



# Inclusion Newsletter

13<sup>th</sup> October 2023

Welcome to the first Inclusion newsletter of this academic year. My name is Mrs Huggett and I am the Assistant Headteacher and Inclusion Manager at Riverside, which means I am the main point of contact for parents of children with any additional needs. For those of you who are new to the school, this Inclusion Newsletter is sent out once a term to keep you up-to-date with developments either in school, Medway or nationally, related to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). It also provides information and advice related to specific areas of need, detailing the support we provide in school and how you can help your child at home.

As well as me, there is a team of other staff working to support additional needs in the school. Mrs Wood, our Home School Support Worker, is available to give guidance to families who may need some support with managing anxieties, behaviour or any other issues or circumstances at home that may be affecting children's learning or attendance. She also runs interventions to support emotional wellbeing in school and co-ordinates our programme of parent workshops, as well as hosting our regular 'Time to Talk' sessions. Keep an eye out on Dojo for her updates – it would be great to see some new faces at these events.

Mrs Barber has recently been appointed to work as our Wellbeing Coach, a new role which has been introduced to increase our capacity to support wellbeing across the school. Mrs Barber will work with pupils, staff and parents to help manage any emotional wellbeing needs, support dysregulated behaviours and ensure children are ready to learn.

Many of you will know Mrs Allen, who has been our specialist Speech and Language TA for some years. She will now be working in a new role, running a Nurture Provision for the Trust. Our Speech and Language Therapist, Laura Blackman, will still be overseeing the children's assessments and plans, and class TAs will be taking on more responsibility for delivering the Speech and Language programmes.

Finally, Mrs Reed continues to cover the SEND Administrator role while Miss White is on maternity leave. I know she has been in contact with many of you already to arrange meetings or share information.

Your child's class teacher is always the best person to speak to first if you have any questions or concerns about your child's learning, but if you wish to discuss your child's needs further, or need additional support, please don't hesitate to contact me at the school.

**Mrs Z Huggett**  
Inclusion Manager



Spotlight on.....

## Social Skills

Social skills are the skills we use every day to interact and communicate with others. They include verbal and non-verbal communication, such as speech, gesture, facial expression and body language. A person has strong social skills if they have the knowledge of how to behave in social situations and understand the normal expectations when communicating with others. Good social skills allow children to develop better peer relationships and demonstrate appropriate behaviours, and can reduce anxieties linked to social situations. Although conditions like Autism do impact on children's social skills, they aren't something your child either has or doesn't have. The skills can be learned and strengthened with effort and practice. Key social skills for children to learn are sharing, listening, co-operating with others, conflict resolution, empathy and having good manners.



Developing strong social skills as a child can support mental health and wellbeing, as well as improved career success as an adult.

~ Be aware of your own social interactions, as children learn from what they see and hear. You should model taking turns in conversations, and show them how to listen and respond to the person speaking in a thoughtful and polite way. Try to make sure that you aren't distracted by technology when your child is engaging with you. If things have gone wrong, wait until everyone is calm and then discuss what happened and how it could be dealt with better next time. Modelling how to apologise and forgive is also important.

Helpful  
Tips

~ Help children to understand different facial expressions and body language by taking photos of them looking a certain way (eg 'angry' or 'worried'). See if children can then look back at the pictures and identify the feeling from the face. Can they role-play the feeling, or suggest a scenario that might make someone feel that way? You can then discuss ways in which we could help someone who was feeling one of the more negative or upsetting emotions.

~ Teach your child to take turns by playing games where they need to wait for others to have a go. Also, look for games where you need to co-operate and work as a team to be successful. Model how to be a good loser and, although it's nice to let them win sometimes, ensure children know that they can't always be the winner or have things their way!

Useful websites:

<https://childdevelopment.com.au/areas-of-concern/play-and-social-skills/social-skills/>

<https://www.parentingscience.com/social-skills-activities.html>