



# Stoke Mandeville Combined School

*Caring, Inspiring and Achieving Together*

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26<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Similar to previous years, the children will undertake a topic linked to mental health and wellbeing to coincide with the national Children's Mental Health Week during the week commencing 1<sup>st</sup> February. We have chosen to adopt the theme, Express Yourself, as it corresponds with the focus of the children's mental health charity, Place2Be.

Express Yourself is intended to support children to find creative ways to share their feelings, thoughts or ideas through activities such as art, writing, music and dance. It is also designed to encourage children to communicate their individuality through activities like these as well as their choices of clothing and hairstyles. Teachers across the school will provide the children with the opportunity to explore their creativity through art and movement whether they are undertaking their learning within school or remotely. It is hoped that the children will discover new ways in which to express themselves so that they will be able to incorporate their favourite activities from the week into their day-to-day lives moving forward. In addition, we will hold a non-uniform day on **Friday 5<sup>th</sup> February** to provide all of the children with the opportunity to express themselves via their choice of clothing and hairstyle. *(There will be **no** charge for this event.)*

You can also encourage your child to express themselves at home. The following suggestions might prove useful ways to promote this mindset:

1. Build on an existing interest or passion. Consider what has helped your child to get through this past year – possibly a love of dancing, baking, singing, drawing or creating models.
2. Encourage your child to find a new creative outlet. There are lots of online tutorials and video demos that you and your child could be inspired by.
3. Your child might not think of themselves as being creative. Try to encourage them to focus on the process and the way it can make them feel, rather than the end result.
4. Listening carefully can help your child to feel more comfortable and confident when expressing themselves. You might want to summarise what they have shared with you and acknowledge their feelings.
5. Children are expressing themselves all of the time but not necessarily with words. 'Listen' to everything your child is trying to tell you through their behaviour or with their play and creativity or with their silence. It's all self-expression.

If you're worried about your child's mental health, please contact your child's class teacher. In addition, the accompanying leaflet, *You're never too young to talk mental health – tips for talking for parents and carers*, might prove useful.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Ryan

Skills for Life Curriculum Leader

