

Lockdown Newsletter #1



We are living and working in a very different way. Please take time to read this newsletter that will hopefully explain how school works and how school staff can support you and your child while we are all staying at home.

Communication with Parents

Our school offices are closed and staff are working mainly from home. However, we continue to monitor the parents email address and this is the fastest and most efficient way of getting in touch with school staff for any reason.

parents@westberryfederation.org.uk

Home learning

During the first week of lock down our focus was on keeping the school open over the Easter break for vulnerable children and the children of key workers. Staff took it in turns to take a break from work so that we were able to staff this important provision over the holiday. We were able to allocate some members of staff to set up online home learning opportunities for children in addition to the guidance and support that all families were sent just before schools closed.

Foundation Subjects ... KEY STAGE 2 (Yr 3,4,5,6) 78 students	Pre-school, YrR, 1 & 2 ... Home Learning 28 students	Foundation Subjects ... Pre-school, Reception, Yr1 & Yr 2 27 students	Year 3/4 Eng & Maths Home Learning for Year 3/4 at Berryn... 58 students
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Lots of Y3 - Y6 children have been accessing the Google classroom successfully and we have now extended this to all children at our schools. Parents of children in Cherry, Maple, Mulberry and Aspen class will have received login details for their child this week. We will continue to post ideas for home learning on the federation website but the main source of learning will be the Google classroom. You may have seen information in the press about some national programmes to provide lessons for children via the internet, TV and podcasts including those due to be broadcast by the BBC. We will signpost you to appropriate resources on the Google classroom and schedule some activities in the class Google calendar.

Attached to this email is a revised Home Learning Guidance document and some helpsheets.

Our approach remains that we are creating opportunities for children to learn at home but understand that a variety of factors including adult time, access to technology and the home environment means that we cannot expect all children to access the same learning. We do not intend to place undue pressure on any family but will do everything we can to support all children to continue to learn at home.

Equality of Access


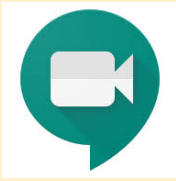


We are exploring a variety of options to support the equality of access to learning for all children while schools are closed. For example this could include loaning resources to use at home or providing 1:1 training in how to access the Google classroom and other resources. If there is a barrier to your child being able to learn at home


please let us know. We will do what we can to support you. We all need to be flexible in our approach and are happy to consider any suggestions of what else we can do to support your child.

Staff staying in touch with children

Teachers have been meeting virtually during the holiday and last week all staff had some training in how we can safely make contact with children while they are at home. We'll now move our support on to include **making regular contact with children or families** to check on welfare and offer support and encouragement with home learning tasks. While some direct online teaching may take place, teachers will mainly be providing a mentoring or coaching style of support while schools are closed.

Staff will be making contact with all children or their family's at least once every two weeks. We will be offering support and advice about home learning and checking on pupils and their family's welfare. All families or children will be asked similar questions including those to establish that children and families are well and have enough food. We will contact some families or children more often if needed. Staff will keep a log of all contact with children.

Method of communication	What could this include?	How will we make the contact safe?
Video chat using school Google accounts  Or 	A group chat with members of staff to provide mentoring to children. Virtual story times. Virtual show and tell Short bursts of live teaching	When children are present in the chat there will be two members of staff present (unless only one child is involved and parents have agreed to be in the room for the duration of the call) Video calls will not be recorded but a log will be made by the member of staff. Video calls will be open to other members of staff including senior leaders who may drop into the call See video chat rules
Email children to school email account 	Information about opportunities available to children. Safety reminders Correspondence with teachers Awarding electronic green cards	Any emails from staff to children (either individual or group email) will be copied to the school safeguarding team. Staff will only use their school email accounts and to communicate to children's school email accounts. Staff and children will not communicate using private accounts.
Private messages in the Google classroom 	Children can ask questions or make comments about their learning for teachers to read. Staff can provide feedback to children or respond to comments	Private comments cannot be seen by other children in the Google classroom. All staff in the Google classroom can see all private comments made by staff and pupils. All Google classrooms have multiple members of staff
Comment in the class stream (this is the first	Children and staff can post comments for everyone in the class to read. These can range from friendly greetings to tips and	All members of the Google class can see these messages. It is easy to see who has posted the comment - no

<p>page you see when you log on to the Google classroom)</p> 	<p>advice for all to see from teachers or children.</p>	<p>comments are anonymous.</p> <p>Teachers can delete any inappropriate messages.</p>
<p>Phone calls</p>	<p>Staff may make calls to families from school or their private phones.</p> <p>Staff members may ask to speak to the children and adults if appropriate.</p>	<p>Only parent mobile numbers or family landlines will be used. Staff will not use children's personal mobile numbers.</p> <p>If a child picks up the phone the member of staff will also ask to speak to an adult</p>

Families can contact school staff at any time with any queries or requests for support using the above email address. Emails to parents@westberryfederation.org.uk are monitored by Su and Faye and forwarded to other members of staff as needed. Children can contact their teacher by email or by posting a private comment on a learning task or by posting a comment on the class stream.

If we are unable to make contact with families and have concerns about a child's welfare, we will escalate our concerns to the Education Welfare Service or Children's Social Care. If your child is not online we will try to make contact by telephoning you.

Video chat rules

Please talk to your child to ensure they understand the following rules. When staff are part of a video call they will insist on these rules. We will encourage children to apply these rules when using video calls to communicate with friends and family.

Rule	Why	Teachers will support this by:
Parents must know that children are video calling , who they are talking to and why.	Many children are using technology far more than usual. We believe that this is a safe routine to establish in all homes	Members of staff will ask children to confirm this at the start of the meeting.
Children must be fully dressed and in a family space (not bedrooms or bathrooms)	The relationship between children and staff needs to remain professional. Staff follow safeguarding rules so that children learn to recognise normal and safe behaviour from an adult in a position of power or responsibility. This makes it easier for children to spot inappropriate or dangerous behaviour from grown-ups if it happens.	Members of staff will ask children to confirm this at the start of the meeting. Members of staff will model safe and appropriate behaviour.
All other members of the household should know that a video call is taking place so that they make sure that they are not caught on camera saying, doing or wearing anything that they would want to	Calls need to be safe and not expose children to language, behaviour or images that are inappropriate. If you wouldn't do, say or wear it at school it shouldn't be happening within sight or hearing of a video call.	Members of staff will ask children to confirm this at the start of the meeting. Members of staff can mute or remove children from a call if they need to. This will be logged and

share.		followed up by a senior member of staff if needed.
Behave as you would in school	<p>This means taking turns, paying attention, following the rules and being polite.</p> <p>For larger groups of children, teachers may ask for hands up or other participation system.</p>	<p>Teachers will behave professionally and remind children to do the same.</p> <p>Members of staff can mute or remove children from a call if they need to. This will be logged and followed up by a senior member of staff if needed.</p>
Avoid background noise that can make the call difficult for others	Noises that you might be used to in your own home can be really disruptive to a video call. Try to avoid being near to dogs barking, washing machines and tumble dryers etc. Encourage younger siblings to give you quiet and space.	Teachers can help children to learn how to turn their microphone on and off so that they can continue to listen to a video call even if their environment is noisy.
Don't dominate the call if other children are present	<p>Depending on the number of participants in a video call the person talking jumps to the main window for everyone else. Think about reducing comments to show agreement and use thumbs up or nodding instead.</p> <p>If you are talking to someone at home - mute yourself so that everyone doesn't hear your conversation. Computer microphones are remarkably sensitive!</p> <p>Make sure you leave time for others to contribute. Some participants might have a slight delay caused by a slower internet speed - give these people time to talk too.</p>	<p>Teachers may use hands up to make sure people take turns.</p> <p>If a child's internet speed prevents them from taking part the teacher will seek to make contact with them in another way.</p> <p>Members of staff can mute or remove children from a call if they need to. This will be logged and followed up by a senior member of staff if needed.</p>

Children staying in touch with each other

Children may use their school Google account to contact other children at West Down and Berrynarbor Primary Schools. School Google accounts allow children to email or use Google Meet or Hangouts to message or video call to communicate with other people within the West Berry Federation including children, staff and governors. School Google accounts do not permit children to use their Google account to communicate with people who do not have an @westberryfederation.org.uk account.

To find a friend on email or hangouts just start typing their name and choose from the list.

Online Safety

Many children are using technology far more than they would ordinarily. Often children learn how to use applications much quicker than adults. We are fortunate to be able to use technology while staying at home but it does pose some risks to our children that adults need to help them manage.

A simple way to think about keeping your child safe online is to compare online interactions with real life interactions.

Would you be happy for your child to share your name and personal details in real life? Is it OK to share personal details if setting up a profile online?

Would you let a stranger into your home? Is it OK for a stranger to see into your home and talk to your child on a screen?

Would you expect your teacher to come into your bedroom? Is it OK to video call your teacher from your bedroom?

Is it OK to be out with your friends late at night? Is it OK to be online with your friends late at night?

Is it OK to make a child talk or play with you in the playground? Is it OK to make a child talk or play with you online?

Is it OK to exclude someone at school? Is it OK to exclude a member of your class from online activities?

Is it OK to use threatening or intimidating language in real life? Is it OK to do this online? Could your comments be misinterpreted?

Our older children have had e-safety lessons - these lessons can be reviewed here along with lessons for younger children.

https://beinternetlegends.withgoogle.com/en_uk/parents

and

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

Useful GOV.UK advice can be found here

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-keeping-children-safe-online/coronavirus-covid-19-support-for-parents-and-carers-to-keep-children-safe-online>

If you are concerned about your child's online safety or the online behaviour of your child or others in our community, please get in touch with us

parents@westberryfederation.org.uk

Free School Meals and foodbank vouchers

We are providing funding to the families of children who are in receipt of means tested free school meals to help with the increased cost of food while schools are closed. We are offering this funding instead of the national voucher scheme as we feel that it offers families better options in the area that we live. Unfortunately this support is not available to the families of children in KS1 who usually get a free school meal as part of the Universal Infant Free School Meals programme unless they are also eligible for the means tested benefit.

If your financial situation has changed you may now be eligible for means tested free school meals. If this is the case we would encourage you to apply. If your application is successful we will be able to offer you financial support toward the cost of food immediately. Your child will also continue to attract additional funding to

enable their school to offer additional school based support for at least the next six years even if the change in financial situation is only temporary.

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/school-information/school-meals>



If you are struggling to have enough food please get in touch and we will do what we can to help. We can explore a number of options including providing food bank vouchers.

Provision for vulnerable children and the children of key workers

We are providing childcare for vulnerable children and the children of key workers from both schools at West Down school. If you need to apply for a place please get in touch. The guidance remains that even these children should remain at home if it is safe to do so and only come into school if there is no other care available. Staff are working on a rota that changes each week and observe social distancing as much as possible. The children are not being taught normal lessons but are encouraged to complete home learning tasks in school where appropriate.

A final note from fellow parents who are also teachers....

Everyone is having to adapt to a very different way of working. We all have good days and bad days and so do our children. It is not easy not knowing how long we'll need to stay at home and not having the answers to all of the questions and worries that our children might have. But we are all in this together. Just do your best. No one is going to criticise you for what you try to do to help your child learn at home. Don't try to recreate a school day at home - take it easy and be kind to yourself and your children. Value the unique learning opportunities that being at home offers (what is the most space efficient way to stack the dishwasher?) and try to create happy memories for you and your child during this time. Stay in touch with your friends and loved ones and ask for help when you need it. Try not to read too much news and remember that people often present the very best version of themselves on their best day on social media...they'll have bad days or even weeks too.

