

Bower Grove Support

Support for the Wider Community 1992 - 2017
For Families of Children with Special Needs



Bower Grove School Fant Lane Maidstone Kent ME16 8NL

SUMMER 2017 NEWSLETTER



HI! We have a good programme of meetings and workshops for the spring/summer term and hope you can join us. Please remember meetings are open to all parents and carers and that includes any other school or organisation. There is no need to book. Please take a look at the previous workshops described in the newsletter. I would like to remind you about the Parent Support page on the school website www.bower-grove.kent.sch.uk; select **Parent Support** at the top of the page for key information and more.

psq.bowergrove@btinternet.com

If there is a special subject you would also like covered please email me; Jo Cousins at

or speak to me at one of the meetings and I will do my best to help. We hope to see you all very soon.



Josephine Cousins

SUMMER 2017 PROGRAMME – OPEN TO ALL SCHOOLS

Friday 5 th May 10.15am-11.40 am	Autism & Anxiety talk Georgina Watts - ASD Advocate and postgrad student of autism studies is joining us to discuss ASD and Anxiety, sharing her own experience and drawing on her research. Please see more information on page 4.
Friday 19 th May 10.15am-11.40am	'Xbox to Exercise' Mr Reece Jacobs, Head of Physical Education, Bower Grove School joins us for a fact-finding morning that will outline the importance of physical activity from early years to adulthood and fitness. This talk will be of value for all ages and parents and professionals alike. Please read more on page 4.
Friday 30 th June 10.15am-11.40am	Behaviour Management - A Parents' Survival Guide Pam Stephens STLS returns for another session on Behaviour Management. Open to all parents and carers; not to be missed.

Winter 2016 and Spring 2017 meetings

MONEY WORRIES - MANAGING A TIGHT BUDGET

In March Heather Hardy, Citizens Advice Maidstone joined us for a very informative Managing a Tight Budget session.

We looked at Debt Emergencies and the correct order of priority. Tips for dealing with debt and our attitude to money. Heather handed out several sheets for us to fill in and there was discussion around the suggested check list of correct answers. There wasn't time to discuss Energy switching on this occasion, but please see links below.

More information can be found on the Citizens Advice website:

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>

Please see some direct links below:

This link will take you to the information on water help

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/water/water-supply/problems-with-paying-your-water-bill/watersure-scheme-help-with-paying-water-bills/>

This link is for energy

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/energy/energy-supply/get-a-better-energy-deal/switching-energy-supplier/>

This link is to a budgeting tool

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money/budgeting/budgeting/work-out-your-budget/>

We thanked Heather for a very informative morning and there was time for discussion on many related money subjects which proved to be a very interesting morning.

MINDFULNESS – TALK BOWER GROVE SUPPORT

Also in March we were very pleased to welcome Hannah Ring, an Outreach Teacher at Bower Grove School to join us for a talk about Mindfulness. Hannah works to support mainstream schools as a Specialist Teacher for students with Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties. Her background is working with children in Nurture Group settings as well as Early Years. Her passion in education is about understanding what children are trying to communicate through their behaviour and how we can support them with this.

Hannah had previously said:

“Have you ever had a journey to work and when you arrived, you suddenly realise that you don’t actually remember the task of getting to work? Alternatively, have you lay in a warm bubble bath and couldn’t relax because you just cannot stop your thoughts racing? For most of us, our minds are constantly whirling, thinking about the children, cleaning, dog walking, shopping, what we’re doing at the weekend etc. We rarely live in the present and do not pay attention to what is happening in our lives at a particular moment. Mindfulness is the act of stopping and noticing what is around you at any given moment (the sights, smells, sounds, feelings and maybe tastes!) During the last 20 -25 years, there have been many studies which demonstrated that mindfulness provides benefits in a range of clinical settings, from pain management and stress, through to management of depression.”

Hannah discussed how Mindfulness is something that is currently in the spotlight, in the press, on the TV and was even discussed in the Loose Women programme. It is currently being used more and more in schools and nurture settings. Hannah recommends the following websites:

Wellbeing Toolkit: <https://nurturegroups.org/news/wellbeing-toolkit-0>

Nurture Group Network: <https://nurturegroups.org/> have more resources around Mindfulness as well as many other Wellbeing approaches.

What is Mindfulness? Further useful links below:

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/Pages/mindfulness.aspx#what>

<http://mind.org.uk/information-support/drugs-and-treatments/mindfulness/#.WNKGBjvyg2w>

"It's about allowing ourselves to see the present moment clearly. When we do that, it can positively change the way we see ourselves and our lives."

"It might be useful to remember that mindfulness isn't about making these thoughts go away, but rather about seeing them as mental events."

"Imagine standing at a bus station and seeing 'thought buses' coming and going without having to get on them and be taken away. This can be very hard at first, but with gentle persistence it is possible."

Hannah introduced us to Mindfulness and we tried a few simple exercises. She showed us a picture of pink elephants on the whiteboard asked us not to think about pink elephants; this was difficult. We then tried some simple breathing exercises; the idea to empty our minds for a minute of pending thoughts and be in the present. Hannah, acknowledge it can be difficult; we shouldn't try to fight our thoughts but observe them. It is natural for the mind to go from one thought to another leaving us stressed and at times anxious. The idea is to take a back seat and let the thoughts come and go acknowledging them but not getting caught up with them. Being awake in the present. Hannah further explained how this can make us less judgemental and think kinder thoughts of ourselves and others. This may enable us to make better decisions with clearer insight.

We were introduced to a few more exercises to try and visual aids that can be useful. Hannah talked about how we can practise mindfulness anywhere, sitting, standing going out for a walk. Really noticing nature is a good way of being 'awake'. There were about 70 people in the room and Hannah said we may find it easier to practise at home where we may feel more comfortable.

Hannah explained how she has seen great improvement in the children she has worked with and was able to quote comments of children at Bower Grove School. One example was a boy who was rather rowdy during play time and he came back in after the break to say I really need a mindful moment. This calmed him down and he was then able to concentrate on his work for the rest of the afternoon. Hannah explained how many of the children really appreciate their mindfulness sessions

MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS SUMMER 2017

Autism & Anxiety talk

Friday 5th May 10.15am for 10.30am – 11.30am

Georgina Watts - ASD Advocate and postgrad student of autism studies is joining us to discuss ASD and Anxiety, sharing her own experience of being diagnosed herself and discussing depression and anxiety explaining how/why this happens, drawing on the research as well as her own experiences.

Georgina will also talk about how to support autistic peoples' mental health and discuss NAS's SPELL framework (which is something she finds particularly helpful) and other factors to consider for improving emotion well-being. Open to all parents and carers.

'Xbox to Exercise'

Friday 19th May 10.15am for 10.30am – 11.30am

Mr Reece Jacobs, Head of Physical Education, Bower Grove School joins us for a fact-finding morning open to all parents and carers that will outline the importance of physical activity from early years to adulthood. The benefits of exercise will be explored and explained alongside several practical ideas to encourage all age groups to become more active.

Current research overwhelmingly shows the decline in physical fitness amongst all age groups. This workshop will provide you with the knowledge to assist your future decisions about health and fitness.

Behaviour Management: A Parents' Survival Guide

Friday 30th June 10.15am for 10.30am – 11.30am

Pam Stephens STLS returns for another session on Behaviour Management. Open to all parents and carers; not to be missed.

All parents and professionals are welcome to join us for these talks and there is no need to book.

For more information please email Josephine Cousins: psg.bowergrove@btinternet.com

Josephine Cousins

BOWER GROVE PARENT SUPPORT

CONTACT: Josephine Cousins Tel: 01622 726773 (during school hours)

Web: www.bower-grove.kent.sch.uk and select **Parent Support** for key SEN information.

Email: Josephine Cousins: psg.bowergrove@btinternet.com

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