



Newsletter

November 2020

A place to
SMILE

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope you all had an enjoyable half term and that the children were able to re-charge their batteries—I know the staff certainly appreciated the rest! As a school, we are obviously trying to get to grips with what the latest lockdown announcement might mean for us in school. Where possible, we are hoping to keep things as normal as possible for the children during the school day, but we will be following the announcements and reading the new guidance closely so that we can adjust our risk assessment, where necessary.

One of the key changes that we realise will affect parents is that from Thursday, the ‘rule of 6’ won’t apply, even when outside. We will therefore need to ask parents to remember that this also applies on the school run, and to please adhere to social distancing from other families at all times on our school site—we know that avoiding the social interaction that many parents enjoy at drop off/pick up may be difficult for you, but we do need to discourage this.

This half term, we are hoping that despite the inevitable changes to our usual pattern of events in the run up to Christmas, that we will still be able to ensure plenty of fun and laughter for the children to mark the season within their class ‘bubbles’. Each YR class is hoping to record a nativity for parents to watch at home; the FOWPS Secret Santa event is going ahead with some adaptations; we have a Christmas lunch day planned in the final week, and there will also be class Christmas parties. More information will follow.

As school trips are not possible currently, we are also pleased to have been able to arrange further experiences in school to support the curriculum this half term, including first aid sessions which were supposed to take place in the summer term, and ‘Speak Out, Stay Safe’ sessions from the NSPCC (see later in this newsletter for details). Where necessary, sessions will be run online.

We have been fortunate as a school that we haven’t yet had a positive Covid case within the school—however, as this is a likely eventuality at some point, please can I draw your attention to the FAQs on the last page of this newsletter about how the school will respond to this situation so that you know what to expect. Thank you for your ongoing support of the school—knowing that we have the parent body behind us really does help when we are working hard to make the necessary changes this year.

Lesley Pennington—Headteacher



Children in Need—Friday 13th November



As a school, we will be supporting the BBC Children in Need Appeal this year, and have chosen a ‘Rainbow’ theme for a non-uniform day with children invited to bring in a donation for the appeal in return. Children may come in brightly coloured clothing, or dress head to toe in just one colour of the rainbow—we hope that this is simple enough so that children can find appropriate clothes that they already have at home. I have set a challenge to see which class can produce the best ‘rainbow’ with the children in the class—I’m looking forward to seeing the photos! Please ensure that your child wears enough layers, brings a coat, and wears shoes appropriate for outdoor play.



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Car Parking—Reminder

With the increase of the wet weather, I have also received an increase in complaints regarding parking in nearby roads to the school at drop off/pick up times. Please can I remind all parents/carers of children at the school to park safely and consider other residents and road users when on the school run. I would encourage parents who need to drive on the school run to make use of the park and stroll arrangement with Lidl to reduce the traffic within Gull Coppice and around the Rookery Avenue entrance.

Early Finish

Reminder—school finishes at lunchtime on the final day of the term—Friday 18th December. Staggered finish times will follow the usual pattern for collection, brought forward by 3 hours.



First Aid Sessions

With basic first aid skills now part of statutory ‘health education’ at primary schools, we are delighted to have been able to re-schedule the first aid sessions that we had originally planned for the summer term. These will be taking place for individual classes between November and January, and will help all children to have a basic understanding of how to respond in a medical emergency. As well as the initial session on dealing with emergencies which all children will experience, children in Y4, 5 & 6 will receive a further two sessions to learn how to deal with more specific emergencies such as choking, bleeding, heart attack and cardiac arrest. We have worked carefully with Meon Valley Heartstart to risk assess the sessions and make adaptations due to Covid. Any sessions in school are being delivered to individual classes in the hall, with plenty of room for the instructors to be socially distanced at all times, with the sessions moving online if necessary.

Meon Valley Heartstart are affiliated to the British Heart Foundation—for more information see <https://www.bhf.org.uk/what-we-do/find-bhf-near-you/meon-valley-heartstart>.

Individual School Photographs— Wednesday 11th November

You will have seen from the diary dates that we have the school photographer booked for this half term. Please be aware that although we usually arrange for both individual and sibling photos at this time of year, due to the changes needed at present as part of the risk assessment, the photographer will be focussing on individual portrait photos only. This is due to the additional time that is required between class bubbles and the restrictions in having children move freely around the school as we usually rely on the older siblings collecting their younger brothers/sisters for the photos. If time allows for some siblings photographs, we will prioritise children in Y6 with younger siblings as this is their final year in primary school.

Governor News—Parent Governor Election

Thank you to those of you that have put your names forward for the recently advertised parent governor role. Now comes the scary bit, the voting! As there is only one advertised vacancy, it is now down to the parent/guardian vote as to who will be joining the governing body. This is an important role and hopefully you will all show your support for your preferred candidate through registering your vote.

This Wednesday, you should receive the statements from all of the candidates who have put their name forward. This will be followed by a Parentmail form which will allow you to respond anonymously, selecting one candidate from the list given. If you prefer a paper ballot paper, this can be requested from the school office and should be returned in a sealed envelope before the closing date at midday on Wednesday 18th November. Candidates will be contacted following the count at lunchtime on 18th November and we will then inform all parents/carers of the results.



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Clothing

With colder weather on its way, please consider providing your child with an additional 'layer' under their school uniform. In line with our risk assessment, we are ensuring that classrooms are more regularly ventilated, with windows/doors opened regularly to ensure a flow of air. Your child may therefore feel more comfortable in school with a 'base' layer under their polo shirt—for example, a plain long sleeve t-shirt or thermal layer. Can I also emphasise the importance of children bringing a jumper and water proof coat every day. We aim to get the children outside for play and lunchtime whenever possible, and children in our younger year groups continue to have regular outside learning time.

FOWPS Funding

We are very grateful for the fundraising efforts of Friends of Whiteley Primary School who have recently passed on significant funds to the school—£10,000 has gone towards the two new adventure playground areas and an additional £5,000 has been agreed to support resources for the school this academic year. These include investment in new library books; three heavy-duty gazebos for the Y1 outdoor classroom to allow use of the outside space in all weathers; and increased PE equipment so that year groups can have sets of the equipment they need to avoid sharing between 'bubbles'.

FOWPS have also agreed to support the 'Life Bus' virtual visits we have arranged for January so that we will not need to ask parents for voluntary contributions for this curriculum enhancement as we have in the past. Parents of older children will know that the Life Education mobile classroom usually visits in early spring to support our drug education curriculum for KS2 children. This year, Life Education are unable to offer face-to-face sessions but we have booked them for online sessions for children in all year groups, with a focus on mental health and well-being. We hope that Whiteley families will continue to support the FOWPS fundraising efforts this year which will continue to enhance what we can offer the children at the school. Information about their '12 Days of Christmas' raffle is due out this week.

Y1—Y6 Parents' Phone Meetings

Information on booking a telephone appointment for parents' meetings this half term will be coming out shortly for parents in Y1-Y6. These are due to be held in the w/c 23rd November.

Mrs Gibbons—an update

Just to make you aware, Mrs Gibbons re-starts her chemotherapy at the end of this week so you won't see her around on the gate at the moment as she is currently quarantining before her procedure. She is very much hoping to be able to return to work soon, depending on how she reacts to the chemo, and also following any guidance during the lockdown. I am sure you will all join me in wishing her well, and hoping we see her back very soon.

New Virtual Tour

Due to current Hampshire guidance, I have been unable to commence tours for prospective parents, but if you know someone who has a child to start school next September, please do encourage them to check out the new school tour page of our school website (in the prospective parent section). I am very grateful to one of our current parents, Antony Burdett-Clark, who has produced an amazing 360° tour of the school—feel free to have a look around yourself and see your child's current classroom.

There is also a new welcome video on our school website on the home page (<https://www.whiteleyprimary.co.uk/>) which includes messages from some of our current pupils. Although it's not the same as meeting people in person, hopefully it will give a flavour of our school.

Shoebox Appeal

The Rotary Club of Whiteley would like to pass on their thanks to all the families who have contributed to our shoebox appeal. Over 125 shoeboxes were donated, which was more than we collected last year! Many thanks for your support.





November 2020 p.4 **Covid Update—School's Response to Positive Cases**

In response to questions that I have already received from parents, and based on the experiences of other schools, I thought you might find the following FAQs useful:

What process will you follow if you hear of a positive case?

The first action will be direct contact with the positive case (and/or their family, in the case of a child) to establish the facts—for example, to find out their friends and contacts, and a timeline of their symptoms (PHE deem individuals to be infectious 48hrs prior to the onset of symptoms). This will be carried out by a member of the leadership team, and we understand from other local schools that this might involve a number of telephone calls over a period of time. We will then be in contact with the DfE Schools Public Health England line. They will carry out a risk assessment with school staff to establish who are deemed to be 'close contacts' with the positive case within the school environment, and communication will be made with all those who will be required to self-isolate for 14 days. We understand that the 14 days will run from the onset of the positive case's first symptoms.

Will all parents be told of a positive case or just those affected?

There are standard letters provided by PHE which schools must use to notify parents of a positive case in school—one is for those where children are affected, and required to self-isolate, and one which will go to all families. These will be issued via Parentmail. We are aware of cases in some local schools where rumours of a positive case reached parents on social media prior to schools notifying parents. Please bear in mind that we will always follow the appropriate protocols from PHE, and whilst we will endeavour to keep families informed in a timely way, our priority will be liaising with the family involved and establishing the individuals who are directly affected as close contacts.

Will we be told the name of the positive case?

No, we are unable to publish the name of the positive case. Individuals may identify themselves to others, but as a school, we are unable to let people know.

If someone in a year group tests positive, will the whole year group be required to self-isolate?

We will follow PHE advice on those deemed to be close contacts, but due to the way we have organized our bubbles, in most cases the class bubble will be required to self-isolate rather than the whole year group if the positive case is a child. There may also be close contacts from outside the class if they engage in any of the year group activities such as intervention groups, breakfast/after school club, or in friendship groups/clubs/activities outside of school. In the case of a staff member, the impact on the school may be wider than a single class bubble as some of our staff work across more than one class, and in some cases, a whole year group bubble could be impacted.

If my child is required to self-isolate as they are a close contact, can they come back to school if they have a negative Covid test?

No—only children who have symptoms themselves should access a Covid test. If a child is required to self-isolate, then even with a negative test, they will not be able to return to school until the end of the self-isolation period.

I am a key worker—will the school provide key worker provision for my child if they are required to self-isolate but have a negative Covid test?

No—there is no requirement for schools to provide key worker provision, and key worker children will be required to self-isolate as above—tests should only be used by those who develop symptoms.

My child is in a class with a sibling of a positive case—will they need to self-isolate?

No—siblings of positive cases will be required to self-isolate, but if they have not tested positive themselves, children who have been in classes with them should continue to come to school, unless they develop symptoms themselves as they have not been in direct contact with a positive case.