Wellsway Multi Academy Trust Parent and Carer Newsletter

May 2020

Message from the Chief Executive

WMAT planning for opening our schools more widely

I am writing with a further update on where we are with planning for a possible wider opening of our schools.

Since the start of the lockdown we have provided a service for children whose parents are key workers and those who are vulnerable. We have done this by opening bases at a number of our schools that have been run by heads and principals and staffed by colleagues from across the trust. This service has continued to run during the holidays, including throughout the Easter weekend, run by our trading company colleagues. By doing this we have enabled parents who work in vital settings such as hospitals and care homes to get to work and have provided a safe and nurturing environment for a number of very vulnerable children. We have ensured that children who are eligible for free school meals get this entitlement, which in the early days of lockdown involved delivering it to pupils' homes.

Alongside this, teachers and other colleagues have worked extremely hard to provide remote learning for children at home. Their response has been magnificent and has demonstrated the dedication and commitment that is such a strong feature of the education profession.

But these arrangements cannot continue indefinitely, for two reasons:

1. Because prolonged absence from school is concerning academically, socially - and for some children, from a welfare and safety perspective; and
2. Because the long-term impact of a deep recession, particularly on the poorest families, will be very damaging.

It is important to balance the public health risks in the short term (related to the transmission of the virus) with longer term public health considerations. If a child loses out on the basics of education, this can have an impact on that child across their whole lives – their economic prosperity and long-term health. Children benefit hugely from being at school. So, we need to take steps towards opening schools more widely.

For now, we are simply making *plans* for how we might open WMAT schools more widely *from* 1st June. As a trust, we have decided in principle that our schools will not open to more pupils until Monday 8th June and, if this is the case, each school will hold two in-school training days for staff on Thursday 4th and Friday 5th June to ensure all the preparations are in place for the children to return.

The government will make its final decision on whether to open schools more widely when it reviews the latest science, including transmission rates, on 28th May. We will make our own decisions based on our capacity and risk assessments. It must be emphasised that the safety of our pupils and staff is our over- riding priority.

At WMAT we place huge value on collaboration and consultation and our response to opening our schools more widely will be no different. In planning for a possible widening of provision on June 8th, heads and principals are working together across the trust to ensure a consistent approach, whilst factoring in aspects that are specific to their school. All planning will take a very measured approach based upon a rigorous risk management process.

We are awaiting further DfE guidance for years 10 and 12, which we hope will include clarity around what 'some face-to-face contact' means in practice.

We absolutely want children back in school and I know that every one of us is desperate to return to some sort of normality. It will be a great day when our schools are finally open to all children and young people and we can return to our workplaces once again. In the meantime it is important that we maintain strong links with our pupils, be they at home or in school, and continue to guide their learning and provide support.

We will continue to update you as the situation develops and hope to be in a position to open our schools more widely from June 8th.

With continued thanks for your support.

Yours sincerely,

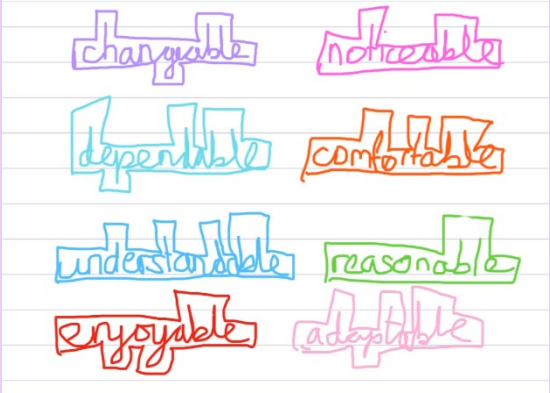
Andrea Arlidge

Chief Executive

Primary Remote Learning

For sale (half price)

You will find this luxurious honeycomb as a place where you play with your friends, sleep, and spend most of your spare time. There is lots of quality room where your parents can hang out and where you can have play dates. The best thing about this fancy home is that no humans would ever go near it because they're a bit scared of you, so you will have peace and quiet forever. It is the poshest home that could ever exist. It includes 1000 bedrooms and you can even have some bees sharing a room so there will be more space. It also includes free honey and as you're bees you can even make some more yourselves!! I would definitely recommend this home for you. This is the only house that is on half price for one whole month. You can take your time to discuss and it will only be £5. You are going to love it here.



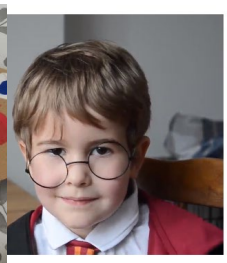
"After a busy week, I just wanted to take the opportunity to quickly thank you both for all your support and wish you a lovely long weekend. Having Seesaw is making the world of difference to home learning, especially whilst we're still both working full time in pretty intense jobs".

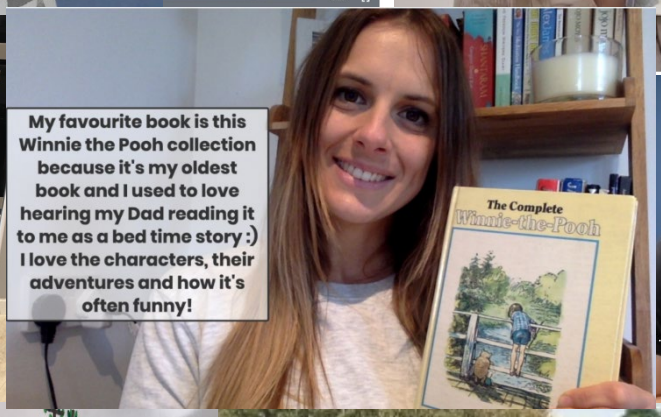
"For 'my child', being able to see short videos from you and have tasks assigned from you (rather than us) feels far more 'normal'. Knowing that you will look at her work and give her positive and constructive feedback has given her the eagerness to want to still carry on doing a good job. So thank you for all the videos, likes and the comments back, I'm sure you are doing more than expected but it is making a real positive difference at home and it's been lovely to see 'my child' smiling when she sees them come in.

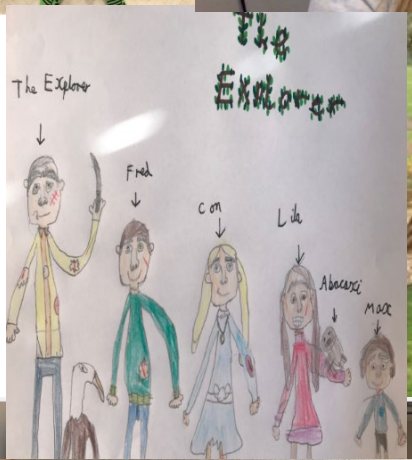
Also the app is so easy to use that she has picked it up really easily and can pretty much sort and submit all her work now independently, which really helps us too".

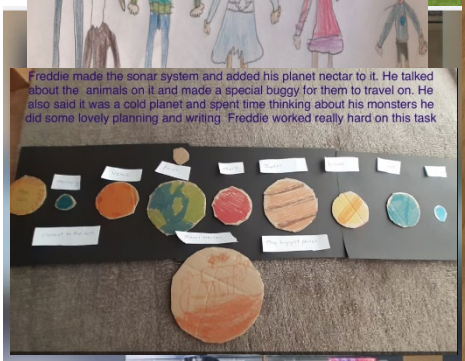
Cheddar Grove

The Children at Cheddar Grove Primary School have had a busy couple of weeks engaging with their online Seesaw Learning. Looks like they have had lots of fun!!



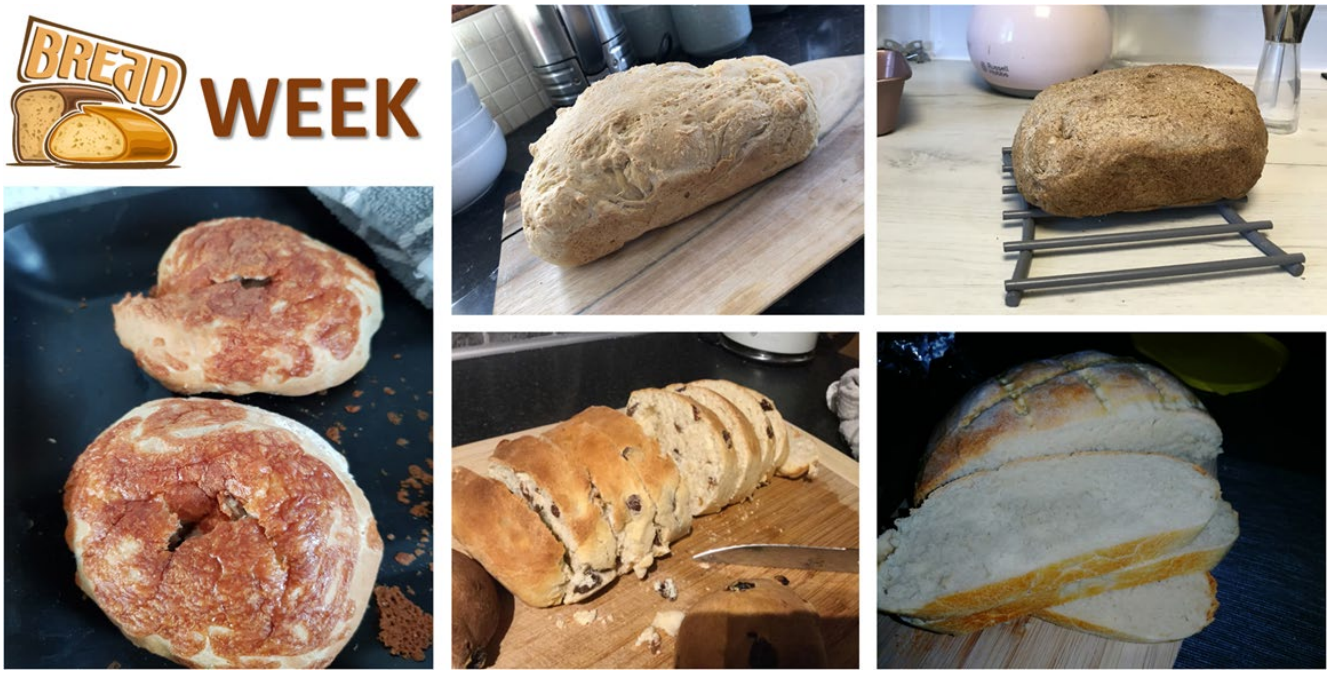






Secondary Remote Learning

Bedminster Down students rise to the challenge!



Last week Mr Parsons added an extension task at the end of his lesson asking students to make some bread using a recipe, providing they had the ingredients and support of their parents. Here are some of the results. Some competition for Paul Hollywood!

Wellsway Student Wins National Essay Prize

Huge congratulations to Joe Bainbridge, in Year 12 at Wellsway School, who received a commendation for his entry in Lancaster University's Modern National Languages Essay Prize. Joe was commended for both the fluency and intellectual sophistication in his writing on 'Learn Languages to Build Bridges'. This is a fantastic achievement in this prestigious competition. Well done Joe!

Activities in our Key Worker Hubs

The key worker children at the Saltford Hub have been working on a Food theme this week.

Among the activities they've enjoyed are favourite food surveys and graphs, finding out where food comes from, following recipes and these wonderful food bowls made from modelling clay.

Student Podcast

Charlotte and Crystal

Charlotte Prewett, Eva Crosbie and Crystal Jay who attend Bedminster Down School provision are developing a student podcast with information and activities that will be fun for their fellow students and provide some peer to peer support. Their ideas include: a school tik tok, fun quizzes, sending get well cards, making posters for the school and carrying out student surveys. They said:

"We are keen on doing a podcast to entertain and inform other students about lockdown and to also keep spirits up. The reason for us wanting to do a podcast is so we can reach out to students as well as to inform them about current day situations from students' perspective".

Sustainable Growth

SBL students had an opportunity to develop their green fingered skills by potting seeds at a social distance. Students took responsibility for creating a rota to ensure the seeds will germinate by being watered each day by regular attendees of the provision.

Students were encouraged to think about sustainability and shown how to use materials from any home recycling box, such as turning a plastic milk carton into a plant pot, rather than purchasing a new plastic plant pot.

The photographs were taken by one of our Year 10 photography students who has accessed our in-school provision each day since closure.

Mental Health Awareness Week: 18-24 May

One thing that we have seen all over the world is that kindness is prevailing in uncertain times.

We have learnt that amid the fear, there is also community, support and hope.

The added benefit of helping others is that it is good for our own mental health and wellbeing. It can help reduce stress and improve emotional wellbeing.

There is more information, resources and activities on the website mentalhealth.org.uk

Creative Writing Competition Results

The judges had a great time reading all the *Twisted Tales* entries. After lots of heated debate, they are delighted to announce the winners who will all receive a £20 Amazon voucher.

Primary school results

- **EYFS:** Frank Popa – Saltford
- **KS1:** Dylan Gommersall – Year 1, Chandag Infant
- **Lower KS2:** Clayton Blake – Year 4, The Meadows
- **Upper KS2:** Matilda Nicholls – Year 5, Chandag Juniors

Secondary school results:

- **1st place:** Gabriella Adams - Year 7, Wellsway
- **2nd place:** Josie Hole – Year 7, SBL

The winning entries are all available to read online (Pdf).

Beware of Fraudsters

Periods of instability, such as during the coronavirus pandemic, bring an increased risk of fraud. Fraudsters will actively exploit these difficult times and will target vulnerable areas for financial gain.

We have been informed that some learners and parents have received a letter from Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) asking for personal learner bank details in relation to the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund. The ESFA will never ask for personal bank account details. **This is a fraudulent letter - please do not respond.**

Similarly, if during this period of schools closure you receive any communication from your school or Wellsway Multi Academy Trust asking for any personal data, please treat with caution and contact your school if necessary to check authenticity.

Opportunity to contribute to University of Bath survey

An online survey launches this week, aiming to gain feedback from the parents and carers of children aged 6 - 16 on how young people are coping with lockdown and its impacts on their mental health. Led by leading childhood clinical psychologist, Professor Paul Stallard from the University of Bath's Department for Health, the study is being undertaken with academic colleagues across five countries which have experienced extensive lockdowns and school closures: the UK, Portugal, Spain, The Netherlands and Romania.

The researchers want to understand more about how children and their caregivers are coping with social distancing, school closures and other challenges imposed by COVID-19.

If you would like to take part please complete the survey.

Help Celebrate National Teacher Day: 20th May 2020

Today is national Thank a Teacher Day, so why not say thank you to someone amazing in your school and with an e-card, with your personal message, for free.

Challenging Design

Summer Term Design Challenge

Calling all Wellsway MAT student inventors. We need you to invent and design a product to improve the quality of people's lives during the Coronavirus lockdown period.

Your Challenge

Design a product that will help people in one of the following contexts: Home office, family living, (playful) family activities, boredom, home exercising, social distancing.

Your Prize

The top inventor in the following categories FS, KS1, KS2, KS3 and KS4&5 will each receive an Amazon voucher

What's Required

Create three pages of drawings, including:

- 1 page introducing what context you are designing for and some research on the problem.
- 1 page displaying your different ideas explaining your problem solving. Sketch multiple ideas to show your creative process.
- 1 page communicating your best and final design idea. Make sure to include some text to help communicate your genius idea with details on materials and sizes, etc…

WELLSWAY
MULTI ACADEMY TRUST

How to Enter

Please email photos of your drawings to dwilkinson@ikbacademy.org.uk by 15th June 2020. All age inventors welcome. Your email subject line should be 'My Coronavirus Design Solution – First name surname & Age'

Click here to access a printer friendly version (Pdf)