

# Ormesby Village Infant & Junior Schools Federation

Headteacher: Mr. Bradley Young



**Ormesby Village Infant School**  
Spruce Avenue, Ormesby St. Margaret  
Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, NR29 3RY  
Telephone: (01493) 730298 Fax: (01493) 733810  
Email: [office@ormesbyinfant.norfolk.sch.uk](mailto:office@ormesbyinfant.norfolk.sch.uk)  
Website: [www.ormesbyinfant.norfolk.sch.uk](http://www.ormesbyinfant.norfolk.sch.uk)

**Ormesby Village Junior School**  
North Road, Ormesby St. Margaret, Great  
Yarmouth, Norfolk, NR29 3LA  
Telephone: (01493) 730944  
Email: [office@ormesbyjunior.norfolk.sch.uk](mailto:office@ormesbyjunior.norfolk.sch.uk)  
Website: [www.ormesbyjunior.norfolk.sch.uk](http://www.ormesbyjunior.norfolk.sch.uk)

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Dear Parents/Carers,

For our courageous advocacy (social action) project this year, the Junior Leadership Team have decided to tackle the issue of isolation and loneliness, particularly for the elderly. Our discussions have been around the negative impact of loneliness and how this can be improved. As a result, they have been tasked with the challenge of creating their own memory boxes, which will be used in the new year by each of them when visiting a local residential home, which has yet to be arranged.

Memory boxes can be used in a multitude of ways and you can make one using almost any sized box or container. You can use any objects that you can get your hands on that reminds you or connects you or somebody else with the past. They are really simple to make and can be a great fun way for you or the individual or group to reminisce over a past event or a particular time in history. There are many benefits to creating a memory box for an elderly person because they help with bringing back memories and are great for helping with communication and their long-term memory.

Memory boxes can be used to help you encourage the person to talk about the objects in the box. They can be used to ask questions about their connection with the items and what their memories are about each item. Allow the elderly person time to think and talk about what connects them to the past by looking at the items from the box. It can be used when a person may feel upset or restless as they can help distract them from other worries, or used to aid with communication.

Anything can be used to put in a memory box but before you start to think of items you could use, it is well worth considering whether you are making it for a particular timeline in history (eg. 1940s, 1960s) or if you are making a general memory box of the individual's past. You may want to tailor the items to a particular time in the person's life, maybe the pets they had, the person's childhood, their family, their work, their holidays or even their vehicles they used to drive. If you are making a general collection of a person's past history then try to include as many objects as possible that you think they could relate to.

Think about the average age of the person the memory box may be used with before adding the items. Most people of a certain age will have a recollection of the items from a particular era or event. Use photos showing the trends in clothing, old vehicles and/or historic sporting events. You might include significant historical events, such as a world war or royal weddings. Alongside these, you might include sweet wrappers, old food tin labels, postcards, old money such as notes or coins would also be useful.

If you knew the person you were doing the memory box for, you could include photos of when they were younger, photos of friends and other relatives. Try not to include any photo that could be upsetting, especially if of a loved one that has passed away, such as a wife or husband. You might wish to include something that



reminds them of the work they used to do, maybe a tape measure for a builder or joiner. Old tickets from places they visited, small items the person may have collected from holidays or places they visited. You could also include books they like or their sporting memorabilia. You could put in any object that will fit comfortably in the box or container, but try to avoid using precious items or heavy objects. It can also be a good idea to label the items. Maybe a note accompanying each item or a sticky label giving times and dates the object was used or dates a photo was taken, not to mention people's names who are in the photo.

To make the memory box you could use something as simple as an old shoe box, an old sewing box, a sturdy cardboard box or even an old, small suitcase. Whatever is used needs to be sturdy enough to contain the objects. The boxes also need to be decorated in any manner suitable which makes them unique and special.

The Junior Leaders are really looking forward to seeing the completed boxes for when they return in the Spring Term and using them with the elderly people.

Yours sincerely,

Bradley Young  
**Headteacher**

