Cheddington Newsletter - Special Edition

Follow up to Curriculum Week "Keeping Safe (Physically, mentally and virtually)"

During the last week of the first spring half term we all took part in a curriculum week in which we took time out of our regular timetable to do a range of activities based around "Keeping Safe". All classes did a range of activities which explored what made the children feel good, what they could do to help themselves to feel good and what habits they could build to help themselves stay safe. The activities included: a whole school survey, role play and drama, visual arts, poetry, using music as a tool for relaxation, yoga, how to manage friendship difficulties and how to avoid problems with social media.

At the end of the week we showed a film of our work from the week to parents, along with a display of work in the hall and a talk about online dangers from Thames Valley Police. In school, we felt that the week was very successful and will continue to be a focus moving forward. A number of parents have spoken to me and asked for further information on a rage of the activities that we did.

We started the week with a school survey in which children were asked eight questions about what they would rather do. The results were interesting and can be seen below.

Answer 1	Votes	Answer 2	Votes
To get a house point	85	For your teacher to smile at you.	87
To beat your high score on a computer game	58	To paint a great picture	114
To be given a small gift	31	To give a friend a small gift.	140
For your teacher to tell you that you are clever	48	For your teacher to tell you that you worked really hard	125
For your parents to give you a hug and say well done	104	For your parents to treat you to a take away	68
For someone to hold a door open for you	13	For someone to say thank you when you hold a door open for you.	146
For an adult to teach you a new skill	128	For an adult to say well done for a skill that you already have	45
To do something naughty and get away with it	39	To learn why something that you did was bad	134

Some results showed a great deal of variation by age and some specific classes did not fit with general trends. For instance it was clear that younger children were far more motivated by house points while older children were steadily less influenced by these and more keen on a smile from their teacher. In general we feel that the results show that the work that we have done on Growth Mindset over the last two years has had a positive effect on most of the school but that there are still a proportion of pupils who have not fully engaged with the ideas behind this teaching. We will use these results to plan in some specific PSHE activities for some particular classes, and to inform our PSHE teaching across the school.

Mental Wellbeing:

In discussion with the children during the week we found that a small number of children were starting each school day in a negative frame of mind, in some cases this could be traced to a specific event but in others there was a general feeling that each day was a cause for worry. Staff tracked pupil's happiness levels at different points during lessons by a simple finger score showing 1 as very worried and 10 as very confident. Most children showed high scores throughout lessons and were clearly happy and confident in their learning. We found that even those children who started a lesson with low scores were showing scores of 8 or more by midway through lessons but the same children would revert back to low scores for the start of the next lesson. As these results were constant throughout the week we conclude that we have small number of children who are anxious about lessons despite repeatedly enjoying those lessons once they have got into them. We will look at ways of addressing this anxiety with the identified pupils.
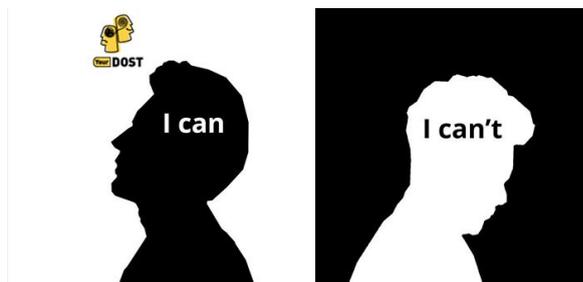
We worked with all classes (at age appropriate levels) to look at how taking different attitudes into the same situations can lead us to feel either more or less happy. The drama and role play suggests that we should continue to help our children see that how happy (or otherwise) they might be often has more to do with their perceptions and attitudes than outside influences. This is something that parents might also want to consider in family conversations.
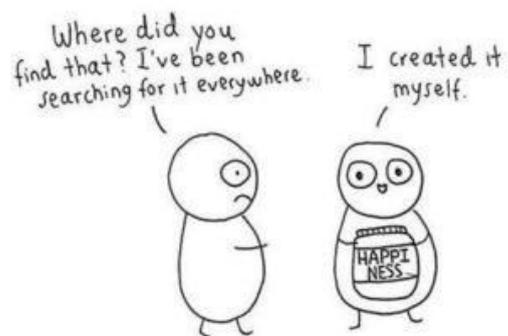
Bullying:

Bullying is the repeated use of hurtful behaviour (both verbal and physical) against another. No school can guarantee that their pupils will never experience unkind behaviour but we try to engender a culture where bullying is not considered acceptable.

At Cheddington we encourage pupils who don't like what others around them are doing to respond with the phrase "Don't do that it makes me feel ….." as research has shown that children of primary age are more likely to reconsider their actions in response to this form of words than to others. If the actions continue then pupils should tell a member of staff who will try to resolve the disagreement.

What to do if you think that your child might be being bullied or may be bullying others:

First of all ask if your child has told a member of staff. Our children know that when problems are brought to staff we listen to all parties involved and then make decisions based upon all different versions of events. Sometimes children prefer to tell a parent, who they feel will listen solely to their interpretation of events.

- Contact the class teacher to politely let them know what your child has told you and give them time to ask other other children what they saw and get a full picture of what has happened.
- The class teacher will contact you with a fully informed update as soon as they can.
- Please don't keep your child away from school as this makes it very hard for the teacher to hear all points of view.
- Remember that most instances of bullying behaviour happen between friends, who choose to play together, and are best remedied by working with the children to help them manage their emotions and friendships more pleasantly.
- Do appreciate that we cannot discuss what we are doing with other people's children with you, just as you would not like us to discuss your child's behaviour with another parent. This does not mean that we are not acting to resolve the problem.

CyberBullying

Cyberbullying is bullying which takes place using technology. It is not possible for any school or institution to guarantee that cyber bullying will not happen but there are ways to help to prevent a child from being cyber bullied and to help them cope and stop the bullying if it does happen.

At Cheddington we take a number of measures to limit the chances for cyber bullying to happen such as: using a strong filtering system, blocking sites which are known to cause problems and using a constant monitoring system for all computers in school. Hand in hand with this we introduce children to communicating through technology using systems which allow use to teach good habits and monitor the children's use closely so that we can trace exactly what has happened when problems are reported to us.

Two features on the school VLE (messaging and discussions) are used to do this and we would encourage parents to only allow their children to use these forms of social media while they are at our school. This allows us to track exactly what was said by who and when if problems occur. Inevitably, children (and adults) do occasionally post unpleasant comments and we use these rare events as opportunities to learn about and reinforce better behaviour choices.

Other forms of social media are not intended for primary age children and we would expect parents to not to allow their children to have access to sites and apps such as Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook and others which have poor track records for cyber bullying and have age guidance stating that they are not suitable for primary aged children. Please don't be convinced by your children that social media sites aimed at grown-ups are safe for them to use and that all of their friends are on them, our survey of Year 6 pupils showed that only a small minority of parents have allowed their children accounts on these sites.

If you are concerned that your child has been involved in cyber-bullying using the school VLE then please use the red report button next to the offending message and drop a note into the school office to let the class teacher know. We will then look into the whole trail of messages and resolve the issue with the children. The vast majority of cases that we deal with turn out to be miss-understandings and are quickly resolved with discussion and apology. However, we do reserve the right to block or remove a pupil's access the system if that is required to ensure that others may use it without abuse.

Unfortunately we are not able to resolve issues that arise from the use of social media aimed at grown-ups which happen outside of school, but we can (and will) notify providers that users have provided false details about their age which will result in accounts being closed.

Key Actions for parents to help keep our children 'E-Safe' through primary school and beyond.

1) Talk to your children about how they used technology each day. The more that they share with you, the less likely they are to have problems.
2) Encourage your children to use the messages and discussions on the school VLE.
3) Agree and enforce time to use mobile devices and times when they should be handed into you.
4) Be clear that technology was bought by you and belongs to you. You have agreed to let your child use it on the condition that they stick to rules that you have agreed.
5) Use the Parental Control settings created by your internet service provider. Searching youtube for 'parental controls BT' or 'parental controls Sky' for instance, will bring up a range of guides to setting up your accounts in ways that keep your children safe.
6) Check your children's devices regularly and click on icons to be sure that they do what you think they do. A common way for older children to conceal their use of apps that they have been banned from using is to swap the icon for the app with one for something innocent.
7) Use the parental control settings on your child's device. Make yourself the main user and set them up another account which you have control over. Once again a youtube search for 'parental controls kindle fire' or 'parental controls iphone' will show all sorts of useful tricks.
8) Remember that most online games now include aspects of social media such as comments, tips and communities. Talk to your children about anyone that they have talked to while playing games.
9) The greatest concern that we hear about from our colleagues in secondary school and from the police is around the trend for 'sexting'. Do talk to your children about the risks of sharing pictures of themselves as they make the transition from primary to secondary school.

All in all, we found that our curriculum week has taught us a great deal as teachers, pupils and as a community. We will continue to develop our strategies in this ever changing field.

Mr Fowler