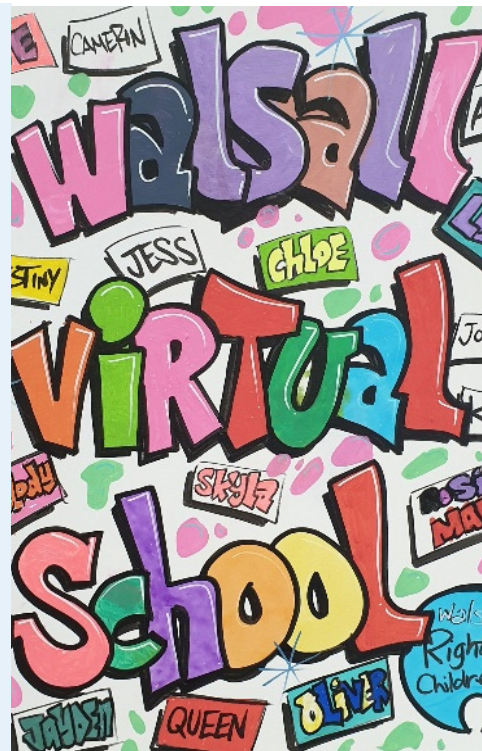


January 2021

As always, stay safe and don't hesitate to contact us if you have any thought, questions or ideas at **WalsallVirtualSchool@walsall.gov.uk**



Teachers Tool Room

Expectations of attendance during COVID:

Our expectation is that all of our children will be offered spaces in school due to their status as vulnerable children. We will be encouraging our children to attend school. If there are parents and carers choosing not to send their children, this will need to be agreed with the social worker.

PEP Meetings during COVID:

PEP meetings are expected to continue during this COVID lockdown and we will continue to attend and offer support in these. We do try to attend as many as possible, but there are some we cannot attend. If you feel there is a reason you would like a representative from the Virtual School to attend, please speak email us to let us know.

Pupil Premium+ funding can also be requested and allocated as normal, attached to SMART targets through the PEP.

COVID Testing in Schools:

The consent to do a COVID test on a child under 16 must be given by the person holding parental responsibility. This means that foster carers cannot give consent for a test. If a child is on a care order parental responsibility is held by their social worker and parents.

To ensure you have access the correct consent, Walsall Council social workers will be completing the consent forms after consultation with the child's parents and carers. Once consent is given the form will then be uploaded to the child's ePEP (document folder on front page). The tests can only be done in school, if the consent form has been uploaded to ePEP having been completed by the child's social worker or parents if the child is Section 20 accommodated.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us or the child's social worker.

Online training:

In partnership with ACEducation we are able to offer a free online courses to our designated teachers.

For all new designated teachers we profile a free online 'Introduction to the role of the designated teacher' course. This course considers the Role of the Designated Teacher and the impact on outcomes for children and young people. It explores the responsibilities of the role and gives practical advice on topics such as preparing Personal Educational Plans. The course includes case studies and example PEPs with SMART targets.



Other courses on offer to schools

Adoption, post permanence and the role of the school

Previously looked-after children start with the challenges of their pre-care experiences. These do not just disappear when they move to a permanent placement such as adoption and may continue to have a significant impact on their learning.

Emotion Coaching

Emotion coaching is about developing the best possible responses to the behaviour of children and young people 'in the moment', intervening with the child as the behaviour is happening.

Promoting the achievement of looked after children in education

We need to better understand the reasons behind attachment behaviours so that we can increase our empathy and understanding and ultimately help towards better educational outcomes. This course provides teachers and support staff with the knowledge to inform their work with looked after children in education settings. It looks at where learning takes place, thinks about how to overcome barriers and be aspirational education role models for looked after children and young people.

To book onto our free online training please contact us at walsallvirtuelschool@walsall.gov.uk

Carers Corner

Expectations of learning and assessment during COVID:

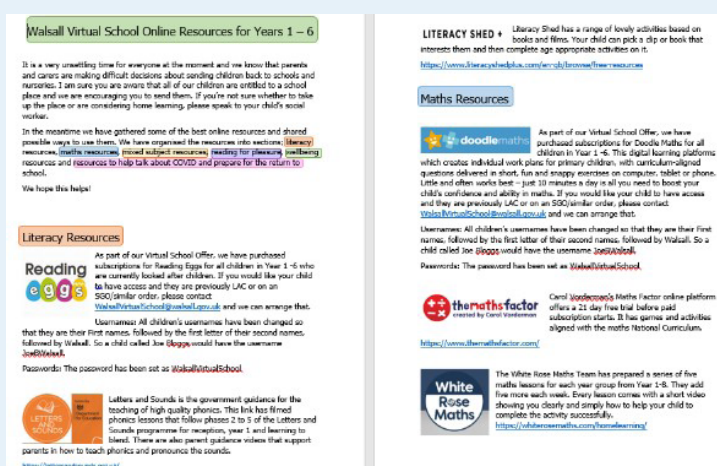
It is a very unsettling time for everyone at the moment and we know that parents and carers are making difficult decisions about sending children back to schools and nurseries. I am sure you are aware that all of our children are entitled to a school place and the expectation is that our children do attend. If you're not sure whether to take up the place or are considering home learning, please speak to your child's social worker.

PEP Meetings during COVID:

PEP meetings are expected to continue during this COVID lockdown and we will continue to attend and offer support in these. We do try to attend as many as possible, but there are some we cannot attend. If you feel there is a reason you would like a representative from the Virtual School to attend, please speak to your child's social worker or email us to let us know.

Online resources:

We have gathered and sent out to you some of the best online resources and shared possible ways to use them for children in Early Years, Years 1-6 and children with SEN. We have organised the resources into sections; literacy resources, maths resources, mixed subject resources, reading for pleasure, wellbeing resources and resources to help talk about COVID and prepare for the return to school. If you haven't received these, please contact: WalsallVirtualSchool@walsall.gov.uk



ACEducation

ACEducation have launched a YouTube Channel to provide free webinars to support parents and carers during this time. The current webinars include 'Understanding and calming anxiety', Coping with bereavement in relation to Covid 19 and the road to recovery, The link to the channel is: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCc_5iBjpgS4p0Jtspgzllw.



Careers Advice:

Our Careers Advisor, Hannah Yates, can offer individualised support to our children. She is especially focused on supporting children in Years 11 and 13 at the moment, so please contact her on: Hannah.Yates@walsall.gov.uk to arrange a consultation.

COVID Testing Consent

To confirm details regarding the COVID testing consent for children under the age of 16 on care orders.

The consent to do a COVID test on a child under 16 must be given by the person holding parental responsibility. This means that foster carers cannot give consent for a test. If a child is on a care order parental responsibility is held by their social worker and parents.

To ensure schools have access the correct consent, Walsall Council social workers will be completing the consent forms after consultation with the child's parents and carers. Once consent is given the form will then be uploaded to the child's ePEP (document folder on front page). The tests can only be done in school, if the consent form has been uploaded to ePEP having been completed by the child's social worker or parents if the child is Section 20 accommodated.

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!



Literacy Lounge

Phonics Screening – Year 2

The Phonics Screening Check was introduced in 2012 in primary schools in England. All children in Year 1 take it in the summer term. Cancellation of the phonics screening check in June 2020 due to COVID, means current year 2 pupils did not take the check in year 1. The check has been cancelled for June 2021 now too, however it is still important that Key Stage 1 children have a secure foundation in phonics to support their reading.

Helpful online phonics resources you can use:

- <https://www.teachyourmonstertoread.com/> - free online resource
- <https://readingeggs.co.uk/> - subscribed to by Walsall Virtual School (Usernames: 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)
- <https://www.phonicsplay.co.uk/> - some free, some subscription resources
- <https://literacytrust.org.uk/information/what-is-literacy/what-phonics/> - more information for parents and carers

Libraries Connected



Here at Libraries Connected, we are showcasing the best digital services from public libraries in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Working with a team of public librarians from across the country, we'll be highlighting key services that can be accessed through library websites and social media platforms.

On this page you can find some of the excellent online rhyme times, story times and lego clubs that keep children engaged and support early literacy and creative thinking. We want to help families to choose live and recorded events not just from their own library service but anywhere in the country.

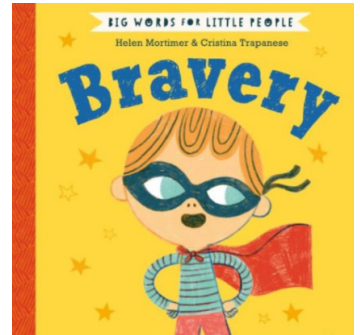
<https://www.librariesconnected.org.uk/page/librariesfromhome>



Book of the Month

Book of the Month for EYFS - Big Words for Little People: Bravery, by Helen Mortimer, illustrated by Cristina Trapanese and published by Oxford University Press

This little hardback book creates a moment to focus on Bravery. It introduces words to talk about feelings with confidence and in a way that feels good. The engaging art style, fun characters and picture book feel make it perfect to share and, because it is from Oxford, it is packed with educational goodness to help children develop and grow.



Book of the Month for Key Stage 1 - One Hundred Steps: The Story of Captain Sir Tom Moore, by Captain Tom Moore and illustrated by Adam Larkum, published by Puffin Books

The story of the man who captured the heart of a nation in its darkest days, Captain Sir Tom Moore. A book about adventure, about family, about never giving up, and about what we can achieve when we work together.

This is an inspirational picture book, published in support of the creation of the Captain Tom Foundation, which tells the incredible story of the man who walked 100 laps of his garden and captured the heart of a nation. Fully illustrated for younger readers, and following the key moments from Captain Tom's incredible life, the book shows what is possible when we come together and never, ever give up.



Book of the Month for Key Stage 2 – Dare to be You by Matthew Syed

If you're the kind of person who thinks: I don't like standing out from the crowd ... I wish I could be more like the cool kids ... There's no point trying to change things ... then this book is for you.

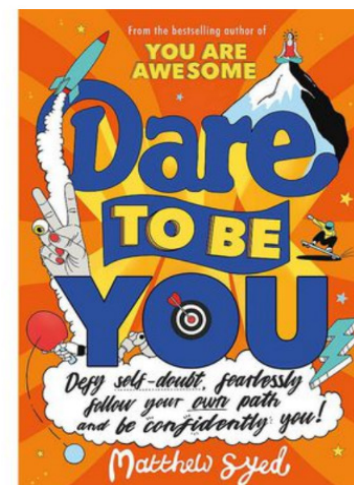
Because guess what? There's no such thing as normal.

Drawing examples from sport, science and even business, Dare to Be You empowers young readers to follow their own path, love what makes them different and question the world around them.

With You Are Awesome's trademark mix of hilarious text, stylish illustration, personal insights and inspiring real-life examples, including Greta Thunberg and Malala Yousafzai, Matthew Syed introduces children to the power of diverse thinking.

When you stop doubting yourself, embrace change and let your kindness loose, you become your own action hero.

This groundbreaking, practical and positive book will help kids develop the inner confidence to grow into happy adults who know - and, more importantly, LIKE - themselves.



Artslink

Coming up in 2021

Exactly when we'll return to live activities is, unsurprisingly, to be confirmed, but we're already planning some exciting projects for you with our Virtual School clusters. Our online platform **Connect & Create** was developed in direct response to the onset of Covid-19, however it's been so successful that we're going to keep it running indefinitely, offering more creative challenges, insights into how artists and arts organisations work, links to what's on in your area, and career guidance from professional artists. Also look out for our Check It Out Challenge - a downloadable do-at-home challenge for the February half-term.

Space to Be

If you care for, or are connected to, young people with complex needs, we would like to alert you to an offer from theatre company Oily Cart:

"Hello,

My name is Anya and I'm a producer working with Oily Cart. We are now booking families onto the tour of our new show Space to Be which will take place in their home through a series of packages.

***Space To Be** is being developed in response to the experiences of families with a young person labelled as having complex needs, who feel they are being pushed over the limits of their capacity during lockdown, with reduced or no support. Enabling moments of joy, play and connection, the project's focus will be on sensory wellbeing for both adults and young people in each household, to explore new ways of being together, even in a restricted environment.*

*This show has been designed for children with complex needs and their families, it takes place over a week in their home and will work flexibly around each families routine. We have availability from 1st March to 7th March. Any families who might be interested in receiving the show should contact me at **hello@oilycart.org.uk**"w*



Competition

This has been a very strange year, but the extra time at home may have given you more time to explore books and reading. We're hoping you have found a book jump into to transport you into another world.

Great writers are pretty inspiring, aren't they? They take simple things, like words and grammar, to build entire worlds. Wouldn't it be great to show them how you've been inspired by their words, characters, settings and stories.



We would like you to create something that you would like to send to the author of your favourite book. That could be a letter, a piece of art, a poem or a story using their characters.

You could tell the author why you loved their writing, draw one of their characters, recreate a setting from the story, or use their writing as inspiration for your own story!

The competition gives you the chance to celebrate the creativity, talent and imagination so it is up to you how you present your entry.

Winners will be announced in the next newsletter, where with permission we would like to share the winning entries.

To be in with the chance to win fantastic prizes, send your entry to **WalsallVirtualSchool@walsall.gov.uk** by 28th February 2021.

There will be 4 judging categories:

1. Ages 5-7 (that's key stage 1 in school)
2. Ages 7-11 (that's key stage 2 in school)
3. Ages 11-15 (that's key stage 3 in school)
4. Ages 15-16 (that's key stage 4 in school)

There will be a winner in each category who will win a bundle of books from their favourite author, we will send your entry to the author (with your permission) AND a few more surprise prizes!

To be in with the chance to win fantastic prizes, with your name and school year group, send your entry to **WalsallVirtualSchool@walsall.gov.uk** by 28th February 2021.



Walsall Council

