

# The Hug

**NEWS**



## The Hug

Big care for little people,  
at the heart of our school



## IN THIS EDITION:

- NEW:** Welcome to our new look
- NEW:** Meet the team
- NEW:** The Sanctuary
- NEW:** Calming strategies at home
- NEW:** Calming strategies at school





# The Hug



**NEWS**

## Welcome

We wish all our families a happy and productive 2026! As we head into spring, a time of new beginnings, it brings fresh opportunities to try new things. For children, starting a new sport or activity can be exciting—but also a little nerve-wracking.

At our school, we care deeply about the well-being of every child. We know that worries can sometimes feel overwhelming—for children and parents alike—but with understanding and gentle strategies, we can help our children feel safe and confident. This newsletter shares practical tips you can use at home and ideas for working together with us at school. Thank you for partnering with us to support your child's emotional health.

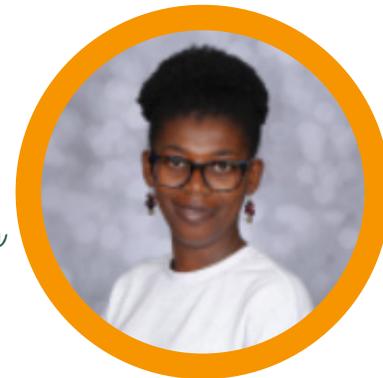
## Meet the team

Mrs Morris leads the Well-being Team to determine the children who need support and the provision that is required in the school, working with the Learning Mentors, Inclusion Team and with support from the Milton Keynes Mental health Support Team. She also leads on staff well-being, ensuring a positive working environment.

Ms Yeboah and Mrs Mena work within our school to help children and families with any difficulties they may be experiencing. They are there to listen, offer support and practical advice. Our Learning Mentors work with individuals, groups of children, teachers and other members of staff, families and external agencies. The role of the Learning Mentor is to build confidence, raise self-esteem, build resilience and motivation, improve social skills, form relationships with friends, family and staff, improve attendance and punctuality, remove barriers to learning as well as help children achieve their potential



*Mrs Mena  
Learning Mentor  
based @Oxley Park*



*Ms Yeboah  
Learning Mentor  
based @Shenley Wood*



*Mrs Morris  
Wellbeing Lead  
based @Oxley Park*

## WELL-BEING TEAM





# The Sanctuary



## Welcome

A warm welcome to The Sanctuary provision. Here at Oxley Park Academy, we have created extremely unique spaces that we are very proud of that the children can use when they feel they need an extra safe space. We believe that children need time and space to talk through their feelings and we are very lucky to have a team of staff who are committed to supporting all children in school to explore their challenges, however big or small. When designing The Sanctuary, we wanted to create a relaxing, yet natural, environment where children feel at ease - somewhere they can feel safe. Throughout the school, our spaces are easily accessible for all children to use.



*The Retreat @ Oxley Park*

*The Retreat @ Shenley Wood*

## Sanctuary Spaces

Our Sanctuary provision offers safe spaces for children to talk or just have some quiet time to themselves. These are replicated over both campuses ensuring all children have the same opportunities.

## The Retreat

The Retreat is an area for small group work focusing on feelings/emotions led by our Learning Mentor or Pastoral TA. Children will get to work on cushions with an 'Oxley Friend' to support them.





# The Sanctuary



## The Treehouse

The Treehouse is a where more formal interventions can take place. Interventions that require writing can take place here. It is also open and available during most lunchtimes

## Virtual Hug

Throughout both sites we have introduced 'Virtual Hugs.' These calming spaces are designed to support children when they need some time and space and are not yet ready to talk to an adult. In each tepee, there is a Panda (one of our Oxley Friends) who the children have named for their individual Street or Quad. The Panda is available for cuddles to help calm and comfort the children, alongside a comfy beanbag and blanket. These areas include books which explore feelings and can then be shared with an adult.

## Oxley Park Friends

No matter where you go at Oxley Park Academy, there will always be a friend. If children aren't ready for a human friend there are many companions in school that the children can talk to...



Virtual Hug

The Treehouse @ Oxley Park



Sharing a virtual hug of news, advice and support



# The Sanctuary

## Calm Room

The calm room is a safe space used to help children manage overwhelming emotions, sensory overload or distress. It is a quiet reset area for emotional regulation enabling children to regain focus before returning to the learning.



## Calm Room

## Umbrella Pods

Our Safeguarding Umbrella Pods display information and reminders for children regarding a number of things; anti-bullying or online safety for example. They also display photos of the adults that are part of the safeguarding team.



## Umbrella Pod



# NEWS





# The Sanctuary in the classroom

## Calm Kit



## A supportive classroom environment

We want our children to feel safe and be able to self regulate whenever and wherever they can. Within each classroom there is a Calm Kit, an Inclusion Basket and Zones of Regulation which enables children to do this.

## Calm Kits

Calm kits bring The Sanctuary into the classroom. Each kit contains a blanket, age appropriate book to support well-being and emotions, blanket, breathing ball and glitter jar.

## Inclusion Baskets

The inclusion basket is a range of tools for children to use to help support their learning. Each class has a bespoke basket and children are encouraged to self-select the resources to help them in their learning.

## Zones of Regulation

Zones of Regulation helps children understand, manage, and regulate their emotions. It enables us to teach emotional awareness and self-regulation skills in a simple, visual way. Children check in every day and are able to understand how their body reacts when they feel a certain way.

## Inclusion Basket



## ★ Zones of Regulation

The ZONES of Regulation™

BLUE ZONE	GREEN ZONE	YELLOW ZONE	RED ZONE
Sad Sick Tired Bored Moving Slowly	Happy Calm Feeling Okay Focused Relaxed	Frustrated Worried Silly/Wiggly Excited Loss of Some Control	Mad/Angry Terrified Elated/Excited Devastated Out of Control

© 2011 Think Social Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.  
From The Zones of Regulation™ by Leah M. Fogarty, M.Ed. at www.zonesofregulation.com



# NEWS



# The Hug



## ADVICE

## Helping Children Learn to Manage Worries

### Tips for at home...

**Create a Calm Space:** A cozy corner with a favourite book, soft toy, or calming music can help your child feel safe when they're overwhelmed.

**Talk About Feelings:** Encourage your child to share what's worrying them. Use phrases like "I understand that feels hard" to validate their emotions.

**Practice Breathing Together:** Try these fun breathing exercises:

**Smell the Flower, Blow the Candle:** Pretend to smell a flower (inhale slowly and blow out a candle (exhale gently).

**Square Breathing:** Inhale for 4 counts, hold for 4, exhale for 4, hold for 4—like tracing a square.

**Keep Routines Predictable:** Regular meal times, bedtime, and homework schedules provide a sense of security.

### Tips for at school...

**Morning Check-In:** A quick chat before school can help your child feel prepared for the day.

**Positive Notes:** Slip a small encouraging note in their lunchbox—simple words like "You've got this!" can make a big difference.

**Work With Teachers:** Share any concerns with your child's teacher so they can offer extra support during the day.

### Calming Music Playlists

Music can soothe anxious minds. Here are some child-friendly options:

Spotify: "Calm Kids" or "Peaceful Piano"

YouTube: "Relaxing Music for Kids" or "Mindfulness for Children"

### Mindfulness Games for Kids

**Five Senses Game:** Ask your child to name 5 things they can see, 4 they can touch, 3 they can hear, 2 they can smell, and 1 they can taste.

**Bubble Breathing:** Blow bubbles together and watch them float away—imagine worries floating away too.

**Mindful Colouring:** Give your child a colouring sheet and encourage slow, focused colouring.

### Extra Tips

**Model Calmness:** Children often mirror adult behaviour. Showing calm responses helps them learn how to cope.

**Celebrate Small Wins:** Praise efforts like speaking up during learning or trying something new, even if it's just a small step.

**Remember:** Worries are normal, and with patience and reassurance, children can build resilience. If you ever feel your child needs more help, don't hesitate to reach out to the school for guidance.

