

TEACHING AND LEARNING GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS

Welcome to our monthly Learning Newsletter where we seek to share some of the initiatives and strategies we use in school so you might best support your child in their education, in order to benefit your child and further enhance their educational experiences in the long term.

What is Cultural Capital?

The term cultural capital is not new. It is a complex theory that comes originally from the field of sociology, which involves the study of society, including relationships, social interactions and culture.

It is important to recognise that everyone has cultural capital – that is – knowledge, skills and behaviours, and that these accumulate over time through many different experiences and opportunities.

Cultural capital is understood to contribute to 'getting on in life' or 'social status', i.e. being able to perform well in school, knowing how to talk in different social groups or societies, accessing higher education and being successful in work or a career.

Rather than thinking of cultural capital as a thing that must be 'given' or 'taught', it might be more helpful to think first and foremost about the cultures, languages and traditions that children and their families bring, and how we might value and celebrate this.

In school, we enhance children's cultural capital through our curriculum, a great curriculum builds cultural capital.

Additionally, cultural capital is enhanced through our extra-curricular opportunities, our discussions with pupils, our recognition of the diversity of children's home experiences, and avoiding assumptions about different cultural backgrounds, customs and experiences.



So what can you do to expand your child's cultural capital?

- Offer access to as broad a range of opportunities as you're able. Try not to limit your child's experiences to things that you are already familiar with.
- Encourage and model use of a wide vocabulary and exposure to a lot of different reading material. It will help to build confidence and fluency and offer new avenues to explore and questions to ask and answer.
- Facilitate high-quality interactions to enable children to develop their language and ideas, to think critically, problem-solve and reflect ('sustained, shared thinking'). For example, as well as positive comments that might be made about a child's work, children could be asked to reflect on what they like, or why they chose particular materials, or how they might solve a problem or develop an idea further.
- Children will benefit from 'in-depth' learning experiences, i.e. time to become deeply involved and immersed in their activities, rather than just 'skimming the surface'. Learning could be extended further with the addition of new resources or materials, information books and visits linked to the child's enquiry.
- Short trips, visits or outings to lots of different environments. Most museums, galleries, parks, places of worship, libraries, markets, etc. are free to enter. Taking a train, bus, ferry, etc., if it's a new experience for your child, can be really useful if you show them how to read the timetable / schedule, book the tickets, etc.
- Model and discuss how to speak, behave, dress in different environments and situations, e.g. How do you behave in a library? What is expected at an interview? How do you verbally address someone if you want to make an appointment at the doctor's surgery? What are considered to be good manners at a dinner table?

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if you wish to discuss anything
covered in this newsletter