



Final Spring Term update

Dear all,

As I write this, I truly hope you have all been able to enjoy the sunshine, as in these strange and uncertain times it certainly seems to have helped.

Never before has the word unprecedented been used so frequently, by so many but it really is the only word to describe the current situation of school closures, home learning and lockdown that we find ourselves navigating.

Whilst I had hoped to be able to write and send this out to you all sooner, there has been a great deal of work behind the scenes, particularly as we remained open over the Easter Holidays and whilst also preparing for hand over with Mrs Jarman. I do hope I have your understanding.

As Head (until tomorrow!) I am so proud of all that the staff have achieved so far, setting up a quality home learning approach; further improving communication through Dojo so that all families can reach out to staff when they need help or advice; safeguarding pupils and staff, setting up the systems and protocols in school to ensure that we are able to welcome children from those families that need the child care at this time in a way that is safe for pupils and staff.

A huge well done and many thanks to all of you at home, embracing Home Learning, many of you whilst trying to balance this with Working From Home yourselves which is no mean feat! We are really proud of what so many children have been able to achieve, adjusting to the changes, sharing their learning and progress.

We have really welcomed the feedback we have received: parents have expressed how much they appreciate what has been delivered and the SLT have reflected on areas that can be further improved - such as introducing whole school themes, making it easier for parents with children in different year groups.

Myself and Mrs Garbutt have remained very busy with Mrs Jarman, working closely with her to ensure that she is able to take over next Monday, feeling as prepared as possible, ensuring as smooth a transition as possible.

I know she is looking forward to starting tomorrow and will be getting to know you all soon, albeit virtually at this time!

School improvement update:

It seems a little strange updating you on what has happened, given how things currently stand and that most of you are unable to see the changes for yourselves, but we felt it important that you remain up to speed with developments over the term and I know the staff look forward to such time as schools reopen and you can see the changes for yourselves!

Lots has continued to develop in the building - redecoration has been continuing and re-dressing learning areas around school so that it is a vibrant and positive place to learn:

- Mrs Small and the Early Years team have worked tremendously hard to establish such a **rich learning environment** for the children - it really does enable **high quality learning** and helps pupils develop their **independence**. Independent learning activities are **purposeful and fun** both indoors and outside, covering all aspects of the EYFS curriculum.
- Learning environments in all classrooms have improved so that there is a greater focus on learning and resources to help pupils learn independently. The classrooms in Key Stage One are particularly effective, and in Key Stage 2 they are increasingly consistent in applying best practice so that **learning is promoted** to best effect.
- The **music room** has been further developed, as have the KS1 & 2 intervention spaces and shared areas.
- Displays have been re-dressed to ensure that they **celebrate learning** and ensure the **high standards** that we want to see around and outside of school are promoted.

The teaching staff worked with several advisors and consultants over the term, as well as being coached in **effective planning** by their team leaders. Teachers also visited other schools to bring back more examples of **best practice** to develop at Sutton.

All classes now use layered success criteria (you may have heard your child talking about 'Paddling, Snorkelling and Diving') which is ensuring that there is an appropriate **level of challenge** and support in all classes. Staff and children are increasingly using these to ensure that they make **better progress in lessons**. Evaluations of the work in children's books shows that **standards are rising** and there are positive signs that this will continue.

Mrs Small has been working on the new **Early Years framework** and is currently busy planning the transition work for the new Reception, adapting things where possible continued closures have an impact.

The introduction of **Read Write Inc Phonics** has been very successful - the staff have really embraced the changes and phonics teaching is fun, well paced and high quality - as a result the children are making good progress which is what it's all about!

The Teaching Assistants all received further **restorative behaviour management** training, using the Step On approaches. This really helped improve consistency in management and coupled with the work of staff supporting pupils in '**The Bridge**' making use of both Celestine and Jade classrooms. The investment in this facility resulted in a reduction in incidents affecting children in class.

We really welcomed the opportunity to share this important work with those parents that came in to our open session to find out more.

The **curriculum** is being redesigned, led by Mrs Garbutt, ensuring that learning is purposeful, connected, engaging and memorable and last term she worked with Mrs Williams and Miss Watts to lay the groundwork for the next two years. Subject Leaders are working to ensure that the challenge from Year R to Year 6 is progressive and that topics are covered in a meaningful way.

Staffing update:

We were delighted to be able to welcome Mr Bate back - he has returned to work after a period of ill health and he is full of smiles and already busying himself with various jobs around the school site, making the school a better place for when everyone returns.

We were very sorry to see Mrs Jeeves and Mrs Nichol leave before Easter. Having worked for the school for so many years, it was strange saying goodbye in such unusual circumstances, however we wish them well on the new paths they have taken.

We were all over the moon to be able to celebrate and share Miss Watt's wonderful news - that she is expecting a baby! We are all over the moon for her and her family and know she is being well looked after safe at home for the duration, whilst continuing to keep busy as Home Learning Lead for Year 5 & 6.

Mr Smith continues to be unwell, however Mrs Garbutt has ably taken on the Acting Deputy Head role which has done much for moving things forwards faster on the school's journey to 'Good and better' and I am confident that she will continue to do this with Mrs Jarman.

Adjusting to new ways of working:

Children and Young People's mental health and wellbeing

The Lockdown has and continues to have a far reaching impact on all aspects of our lives and we do not underestimate the emotional and social impact on the children, as well as how challenging it is for parents too!

In case you haven't seen it on the Dojo School Story, your child may benefit from understanding a little bit more about Coronavirus and what it means - you can look and listen to a super story, illustrated by Axel Sheffler here:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qDgdZEysVNubbmMqH3ZrwMDn89IG_cU2/view?usp=sharing

Do remember the staff are still available during work hours via class dojo. They can't offer you a magic wand to fix all the challenges families face at the moment, but they can point you in the right direction to services that are available for families in crisis and of course to offer any assistance with learning. Don't forget that our Welfare Officer, Mrs Brown, and Emotional Literacy Support Assistant, Mrs Pendle, are also listed as staff you can contact via dojo where they are available to support with links and ideas to help manage any emotional or wellbeing issues your child may be experiencing.

Both the NSPCC & Childline have reported a significant rise in calls from children during Lockdown, sharing anxieties and worries that they have. Most children have super relationships with their family and can talk to them, but sometimes talking to someone else really helps.

Childline offer 1-2-1 Counselling for children that are experiencing difficulties. You can contact them from 9am-Midnight on 0800 1111 or login for online chat here:

<https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/>

'Whatever the worry - it's better out than in.'

Further information about parent support is at the end of this letter.

The NSPCC have put together a bank of advice and support materials for families which is full of useful advice for helping children understand and cope with what has changed, as well as how to balance working from home. You can find more here:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/coronavirus-advice-support-children-families-parents/>

Social connections, alongside exercise, sleep, diet and routine are important protective factors for mental health.

Further resources to promote and support mental wellbeing are included at the end of this letter.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Trips: *What about my child's trip – will it go ahead? Will we get a refund?*

Some of you have enquired about what will happen about the trips planned in the summer term. As it stands, there are no concrete plans from the DfE for schools re-opening, however nor is there confirmation that schools won't re-open this academic year. The school continues to work very closely with the Local Authority to ensure that plans are ready to swing into action as soon as confirmation comes from the Government.

The postponed Stibbington trip may still go ahead in June - however if this is not possible another date will be set in the future.

With regards to the Year 6 residential trip, the school is in discussion with the trip organisers and insurers to find out what the situation is and staff will be in touch with the parents of those affected in due course.

Parent Consultations: *When will we get our Parent Meeting?*

We know that some of you missed out on your Parent Consultation meetings due to the onset of the COVID-19 situation, however please be reassured that there are plans afoot for you to have a remote consultation with your child's teacher. Watch out for news about this next term.

Schools re-opening: *Is it true school will open in 3 weeks or not till September?*

You may have seen much speculation in the media over the last few days about when schools will reopen. The truth is that we do not yet know. However, please do rest assured that the SLT and Local Authority are already in the planning stages to consider a carefully planned re-opening in the safest way possible and they will work together to ensure an appropriate approach for our children, family and staff.

Scam warnings:

Sadly during difficult times such as these we have seen a spike in attempted frauds. Fraudsters see a crisis as the perfect opportunity to take advantage and try to make easy money.

As we have already shared with you, there have been reports of calls from somebody claiming to be from Public Health England, asking residents if they had received their letter from the government and if they have support from family and friends, etc. – trying to obtain personal details. Please be vigilant.

There have also been reports of parents and carers in receipt of free school meals being targeted by fraudsters.

They are contacting parents and carers with messages such as “ If your child is entitled to free school meals send your bank details to the school and they will help with funding while the school is closed’. The email contains links for the parents to follow. These emails and links are fake.

Free School Meal vouchers: *Where are our vouchers?*

If your child is eligible for free school meals and they are not in school then your family is entitled to a voucher for £15 per week. Prior to the National Scheme, we were able to set up a voucher with the local One Stop. Going forward we have set families up with the National ‘Edenred’ system. There are many issues reported with the website and accessing these vouchers however it is working through the system.

If you are *still* struggling with the system and you have either not received your activation code from Edenred or eCodes have not been received, then you can call Edenred directly. A new Edenred phone number is **0333 400 5932** - included within mobile phone contract ‘inclusive minutes’ and charged at the national rate thereafter.

Millions of families are suddenly facing real challenges financially.

If your financial circumstances have changed you may now be eligible for Free School Meals. If so, do let the school know. If you are not eligible but are facing financial hardship there are a number of charitable organisations set up to help, both locally and nationally. You can get in contact with the school who can point you in the direction of help where it is needed - please rest assured that all information will be held within the strictest confidence.

Online Safety: *How do we keep our children safe online?*

During this period of school closures your child is likely to be spending more time online. There are lots of benefits to our children getting online. It can support social interactions, be a great place to learn about the world around us and be a great source of entertainment. However, alongside the benefits come the risks of cyberbullying, online grooming and exposure to inappropriate content.

Mrs Garbutt has already published advice on this topic on the whole school story, however you can also view the advice here:

<https://www.cambslearntogether.co.uk/home-learning-computing>

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/>

<https://www.missingkids.org/netsmartz>

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/>

<https://www.net-aware.org.uk/>

Farewell

It has been an absolute privilege to serve the children and families of Sutton. Transformation takes time and we have achieved a great deal over the last 18 months; though there is still work to do, I know that Mrs Jarman, Mrs Garbutt and the rest of the staff and Governors will continue to build on the foundations that we have laid for the future.

I was actually rather overwhelmed by all the well wishes and messages of thanks and support I have received so I just wanted to say a massive thank you, especially those that have been so supportive on this journey, really helping to make the changes so far!

Wishing all the children, staff and Governors the very best for the continued journey,



Mrs Emily Gore-Rowe

Mental Health and Wellbeing resources:

Volunteers, parents and carers can access Every Mind Matters

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/> and Rise Above. The Every Mind Matters platform, from Public Health England, provides information about looking after your mental health.

Rise Above has some great video clips and activities for older children:

<https://riseabove.org.uk/>

Public Health England has also published guidance on supporting children and young people's mental health here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing>

An Coronavirus guide from the Children's Commissioner is another resource you may find useful, especially with offer children who can use it for themselves It can be downloaded here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1n9pgd28e5l8v1MMX0VO5ReXdTcoURWxw/view?usp=sharing>

SEND support, designed for those with children with Autism is also really helpful for many other children too (it works for me at home!)



ESTABLISHING ROUTINES: STEP BY STEP

Claire Nunn and Megan Williams
Autism Advisory Teacher Service

Routines help all children to learn. For children on the Autism Spectrum the predictability of routines can really help to support behaviour. Establishing routines at home can be difficult but the following steps, using the bedtime routine as an example, can be a useful guide.

STEP 1: Identify each step of the task that you'd like your child/young person to complete and list the steps:

1. Brush Teeth
2. Wash Face
3. Read one Bedtime Story
4. Turn off the Light

STEP 2: Use the list to make a schedule. Use whatever format works best – photographs, symbols or a written list.



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STEP 3: Use timers or alarms to signal the beginning and endings of each step.

STEP 4: Refer to the schedule throughout the routine. Provide praise for completing each step. Prompt your child to point to the step on the visual schedule while he completes the step. As each step is completed, give him descriptive praise "Good work brushing your teeth".

STEP 5: Be consistent. Complete every step of the routine every time. E.g. complete the routine in the same order every night.

Viruses are contagious
 So is panic, fear,
 hysteria, calm, love,
 enthusiasm, kindness, joy
 Choose wisely



Parent mental health is important too – when everyone is under pressure, make sure you look out for and make time for self care too.

There is a lot of support out there if you just know where to look:

Adult Mental Health

Whether adults are at home alone or with family, working remotely whilst supporting the learning of their children or still providing essential services in a workplace, looking after our own mental health and well-being is essential.

We all need support or someone to talk to sometime and these resources may help you:

Source of Support Organisation/ Charity	Contact details	Additional Information
Samaritans	Call 116 123 jo@samaritans.org www.samaritans.org	24/7 confidential listening service
Saneline	Call 0300 304 7000	4.30pm-10.30pm 7days a week Out of hours mental health and emotional support and information
The Helplines Partnership	www.helplines.org	A comprehensive listing of organisations in the UK that provide helplines, searchable by topic.
SHOUT	Text SHOUT to 85258	The service is free on most networks and available 24/7. Trained volunteers will listen to you, and work with to help you take the next steps towards feeling better.
Employee Assist Programme	Your workplace and/ or Union may have an Employee Assist Programme which your Manager will be able to signpost you to.	
NHS	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/moodzone-mental-wellbeing-audio-guides/	A set of free self-help audio guides on different topics such as Anxiety, low mood, sleep and unhelpful thinking. There are also links to other sources of support.
Action for Happiness	www.actionforhappiness.org	A website of free resources to support wellness and well-being including the famous calendars https://www.actionforhappiness.org/calendars which give ideas to make small changes to our own and others' lives.



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