

Dear parents,

I hope you are all keeping safe and well.

As part of our ongoing aim to support the social and emotional well-being of our pupils as much as we can during these difficult times, I have produced some more story massage videos for you to use at home. To go alongside it, I thought it would be helpful for you to have a bit more information about peer massage and the benefits that can be achieved.

In school, all of the children take part in a peer massage before learning begins. The children ask permission before beginning, so the children always have the opportunity to say no. It is very rare that children don't chose to take part as the it is a part of the day which they love, but if they do they opt out, they may help the teacher show the moves, do it in the air or to a teddy bear, so they are never excluded from the special ritual.

The reasons behind us investing in this as a school is simple – the impact of this on the children's state of mind, calmness, alertness and readiness to learn is profound. When we embarked on this strategy 5 years ago, we really didn't envisage such an impact!

The theory behind it is all about the theory of positive touch. Any form of positive touch releases oxytocin, a feel good hormones that floods our body with calm. It sounds simple (and it is!), but it really does have an incredibly calming effect on children of all ages across school.

Positive touch gives children reassurance, develops stronger relationships, can reduce feelings of anxiety and restlessness and help children to feel safe and secure. With the profound and sudden changes that have been forced upon our families, our children need to feel safe and secure more than ever before.

I have put together a series of videos to help parents and children to use massage at home. Children can do it with you, siblings, on a teddy bear or even on a pet! Video calling a friend or family member and teaching the moves to them would be a great way to connect with others. It is not just for calming before bed. In school we use it to get us ready to learn in the morning, as a brain break and as part of planned relaxation times.

I hope you enjoy using the resources at home

Stay safe and well,

Laura Leitch