



Picture News at Home

Dear Parents,

At Birches we strive to broaden horizons, develop children's critical literacy skills as well as foster an understanding and appreciation of some of the issues we face locally, nationally and globally. As part of this, we subscribe to Picture News. Picture News publish weekly resources, focused around a key issue or event. In school we use these resources to discuss 'the big question' during assembly and in follow-up discussions in class. It provides children with a valuable opportunity to consider the viewpoints and opinions of others as well as developing the Fundamental British Values; Individual Liberty, Rule of Law, Democracy, Mutual Respect and Tolerance.

We would like to build on this further by launching our new Picture News at Home area of the website. Each week we will post 'the big question' which includes discussion points for talking with your child at home. We will also post a copy of the week's edition of the Picture Newspaper for children to read and enjoy.

Having age-appropriate conversations with your child about the news keeps them interested and informed about what's happening in the world...and you too! Their viewpoint changes from 'what's happening in MY world?' to 'what's happening in THE world and what is my place in it?'

By having regular conversations about the news, you are able to share a whole range of topics and together make more sense of different events, issues and stories.

There are no rules or script to follow but you might want to watch, listen, read and discuss the news selectively. Some significant news stories can be frightening, and you will need to consider what your child can cope with and whether they are developmentally ready to understand certain events. For example, you might decide to listen to the news rather than watch it as there may be images they might find upsetting.

Talking about the major headlines of the day and current affairs is important so that children grow up as global citizens but it's important too to share a variety of fun and exciting news stories from the worlds of sport, entertainment, music, science, etc as well as local news closer to home.

Here are some quick tips:

- **Initiate** discussions about the news using the Picture News resources.
- **Read and watch** some news stories together from different sources.

- **Find out** what your child knows about the news and explore their understanding.
- **Listen** to what your child says and value their opinions.
- **Explain** simply and in a way that makes sense to them.
- **Promote** a habit of enquiry and make asking questions your child's default setting.
- **Help** your child to spot fake news and how-to fact-check.
- **Develop** a news habit by accessing the news daily.
- **Defuse** bad news and offer reassurance.
- **Protect** your child from distressing and disturbing news.
- **Avoid** repeated viewings of the same news event.
- **Monitor** your child's exposure to the news.

Discussing the news of the day doesn't have to be formal but can be done naturally and casually in everyday moments such as during a walk, on the way to school or preparing a meal.

The important thing is to keep the conversation going about the news and make it a feature of your daily lives.

By working together, we can help children become critical consumers of the news so that they are 'news savvy', articulate and confident citizens.