

Well-being Wednesday afternoon and Well-being week – Express yourself!

Dear Parents and Carers,

Over the course of the last week, we have become increasingly aware of some parents and children who are understandably struggling with the current situation for a number of different reasons.

Some parents are expressing concern over their ability to home-school and feel that they aren't doing the right thing by their child. Some are also concerned at seeing their child's motivation levels drop and others feel that their children are struggling mentally. Many children are missing seeing their friends and teachers and are finding it difficult to get motivated for home learning at times as well. Because of the requirements of home learning, they are also spending a great deal of time on screens, which is certainly not ideal but unfortunately unavoidable.

What I want to say to all of the above though is that we get it. We understand that it is hard to keep pupils going, especially if they are starting to feel fed up of the situation. As school leaders, we do understand that as lockdown goes on, it gets harder and harder for everyone but you can only do the best that you can. Over time anything that you can do to help your child will help us and most importantly them. We are so grateful to you for sticking with it – a heartfelt THANK YOU from all of us! When there are days where it's hard, it's okay. Teachers and Teaching Assistants are having their fair share of hard days too. It's not an easy task to deliver home learning every day but like you all are, they are doing their best. Everyone's best is good enough!

We have ten school days until the half-term break when children will get a chance to have a much-needed break. Until then, just take it a day at a time. Over that period, we will all have up days and down days. When your child has a down day, don't be afraid to let us know and we will do our best to support them.

Please remember that children and young people are amazing. They are resilient and can adapt. Our job, in conjunction with you as parents and carers, is to make sure that we try our absolute best to keep them interested in learning and to keep their spirits up. Ultimately, we all want your child to feel happy and to be able to cope. We may not be together at the current time but we are still all in this together and we will get through it together.

With all of the above in mind, I want to let you know that we have decided that from now on, we want to make every Wednesday afternoon a screen-free 'Well-being Wednesday'. You may or may not know but next week is children's mental health week and the theme this year is 'express yourself', which is very fitting in these times.

Therefore, every Wednesday from 12pm from now on, children will be able to choose how they spend their afternoon, as long as it is away from a screen, rather than having online learning to do. All we ask is that whatever they choose to do is either photographed or recorded and sent to the Class Teacher to view so that it can be shared and celebrated. Attached to this newsletter, there are quite a few ideas for your child to consider. Other suggestions will come from Class teachers via the Home Learning Site but it could include things like Lego creations, junk modelling, baking, completing jigsaws, reading a book, mindfulness colouring, being recorded singing or playing a musical instrument etc. You will also see a fantastic art competition on this newsletter that your child might well enjoy doing. The list of possibilities is endless so please let them be creative every week and express themselves! Children in school will have similar opportunities provided for them.

We sincerely hope that the above initiative will provide a break from routine in the middle of the week and be really great for both children's and parents' mental health. We also hope that it will remove some of the pressure that can come with home-schooling and allow parents and children to all relax a bit and have time to focus on your own work, which we know most of you are juggling so well.

Please don't worry though because we will still ensure that the children receive the required amount of learning over the course of the remainder of the week. Teachers will still be working but now won't be available to answer questions on Wednesday afternoon to give them a break from answering emails and teachers have mental health too! Consequently, there will be no Wednesday afternoon briefings from now on. They will of course still receive the children's creative contributions and celebrate these during briefings and on the class 'Praise pages'.

Finally, the mental health week initiative suggests a 'Dress to Express' day on Friday 5th February. We would therefore like all children to dress in 'bold and bright' colours during their morning briefing on that day. Let's make the briefing screens awash with vibrant clothing and cheery smiles! Children - bring your animals and parents/carers too!

We look forward to your support with the above and hope you all view it as a really positive thing to do.

Kind regards and stay safe everyone,

Mr. Hutt and The Coppice Leadership Team.