



Newsletter

March 2021

A place to
SMILE

Dear Parents/Carers,

We hope your children are coping well with the return to school. Whilst it's only another week until Easter, we feel that the holiday period will be a positive break—many still need to regain the 'stamina' for a full week in school! Hopefully, we can all recharge in the holidays, as well as look forward (hopefully) to the signs of normality returning with the opportunity to meet as a group of 6 outside and to go a little further afield.

With the roll out of the vaccination programme and lowering rates of Covid in the community, the slow steps out of lockdown will hopefully help us all to feel more positive. By Easter, all WPS staff will have been offered the Covid vaccine, which helps them to feel more confident being around so many children in school everyday. A little plea from myself and all the staff, though—please, please can we all continue to follow the guidance, even as there is some relaxation of the rules? We have done so well as a community to minimise the impact of any positive cases, and would like this to continue into the summer term—however, we are already starting to hear children talking about going for 'tea' with each other and even 'sleepovers'! It's important to remember that although our children are bubbled in class during the day, they aren't bubbled with everyone's wider families and interactions in each other's houses increase the risk of contacts. We'd really appreciate everyone staying strong now—the end is in sight!!

We expect that there will be updated guidance for schools soon to reflect the national changes in guidance. At present, there are no significant changes planned in school for April although we hope to be able to move to using year group 'bubbles' soon and we are planning for summer term day trips. Staggered arrivals and departures will remain the same at present, as will the requirement for the wearing of face coverings when on site. We will keep you posted as and when any changes are planned.

Lesley Pennington—Headteacher

Heartstart Meon Valley — First Aid Sessions

I'm pleased to say that we have been able to re-arrange the first aid sessions for our YR/KS1 classes with Heartstart—these will take place before Easter. They are a great introduction to children for dealing with emergency situations and we are very grateful to the volunteers for providing this opportunity for our pupils.

Heartstart Meon Valley have also developed an online first aid training programme for adults which is completely free to access. It takes 2-2.5hrs which can be split into sections. To access the training, follow the link on their web-site:

<https://www.heartstartmeonvalley.co.uk/online>

Journeys to school—a few reminders

If you drop your children off by car, please can I ask parents to make use of Rookery Avenue wherever possible, using the roundabout to turn round. All KS2 children can use this entrance and we will be keeping a member of staff on gate duty in the mornings whilst we have the staggered starts.

With the warmer weather coming and the return of the rule of 6, I am anticipating an increase in parents who may meet up after the school run to walk home together. Please can I request that you move away from the school gates as soon as possible and avoid congregating on the routes in and out of school. It is still important that everyone feels comfortable as they move around the school site and able to keep to the distancing rules.



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Lateral Flow Tests for Families

As mentioned on a recent Parentmail update, adult members of households/support/childcare bubbles where there are school aged children are able to access twice weekly lateral flow testing for Covid. These are now available to be collected from local testing sites including Cams Alders car park in Fareham (open 1-8pm every day—no appointment needed). For more information, visit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rapid-lateral-flow-testing-for-households-and-bubbles-of-school-pupils-and-staff>.

Message from the Governors—Changes to the Leadership Team

As you will no doubt be aware, due to some very sad circumstances, the leadership team at WPS has had reduced capacity over the past 12 months. With the departure of both Mrs Skipp and Mrs Gibbons later this term, the governors and Headteacher recognise the need to plan for the future to best ensure that WPS can continue to develop and move forward, and we have spent time carefully considering how best to support the school in increasing the leadership capacity. As a result, the governors have agreed to restructure the leadership team for September 2021 to include a Deputy Headteacher with responsibility for Inclusion, and to create a new Assistant Headteacher role to work alongside the Head and Deputy. The Assistant Headteacher will have a particular focus on the development of teaching and learning.

To help ensure continuity for the school, it was agreed to advertise the Deputy Headteacher (Inclusion) post internally, and as a result, we are delighted to announce that Ms Kate Bolton will be remaining as a permanent member of the WPS team in September. Ms Bolton has been on secondment with the school since September as Acting Deputy & Inclusion Manager, working alongside both Mrs Pennington and Mrs Gibbons, and has already become a valued member of the team. The school will be seeking to appoint externally for the assistant Headteacher position in the summer term to complete the leadership team for September 2021.

The governors want to thank both Mrs Gibbons and Mrs Skipp for their considerable contribution to the success of the school over the years. Their shoes will not be easily filled. However, we have confidence in the whole staff in ensuring a smooth transition to the new structure. I'm sure you will join me in warmly welcoming Ms Bolton to the WPS family.

Tom Southall—Chair of Governors

Parents' Meetings—Update

During the w/c 26th April, class teachers will be holding parents' meetings. These will be offered via Zoom (a phone call may be requested as an alternative). Dates and times for these will vary for each class, and further information on how to book will be sent out before the Easter holiday. If your child receives SEND support, you may also request a separate appointment with Ms Bolton—more information about this to follow.

A Message from Mrs Skipp

To Everyone at Whiteley Primary School,

I would like to say a huge thank you for the most beautiful leaving gifts that you all gave me. I cannot tell you how touched I was by everyone's generosity. The vase has already been used and I am so looking forward to going on my glass fusion course. I have so many wonderful memories of the 17 years I worked at Whiteley Primary School and the decision not to return was very difficult for me to make, but at this time spending time with my daughters and family is what I need to do. I end as I started and once again say thank you so very much for the presents, kind words and support you have all given me over the years.

Much love, Victoria Skipp