

Polehampton C. of E. Schools Federation

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Friday 19th June 2020

Dear Polehampton Families,

Yet another different week for our schools, with lots of our Year1 children returning – how lovely to see you! The teachers have enjoyed starting the phone calls home – how lovely to hear about all the fun things you’ve been doing!!!

Plans for the summer term

Year Two Children – Yesterday we emailed everyone to let you know about how we will support your induction to the Junior School, including an induction morning for those children not in school. I have already heard that those children are excited to be getting their uniforms back on! We can’t wait to see you at our Junior School!

Children in Years 3, 4 & 5 – We are planning a little visit for you before the holidays, a socially distanced picnic in bubbles of up to 15 where you can see your current and your new teachers! We will be writing to you very soon about our plans and the rules we will need to follow.

- **Children in our Priority Group for those year groups** – as you are currently in school so won’t be able to join those sessions (no bubble mixing I’m afraid), we will make sure your teachers give you a wave, so you see them in the playground or at the door to your class before the holidays too.

Please note – all visits to school are entirely optional. Whilst we would love to see you, I appreciate that parents have their own reasons about whether that is appropriate for their family at this time.

Space and Staffing

I know that there have been articles in the press this week about schools using other buildings if they have space issues. Whilst space is one of our challenges, our key issue is staffing. We aren’t in a position to open any further year groups. We do have a number of staff that can’t come into school which makes our jigsaw puzzle of bubbles a little more challenging.

We have received some very kind offers of support with regards to parent volunteers working in school. This is such a lovely offer. However, we are working really hard to ensure we have a very consistent approach to our provision at the moment.

All the way through this experience, staff have been involved in our risk assessments and planning to meet the emotional needs of our children. We have had many meetings and additional training to support our work. Passing all this on to volunteers would be extremely difficult as we wouldn’t be able to share confidential information with you that might be significant for particular children. So, whilst your offers are extremely kind, it’s just not possible to utilise your time in this way.

Plans for September

We have had no further information about September yet – however, we are thinking hard about what this could look like.

We are currently working on 3 possible scenarios.

- **Plan A** – back to normal which is my favourite option – this would be mean that restrictions have lifted in terms of class size and social distancing so we could have 30 children in a class. There might still be some guidance that impacts on parts of school life like assemblies, visitors to school or trips.

- **Plan B** – things remain as they are - guidance hasn't changed which will mean we continue as we are now. This actually is a significant piece of work - as we have staffing/children changes, we need to re-plan around that.
- **Plan C** – a new plan - guidance changes in some ways which means we might need to develop a different way of working entirely. This one is harder to plan for, hard to anticipate what we might be required to do. We keep reading the daily guidance and checking for possible indications.

Additional Funding to Support children as they return to school

We are delighted to hear today's announcement by the government, regarding catch up tuition funding. We now await further details so we can understand what that will look like for our Polehampton pupils.

Replying to emails and phone calls

Understandably, we are receiving many more phone calls and emails from parents than we would usually. We do apologise if we don't get back to you very quickly, as we would like to. We will get to everyone, but we are sorry if it takes a little longer than usual. As always, you might well find the answer to your question in these newsletters, as lots of people might find those points useful.

Staff toddler photos – Can you spot who's who?

So, we have had some fun on Twitter this week with staff photos – I've attached the ones we've posted so far. Can you see who's who??? More pictures and answers next week!

Support with Childrens' Mental Health

We are acutely aware that the longer this goes on, the more children are finding it hard to manage their feelings and emotions. I have attached 2 information leaflets today – one about patience, one about positivity. I hope you find them helpful.

The Duchess of Cambridge has done an assembly on kindness which you might find interesting to share at home.

<https://classroom.thenational.academy/assemblies/kindness/>

Here is a new book called **Everyone Worries** which might be good to share at home too.

<https://en.calameo.com/read/000777721945cfe5bb9cc?authid=Xu9pcOzU3TQx>

Talking to children about racism

Blue Peter are doing an excellent job of talking directly to children about how racism feels for their presenters and the wider issues – I highly recommend you watch it with your children and allow them to talk about the issue. Educating ourselves more and more is the way forwards, not being afraid to ask questions and challenge ourselves to look re-examine our viewpoints as we learn. These are real life skills that we need to have throughout our lives.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/watch/bp-advice-for-helping-to-stop-racism>

Children and social media

We have heard some lovely reports of fun online recently but also that there have been unkind words said. This is on our learning platforms but also on children's own groups, such as WhatsApp. It's always good to ensure you monitor any online conversations – join the groups that they are in, so they know you are able to see what's being said. Check in regularly so you can remind them of the rules.

Thank you, PTA!

We heard that £671 was raised this week with the Bags2School Collection!! Thank you to everyone involved in organising and to everyone who brought along a bag or two!!

Children in school

Can I do a reminder that, with our unpredictable British summer weather, your child might need either a raincoat or sun-screen & hats/caps? As the children are at their desks much more, we are going out if at all possible, certainly during light showers, for a run around, so coats are essential on rainy days.

- **Priority group**

1. Can I just remind everyone that we are open from 8.30am until 4.00pm. Staff might still be setting up before 8.30am and we want to be ready to welcome everyone, so please don't come early. At hometime, staff are then busy getting ready for tomorrow, checking Google Classroom or Purple Mash or calling children, so please be prompt to collect. Thank you!
2. Waiting lists – as days become full, we will operate a waiting list system.

- **Closing bubbles due to staffing issues**

I just wanted to remind parents that we might have to close bubbles if we have staffing issues – this is because we can't move staff across bubbles, for example, we can't "borrow" staff from a bubble that isn't in that day.

- **Summer Holidays**

I have had a few questions about the summer holidays – school will not be running the priority group over the holidays. This is for lots of reasons, including staff annual leave entitlements and work that needs doing in the school, for which we need to close.

We are looking to see what we can sign post to parents, in terms of holiday clubs as we would normally do, but everything is much more uncertain than usual this year.

- **Infants**

If you bring your own packed lunch, please can you check your child can open the things themselves – a few children have needed help opening boxes or peeling bananas. As we are trying to avoid close contact with children, we do ask parents if they could review what they include in their packed lunches – thank you!

Summer Reading Challenge 2020 - "Silly Squad"

The Summer Reading Challenge is going online this year! Below are links to register for the challenge and to become a member of the library. You will then be able to borrow ebooks, e-audio books and e-comics.

Sign up - You can sign up for the Summer Reading Challenge on the national website, this year, instead of registering at your local library: <https://summerreadingchallenge.org.uk/>

Library membership for the summer - If you are not already a member of the library, you can join the library online here <https://wokingham.spydus.co.uk/cgi-bin/spydus.exe/MSGTRN/OPAC/JOIN> to borrow e-books, e-audio books and e-comics for the challenge.

Best wishes everyone - I hope you are all able to have lovely weekends,

Miss Ball and the Polehampton Team