



This is Freddy. Freddy is 6.

He has a sister called Dotty, who is 4 and an older brother, Bobby, who is 10. He quite likes his brother but Dotty annoys him, especially when she comes into his room and knocks his Lego builds over. "She annoys us, too" said his stick insects. Freddy has two stick insects, Larry and Jeffrey. He loves his stick insects, nearly as much as he loves his mum and dad.



Freddy goes to Silver Oak primary school. It is on Sandy Crescent, opposite the park. They go to the park after school every Friday with his granny. They whizz down the slides and spin round and round on the roundabout. It's fun! Once, Freddy saw his teacher, Mrs Fine, pushing her son on a swing in the park.

Freddy sort of likes school and he sort of doesn't like school. This is what he likes:

- Helping Mr Jones, the teaching assistant, to do the photocopying.
- Helping Mr Jones sharpen pencils with the electric sharpener. That is so cool.
- Running up and down the hill in the playground.
- Doing maths and learning about the rain forest.



This is what he does not like:

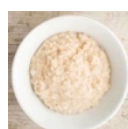
- The noise. It is SO SO SO noisy, especially at lunch time.
- Writing. That is too hard and it makes him sangry (angry + sad = sangry)
- School dinners
- Hand driers in the toilets. They hurt his ears
- Changes and new things. For example, once Mrs Fine was ill and when he went to school there was a new teacher in the classroom. Another time, when he was at school they had music instead of PE. That was very hard for Freddy. He likes to know what is going to happen. This makes him feel safe.



"But you managed to stay at school when you had a new teacher, Freddy," said Larry, the smaller stick insect. "Larry's right," said Jeffrey. "I know you cried but you did not run away. You were so brave." "How did you do that, Freddy?" said Larry. Freddy had a think. "Mr Jones helped me," he said. "We have a plan for when things are different, and he helps me to remember to follow the plan. This is the plan. First, I trace a circle on my hand lots and lots of times. It feels nice. Then, I think about you two, because I like thinking about you. And then I say to myself, "I am scared, but I am brave and I've got this bro!"



One Monday morning, Mrs Fine said, "Children. This is what we are going to do today." She showed the class the visual timetable for the day. Mrs Fine always does this and it helps lots of children, including Freddy. "We are going to do the register, as we always do, and then we are not going to do numeracy, we are going to have a special PSHE. We are going to talk about something very important that is happening in the world. I know you weren't expecting this and I am sorry for changing our routine." It felt horrible to Freddy. Anything new or different felt horrible. It felt like a big sticky lump of porridge going round and round his tummy. It felt like strings of fairy lights going on and off in his head. It felt like a scream climbing up his throat trying to get out. Mr Jones looked



at him and whispered, "Remember our plan!" and he drew a circle on his hand again and again. Freddie did the same. The sticky lump of porridge in his tummy stopped spinning round and round. "Think about Larry and Jeffrey" said Mr Jones. Freddy pictured them in their tank and the fairy lights went off in his head. "Say it!" said Mr Jones and they both mouthed "I am scared, but I am brave and I've got this bro!" The scream slid back down Freddy's throat.

"Put your hands up if you have heard anything about the Corona Virus," said Mrs Fine. Everyone put their hands up. Children had heard it on the radio, and on the television. They had heard their parents talking about it, their grandparents, their aunts and uncles, and Molly Brown said she thought her dog had barked it. No one believed her.

Mrs Fine told the class that the Corona Virus, aka Covid-19, is a virus that can spread from person to person by droplets in the air when you sneeze or cough, when you touch things that have been touched by people with the Corona Virus, and if you touch someone who has the virus.

Molly Brown started crying. Mia Bailey screamed. Everyone started shouting and total panic exploded in the classroom. Freddy ran out of the room and hid where he always hides, under the coats on the floor outside the classroom. His heart was beating so fast, so loudly, it felt like it would burst. His mind was full of flashing fairy lights and he felt sick.

"It's really scary, isn't it?" said a familiar voice. It was Mr Jones. "We all feel scared." Freddy did not say anything. "There was another virus like this in 2004 and everyone was really really scared, just like now. But we were told to wash our hands, cover our mouths when we sneezed or coughed, keep things really really clean and this helped and, well, we don't have this virus anymore." "Were people very ill?" Freddy whispered. "They were Freddy, but lots of people didn't get ill and now we don't have this virus." "Will the Corona Virus be like that?" Freddy said in a slightly bigger voice. "We are all working together to stay safe from this virus, Freddy. The good news is that we can do things to keep safe, just like we could with the virus in 2004. We have super powers we can use to protect ourselves."

"What can we do?" said Freddy poking his head out from under the coats. "We can wash our hands, A LOT! This really helps, Freddy. When you wash your hands, the virus can't live on your skin. You kill it. You can put a special gel on your hands if you can't wash them, that zaps the virus away too. You can cover your mouth with a tissue if you sneeze or cough to catch that virus and then throw it in the bin – and remember to wash your hands again so that you completely kill any germs. Kapow! Boom! That is the end of that virus! So long loser!"

Freddy came out from under the coats and sat next to Mr Jones. "What we need to do is to stay at home for a bit, away from people so that we stop this virus from spreading. We need to catch it and kill it and we can do that, Freddy. I would give you a fist bump, but we can't touch each other Freddy in case we pass germs to each other."

Freddy's bottom lip trembled. "I know Freddy. It is horrible. I feel like crying too, but don't tell Mrs Fine or Molly Brown!" "Is Molly still crying?" Freddy asked. "No, she's stopped now. She said that she cried at home and her dog said, "Don't worry, be happy."" Freddy and Mr Jones looked at each other and they laughed and laughed.



Freddy, there's one more thing," said Mr Jones. "What?" said Freddy. "We have to close school for a while, so that we can be safe and when things are safer, we can all come back again."

The porridge started churning in Freddy's tummy. The fairy lights flickered on and off. The scream rushed up into his throat again. "I know it's hard Freddy. There are a lot of changes going on, I am so sorry. I know you find changes hard, but Freddy I know something else about you, too."

"What?" said Freddy, very quietly, hardly moving his mouth in case he let the scream out. "You are scared, but you are brave. You've got this bro." "You're right. I've got this bro," said Freddy. "I can draw a circle on my hand when I feel scared, like this." "Yes, you can," said Mr Jones. "I can think of my stick insects, Larry and Jeffrey. They make me feel warm inside and happy," said Freddy. "Yes, you can," said Mr Jones. "I am scared, Mr Jones, but I am brave and I've got this bro!" "You've got it bro! Shall we go back inside the classroom?"

They went back in. It was calm and quiet. No one was crying. Mr Jones winked at Freddy and said, "We've got this bro!"



**When he is scared**

1. Freddy draws a circle on the palm of his hand. It feels nice and it helps him feel calm. What could you do?

I could \_\_\_\_\_

or I could \_\_\_\_\_

2. Freddy thinks about something he likes. He thinks about his stick insects, Larry and Jeffrey. What could you think about?

I could think about \_\_\_\_\_

or I could think about \_\_\_\_\_

3. Freddy tells himself, "I am scared, but I am brave and I've got this bro!" What could you say to yourself?

I could say \_\_\_\_\_