

Warmley Park School and College

Aspire, Believe, Enhance, Achieve

Newsletter No: 20 – 26th June 2020



So last week, we were looking at the rain and thinking ‘when will this ever end?’ This week, the rain most definitely got replaced with sunshine. I hope that you are all managing to keep as cool as possible.

We have a small number of Tuf Spots (large plastic trays) that we could lend to parents for outdoor play. They measure 1m x 1m and are great for sand play, gardening activities, and of course water play. If you would like to borrow one please call the school office and we can arrange for it to be delivered to you. We also have popsicle moulds if you would like to borrow these.



Ideas for keeping cool and outdoor play:

https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/46584177381347458/?nic_v1=1auh%2F51LY3%2FGHbWENLU3kza4vsBTtWpY%2B7DvyiCbPc%2FcbHkn4A%2BySbNq%2FIGjcrJ3wZ

https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/546202261039018018/?nic_v1=1awb4yWfiVXCz8uJowB3PVUktUDVP2w8AyWvaVunlSteUGoICSeRFtzA8fL45aisdn

<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/mothernatured/outdoor-play-ideas/>

September

Last Friday, Gavin Williamson, Secretary of State for Education announced that the government would be looking at expanding in-school “bubbles” to include whole classes.

And on Tuesday of this week, the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson told the House of Commons that “*primary and secondary education will recommence in September with full attendance*”,

We are looking at how we can move towards these plans, but at this stage there is little information about what will be expected. We shall, of course keep you informed of the decisions the DfE are making and how that will impact on your child, the school and you as parents. As yet, there has been no specific guidance for special schools.

We will probably get some answers before the end of term, but are expecting information to continue to come through during the summer holidays. It may come a bit late to have an effective start in September, but the most important thing is that we get it right for the pupils which may mean a delayed start to ensure that it is safe and fair. We are in discussions with South Gloucestershire Council about our plans. Governors are also meeting next week and will be discussing the strategies that we have already identified. This includes how we instil school routines, ensuring that we support the social, emotional, and mental health of pupils, and embody a sense of steadiness.

We will be contacting each family before the end of term to talk to you about your child and how we can ensure that we are as prepared as possible for an effective return to school in September. The points that we would like to cover in the call include:

1. How is your child now?
2. Talk us through how you think your child will respond to coming back to school
3. How can we support their return to school?
4. How has your family been affected by COVID19?
5. Are there any positives that you would like to share with us that have occurred during lockdown?
6. Acknowledgement of parents as teachers- well done

The planning that we are doing for September, takes into consideration the Recovery and Reconnection Curriculum that most schools in South Gloucestershire and in many other local authorities around the country, will be implementing. As a school, we are working with Sharon Gray, an ex special school Headteacher and Ofsted Inspector. She has said that schools will need to be putting social, emotional, and mental health needs at the core of what we are doing. Sharon, Professor Barry Carpenter, and South Gloucestershire Council are all promoting an engagement based model to the curriculum. We will be introducing routines and relationships before moving onto a more academic lead curriculum. This is likely to mean slowing the pace of what we do, so that we are not just rushing back to do 'gap filling' on what pupils would have learnt. We will use our knowledge of each pupil to ensure that they have what they need emotionally to be able to move forwards.

What we already know

- Everyone's experience of the pandemic is different.
- Some pupils will be keen to come back to school, some less so.
- Some have got into a routine that works for them and that is going to change.
- Professor Barry Carpenter identified that imagination is usually a joy of childhood but now we are talking about a virus that we cannot see, yet we know it has caused massive turmoil and changed the way we go about our day to day lives. Germs, viruses, illness, news reports, statistics- very unknown and scary for some children and adults.
- Pupils may have questions, they may experience anger, fear, anxiety about now and the future, disappointment, uncertainty. We are preparing for this with social stories, explaining routines, safe spaces, who can I talk to boards, who is in school today boards, sensory resources, reconnection activities, and a school environment that feels safe for them.
- We want to acknowledge this period- not just pretend it never happened. We want pupils to know that they have been missed by their friends and the staff. We want to acknowledge that they will have missed their routines, their choices, and the people that they previously saw.
- There will have been a lot of positives that have happened during lockdown- particularly home learning, that needs to be celebrated.
- Pupils will have grown both physically and cognitively at this time, they will not be starting back to school with a seamless transition from where they were when lockdown started.
- Black Lives Matter has been highlighted in our city- places that our pupils may recognise.
- Some parents will have questions about the health needs of their child.

- Anxiety can be tiring and we expect that pupils will find it difficult to focus for long periods of learning, so are planning to include lots of sensory breaks, outdoor learning, physical activity, and time to reflect. This does not mean that teachers will not be planning for their teaching each day- they will. We will be providing structure and security, rather than a slack approach.
- We know that creative learning can be of great value in reconnecting- drama, dance, art, music. We intend to use these activities to help pupils to explore their experiences of lockdown and returning to school.
- All pupils have experienced a change of routine whether they have been in school or not.
- So we are thinking about how we use our understanding and expertise of supporting bereavement and trauma through training for our staff, and strategies to enable pupils to feel secure.



We are not in the same boat

*I heard that we are all in the same boat,
But it's not like that.*

*We are in the same storm, but not in the same boat.
Your ship could be shipwrecked and mine might not be.
Or vice versa.*

For some quarantine is optimal.

A moment of reflection, of re-connection, easy in flip flops, with a cocktail or a coffee.

For others, this is a desperate financial and family crisis.

For some that live alone they're facing endless loneliness.

While for others it is peace, rest and time with their mother, father, sons, and daughters.

Some were concerned about getting a certain egg for Easter while others were concerned if there would be enough bread, milk and eggs for the weekend.

Some want to go back to work because they don't qualify for unemployment benefits and are running out of money.

Other want to scream at those who break the quarantine.

Some are home spending hours a day helping their child with on line schooling while others are spending hours a day to educate their children on top of a 12 hour workday.

Some have experienced the near death of the virus, some have already lost someone from it and some are not sure if their loved ones are going to make it.

Others don't believe this is a big deal.

Some have faith in God and expect miracles during this pandemic through a time when our perceptions and needs are completely different.

Each of us will emerge, in our own way from this storm.

It is very important to see beyond what is seen at first glance.

Not just looking, actually seeing, not just listening, actually hearing.

We are all on different ships during this storm, experiencing a very different journey.

Let everyone navigate their route with respect, empathy, responsibility and compassion

Anonymous

As always, stay safe.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Liss". The letters are cursive and connected, with a small dot above the 'i'.