

November 2021



Dear all,

We hope you have had a lovely half term. We do not usually produce another newsletter so close to the start of a new academic year, but we have been quite busy with lots going on!! We have recruited lots of new volunteers this year so this newsletter will have some gentle reminders to help those of you that have not been with us for very long. Those of you that have been with us for many years then you can just scroll on by some of the sections!!!

The immediate health risks of Covid to children and young people, and vaccinated school staff, may be low, however, in some areas, the current case rates and the number of outbreaks is impacting on attendance in some schools causing further disruption to children's education.

Some Headteachers, in both primary and secondary schools, have now been strongly advised to implement the use of face coverings in communal areas again for staff, children and visitors unless exempt, so you may be advised to go back to wearing face coverings again during your sessions on your return to school. Please also remember that we do have duplicate books if you would prefer to go back to book sharing.

We do hope that most of you are now enjoying being back at school. If you have not yet had a return to school date and are ready to return, do please advise your fieldworker as we have many vacancies to try and fill in schools this term.

If you know of anyone that is thinking about taking up a volunteering role, do please pass them our way as the demand for our support in schools is very high. Spread the word and give us a follow on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/abctoread2> and Twitter <https://twitter.com/abctoread>

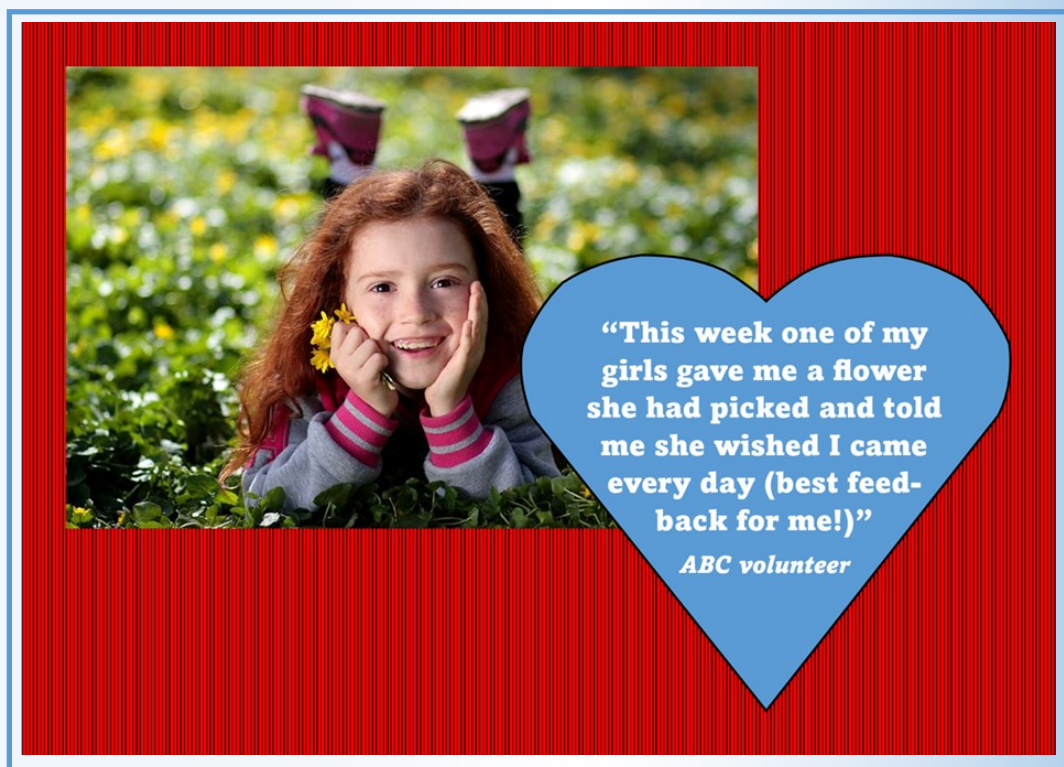
Our trustees have this month reviewed the Storage and Internet Use policies.

Buddy training

Not only have we been very busy training new volunteers, but we have also trained 6th form students to work with younger children and this has really taken off over the last few weeks! The feedback has been stunning, and a group of trained students helped Year 7 children move from a reading age of 6 to age 13 in just 6 months! This goes to show how much our work is never more needed.

Right: 6th Form students at Easthampstead Community School





New - Government Resource relating to Early Reading

This Reading Framework sets out the core principles of teaching reading for children in Reception and year 1, and for older pupils who have not yet mastered the foundations. It provides support and guidance for school leaders, classroom teachers and Initial Teacher Training partnerships about how to create a school environment where every child is not only able to read proficiently, but also develops a genuine love of reading.

Although our role is to inspire children to enjoy reading some of you may find this an interesting read: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1000986/Reading_framework_Teaching_the_foundations_of_literacy_-_July-2021.pdf

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021

This important document is revised each September and we ask all volunteers to read the new edition: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1014058/KCSIE_2021_Part_One_September.pdf



Volunteer training session—thank you for coming!

For those of you that came along to our volunteer morning on 5th October, Anne-Marie, our speaker, wanted to share with you a video link which she was not able to log onto at the time so here is the link. It is too beautiful not to share! https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gXI80TqAMQQ&ab_channel=rupertrupert
It was wonderful to be out again and to see so many of our volunteers so thank you all for coming along. An enjoyable morning was had by all, and we hope you all took something useful away from the morning to coincide with World Mental Health Day.



Christmas coffee mornings

As we have had a recent large gathering, fieldworkers will be organising their own Christmas coffee mornings this year so that you can all get together in your own teams. They will be contacting you all soon to advise you of the location and date.

Gift giving

It is that time of year when we all love to gift, including to some of the schools that we work in.

We encourage you to have a positive relationship with the children and schools you support, however, you **must not** give any personal gifts to children. It may be inappropriate for reasons that you're not aware of, giving the impression of favouritism or raising expectations of the level of support you can provide. ABC to read volunteers must also not accept gifts of monetary value from children or the school (gifts such as thank you letters, or pictures drawn by the child are fine!). If you are unsure whether you can accept a gift, please contact your fieldworker.

Donations while you shop

Give As You Live, Easyfundraising and AmazonSmile turn a percentage of every penny you spend into a donation for ABC to read, so please think of us this year if you do any online shopping. We are set up on these platforms to receive a donation.

Read a story

During the last school closures our volunteers took some time and recorded a very short video of themselves reading a story. This enabled us to share the videos to the children we support so they could listen to someone read them a story. We would like to do this again over the Christmas holidays. Here is a link to give you an idea. If you would like to take part, then do please record yourself and send in a short story suitable for primary children.

<https://www.abctoread.org.uk/storytelling-with-abc-to-read/>



Online reading sessions

We do realise that some of our volunteers have paused their face-to-face support into schools either through their own choice or because some schools are having a rise in cases and are not accepting external visitors.

Whilst we know that our face to face is the best method to support children, we were able to adjust to online last academic year via Teams or Zoom. The feedback we received from families and schools was very positive as children were falling further and further behind. Sometimes the sessions just allowed a friendly face and interaction with children that needed it whilst at home or had time out from the classroom. Some volunteers read a story and talked about the book, whilst others were able to share screens and play games. Just listening to a story being read aloud is great for improving a child's reading skills.

So, we would like to be prepared for the winter months and find out from our volunteers whether any of you are happy to run online sessions again or to give them a go if you have not already done so, in case we are faced with more children or volunteers having to stay at home over the winter months. Could you therefore please reply to us info@abctoread.org.uk with a short message advising us of your name and your interest in running some online interactive sessions. It would also be useful to let us know if you have carried out online sessions in the past.

For those of you who would like to give online sessions a go but are unsure then do look at this wonderful clip from our volunteer Kate from Holyport CE Primary telling us it is not as difficult as we think! https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3XK_cKxRJu0&ab_channel=ABCToread

Helpful pointers for your sessions

One of our volunteers, Kate, has passed on a useful information sheet to help plan your sessions with the children. There are some helpful ideas on how to involve the children before, during and after the story. Please find this attached separately.



Please note that the office will close for the Christmas break on Thursday 15th December and will re-open on Thursday 6th January

