

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that this latest newsletter finds you and your families well.

Next week will be the sixth week of school closure (not including the Easter break), and the eighth week since lockdown began. It is of course natural that many people are eager for the restrictions to be lifted and for life to return to its normal pattern. Certainly, the media seems to be awash with speculation, alleged Government leaks and predictions as to when the lockdown measures will be eased. One specific question which seems to have been focused upon more than any other in relation to lockdown is “When will schools re-open?”.

This is a question I have been asked innumerable times since the closure period began. The assumption is that, as a Headteacher, I will be privy to information which is not in the public domain, and may be able to offer some insider knowledge. Unfortunately, much as I would like to offer some knowing hints or carefully phrased clues, the truth is that I have absolutely no idea when schools will reopen. In fact, I suspect that this information will be shared with me at the same time and in the same way that it is with the rest of the country, via one of the Downing Street TV briefings.

So, whilst I can't offer you specific details about school opening dates I can offer you a few opinions and one or two facts about our school re-opening.

The first thing I would say is that those in charge of making decisions at a Government level have an unenviable job at the moment. These are unprecedented challenges and, aside from perhaps a handful of medical experts and scientists, it is impossible to answer with absolute confidence many of the questions which need to be asked concerning the Covid-19 virus and how it spreads.

Secondly, I would like to make a point which seems to have been lost in much of the media coverage and one or two of the more negative individual opinions being reported nationally.

Many schools, including our own, have not closed. In fact, the school has remained open for the children of key workers etc almost every day over the past eight weeks, including the Easter holiday period. Every member of staff has been into school to provide cover and care for the children who require it, and in doing so have placed themselves in a position of increased risk, with absolutely no PPE. Staff have done this because they want to enable key workers to continue in their vital roles. This cover has been provided in addition to a daily online presence for home school learning and teachers supporting their classes. We have also been working hard to ensure that our families receive enough food to eat.

We do not know for sure what impact re-opening schools in the near future will have on the infection rate. What we can say for certain is that our experience of opening during the lockdown, even for a small number of children, has shown that retaining social distancing in school is virtually impossible.

Before schools can reopen, I believe the following information and assurances need to be given to parents and schools;

- What is the most accurate, scientifically predicted impact of re-opening schools on infection and mortality rates amongst children, parents, extended families and school staff?
- Are these predicted impact figures based upon the highly unrealistic assumption that social distancing can be maintained in schools?
- Will children and staff have access to regular Covid-19 testing facilities and adequate PPE equipment?

...continued

Given that the question of deciding when it is safe for schools to reopen inevitably requires an element of risk taking with undeniably high stakes, it seems to me that we have to approach this decision with extreme caution. One of the best pieces of advice I received as a new Headteacher from a much more experienced colleague was to “always do what is right, not what is expedient”. For the past twenty years this advice has proved its worth on countless occasions. I therefore hope that those charged with making the difficult choices on lifting the lockdown and re-opening schools make decisions which are based upon putting health considerations before political or economic pressures.

Thanks to all of those parents and staff who continue to support children’s learning during these unusual times. Whilst the school remains closed, please feel free to continue to contact us if you feel that we can help in any way.

Best wishes

Martin Higgs

Getty Museum Challenge

Thanks to everyone who has already got involved in this! Have a look on our Facebook page where you can see these and some of the brilliant ones sent in by some of our staff. Please join in if you’d like to!



Stay at home to stop coronavirus spreading

Everyone must stay at home and away from other people to help stop the spread of coronavirus.

You should only leave or be away from home for very limited purposes:

- shopping for basic necessities, for example food and medicine, which must be as infrequent as possible
- one form of exercise a day, for example a run, walk, or cycle – alone or with members of your household
- any medical need, including to donate blood, avoid injury or illness, escape risk of harm, or to provide care or to help a vulnerable person
- travelling for work purposes, but only where you cannot work from home.

Even when doing these activities, you should be minimising time spent outside of the home and ensuring you are 2 metres (3 steps) away from anyone outside of your household.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

This is an unusual time and we are conscious that some people and families will be finding it difficult. We have included some helpline numbers on this page in case anyone finds them useful.



0808 802 6666



0800 678 1602



NHS Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

The Trust has its own Out of Hours telephone support provided by Support Matters Cornwall. This service operates from 5pm to 9am on weekdays and 24 hours a day at weekends and bank holidays. The service is open to all patients (aged 16+) under the care of the Trust's mental health services. Support can be delivered over the telephone, via text, email or web chat. Call free on **0800 001 4330**.

Penzance CTIPA Foodbank

The CTIPA Foodbank in Penzance has let us know that it is no longer necessary to obtain a voucher to receive food from them and that they are open every day at the moment. If their support would be helpful to you at this time, just phone Vryan or Adele in the office in confidence on 01736 364087 and they can phone the Foodbank for you who will be able to help. The Foodbank are extremely busy at the moment and are very grateful for any donations.

0300 123 3393



**citizens
advice**

0344 411 1444

**"It's alright to
ask for help"**



116 123

NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HELPLINE

0808 2000 247

24/7 CONFIDENTIAL FREEPHONE



Online Safety

Whilst there are huge benefits to being online in order to stay connected to family and friends during this period, many parents may feel concerned about the activities and content their children are accessing. This guidance outlines resources to help keep children safe from different risks online and where to go to receive support and advice.

<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>

At National Online Safety we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information they need to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one platform of many which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, hints and tips for adults.

Disney+ is the latest big player in the TV streaming market. The global brand has released its own subscription-based streaming service to rival that of competitors such as Netflix, Amazon Prime and Apple TV. As the name might suggest, it's designed to be family friendly, with content restricted to PG and PG-13 (UK equivalent 12a). It can be streamed on pretty much any device – mobile phones, tablets, PC's, TVs and games consoles – and features a huge library of classic Disney titles. Below, we've highlighted a few tips for parents to consider to ensure that their children get the most enjoyable experience out of the service.

5 TOP TIPS FOR PARENTS DISNEY+

1 Create a strong username & password

On its release in the US, Canada and Netherlands in November 2019, Disney+ was dogged by allegations of being hacked. Many users complained that their account details had been stolen and blamed Disney+ security. To date, Disney+ has confirmed there was no data breach from their end. As Disney+ doesn't use 2-factor authentication, anybody who potentially hacks your username and password could also access your credit card details. Therefore, it's important to create a unique username and a strong password that isn't used for other sites. Always use a mixture of letters (upper and lowercase), numbers and symbols and try to ensure the minimum length is 8 characters.

2 Monitor your child's usage

Whilst the ability to stream on almost any device capable of connecting to the internet might seem great at first, parents may also want to exercise a little bit of caution. Parental controls on Disney+ are quite limited and there are no settings to help with screen time or usage, so it can be easy for children to binge watch, particularly given the amount of content available. Apple, Google and Amazon devices all provide options to limit children's screen time so parents can manage how long their child uses the app.

3 Enable 'Kid's Profile' mode

Although Disney+ is billed as family friendly, there is still an option to enable a 'kid's profile' which removes all PG and PG-13 rated content. This adds an extra level of safety if you're still concerned that your child may watch something that could be deemed too 'intense' for their age. Setting up a kid's profile also switches off autoplay which means the next video in any series won't automatically play once one episode has finished. It should be noted though that children can easily switch between accounts themselves given there is no security required to get into profiles.

4 Double check for films with 'outdated cultural depictions'

The Disney+ service includes programs and movies that go back to the 1920s and which have been left in their original format, with their original content. Some of this programming contains cultural insensitivities and depictions that were included in the original show, but Disney would never include them now. For example, cultural stereotyping, the representation of minority groups or character portrayals which may be deemed racist. For this reason, viewers are made aware through a warning message stating "This program is presented as originally created. It may contain outdated cultural depictions." Whilst Disney do their best to highlight any such content, it's always worth discussing these issues with your child if they raise any queries.

5 Sit back and enjoy!

Above all else, Disney+ is designed to be family friendly and there is very little, if any, adult-themed content available for children to stumble across. The library of films and programmes can range from all-time classics to the latest Hollywood blockbuster and it can be a great avenue for parents and children to sit down together, ready the popcorn and enjoy some great family friendly entertainment.

Meet our expert

Pete Badh is a writer with over 10+ years in research and analysis. Working within a specialist area for West Yorkshire Police, Pete has contributed work which has been pivotal in successfully winning high profile cases in court as well as writing as a subject matter expert for industry handbooks.



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#WakeUpWednesday

SOURCES: <https://www.disneyplus.com/> | <https://www.netnanny.com/blog/how-to-set-parental-controls-for-disney-plus/> | <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2019/nov/14/disney-attaches-warning-of-outdated-cultural-depictions-to-classic-films>

www.nationalonlinesafety.com Twitter - @natonlinesafety Facebook - /NationalOnlineSafety Instagram - @NationalOnlineSafety

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 17.04.2020

Daisy's Diary

Foxes!

I think our foxes are around again. Before spring started, when it was still raining and raining and raining and RAINING we got a film of a beautiful fox around the sandy burrow by the wildlife meadow. If you'd like to see her/him here's the link -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nCOdFvI9Ycl>

When I've been in to school (which is only really once week to check and water – I would love to be there lots to keep planting and building but we all need to stay at home) I've checked for footprints and there's been some quite large ones! In the first couple of weeks I couldn't sleep as everything was so worrying and strange (which it still is but I'm more used to it now. Plus I think I'm now used to eating massive amounts of cheese and biscuits in bed every night.) So I went for night time walks. The stars seem so clear at the moment – maybe the air being so much cleaner? I was walking up around Alverton (saw a shooting star on Love Lane) when I saw a fox! It saw me too and we looked at each other for a while....it could have been our school fox! It had a really bushy tail and he/she was long and slender and really had a really bouncy trot.



Remember – safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

If you have a safeguarding concern, please contact Martin Higgs (Designated Safeguarding Lead) at head@alverton.cornwall.sch.uk or, if it is out of school hours, please contact the Multi Agency Referral Agency on 0300 1231 116; E-mail:

Contacting School

Please be aware that whilst school remains open for some children, there will be no admittance to the building or grounds for any parents, visitors or children not currently at school. If you need to contact us, please do so by email (secretary@alverton.cornwall.sch.uk) or by calling the office between 9am- 1pm, Monday to Friday on 01736 364087.