4 – Rise: Extraordinary Women of Colour who Changed the World

Author: Maliha Abidi

The remarkable achievements of 100 inspirational women of colour from around the globe are showcased in this informative and attractive non-fiction book. The common threads which connect them all are the discrimination they have encountered because of their gender and race, along with their determination to overcome these barriers to accomplish great things.

A handful of well-known names are included, such as Mexican artist Frida Kahlo and American civil rights activist Rosa Parks. However, the majority are lesser-known figures, demonstrating that there are many extraordinary role models from a diverse range of cultures to inspire young people. Subjects include Amna Al Qubaisi, a racing car driver from United Arab Emirates, whose success in this male-dominated sport is even more impressive considering the tensions regarding women's rights in the region; Clemantine Wamariya, who escaped Rwandan genocide as a young girl and became a storyteller and human rights activist; and Lee Tai-young, a Korean lawyer and judge, who dedicated much of her career to supporting the rights of women in the legal system.

Vibrant, full-page portraits of each woman are accompanied by one-page biographies documenting their key influences, challenges and achievements. This important book is sure to inspire and empower young people.

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.

Passwords:

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!

The Mathletics logo is displayed in white text on a blue, rounded rectangular background.

