



Update on Wider Re-opening at Alverton

Dear Parents and Carers,

When we took the decision not to follow the Government's call for schools to re-open more widely for certain year groups on June 1st, we promised that this position would be regularly reviewed. Indeed, senior leaders and governors have met each week to discuss this situation and to review our decisions on re-opening.

We are well aware that these are difficult times for our community and for our families. Whilst we have been open continuously since the lockdown began for children of key workers, we know that there is growing pressure on parents in non-key worker roles to return to work, and there are also significant financial, emotional and mental pressures on families who have been in lockdown since March.

The reason we did not re-open on June 1st is that we simply did not have the evidence to convince us that it was safe to do so. The lack of scientific and medical evidence to support the demands to open schools more widely has put school leaders across the country in an impossible position. This led to each school having to make their own decisions on re-opening based on what they believed to be the right thing to do. The result is that we have a patchwork of school provision both locally and across England, with the whole issue of school re-opening becoming hugely politicised and divisive.

I absolutely stand by the decisions we took in May. Based upon what we knew (and perhaps more importantly didn't know) at the time, I simply could not say that it was safe to re-open the school more widely on June 1st, and I believe that this decision reflected the views of the vast majority of our parents and staff. Indeed, I am proud of the fact that our school has not closed at all since lockdown began, enabling key workers to continue to carry out their roles, whilst also providing high-quality home school learning for all of our children. I cannot praise our staff highly enough for the dedication and professionalism they have shown throughout this crisis.

In reviewing our current position with regard to re-opening, a number of things have changed, and many have not. The easing of lockdown has led to changing expectations within our community, the re-opening of shops on June 15th, the likelihood of the two metre social distancing rules being relaxed and the lack of clarity on what is, and is not, allowed in terms of behaviour to manage the virus has created a perceptible change in how the crisis is being seen by many people.

In terms of the scientific and medical evidence to support a wider re-opening of schools, little has changed. We know that effective social distancing in school remains unrealistic. It is perhaps too early to say if this re-opening has impacted significantly on the spread of the virus. What we know is that the virus has not gone away, and the chances of a second spike or wave of infection are real. The fact that our country has the highest COVID-19 death rate in Europe is reason enough to proceed with caution. That said, although the 'R' rate in the South West is now above 1, the number of cases in Cornwall seems to be relatively low at present.

With this in mind, we have decided to move carefully towards a position where we re-open for some children from Monday 29th June. This re-opening will aim to bring back children in Reception (initially) and then Year 6 before the term ends in July. To this end, we will be contacting parents of Reception children on Monday to ascertain if they wish their children to return so that we can plan accordingly. Year 6 parents will be contacted later next week. Our plans may, of course, need to change if anything alters significantly in terms of the spread of the virus locally or nationally.

We need to be clear that this will not be a return to business as normal. Children will need to be in small groups ('bubbles') and this will limit the number of children we can have in school since each 'bubble' will need a room and a teacher and the availability of both are finite. This capacity is further reduced by the need to continue to provide cover for the 35 key worker children who are currently in school. A wider re-opening also means that staff will be needed in school more regularly and we will not therefore be able to maintain the same level of home-learning provision as has been available until now, certainly within Reception and Year 6.

I hope that this clarifies our current position. We are grateful for your continued support for our school and we will continue to keep you informed of any changes as quickly as possible.

Best wishes

Martin Higgs
Headteacher

COVID-19 isolation may cause tensions to rise and domestic abuse to increase. Help is available.

Who can help me?
We can

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HELPLINE
0808 2000 247
 24/7 CONFIDENTIAL FREEPHONE

WCWAid
 West Cornwall Women's Aid
01736 367539
<https://www.wcwaid.co.uk/helpline>

AT HOME SHOULDN'T MEAN AT RISK

#YOUARENOTALONE FIND SUPPORT AT: gov.uk/domestic-abuse

Download this image onto your phone for **when you might need help**

Cornwall's 24/7 NHS mental health support 24h

Call for free, any time day or night if you are worried about your own or someone else's mental health. The team behind the 24/7 open access telephone service will listen to you and determine how best to help

0800 038 5300

Valued Lives:

Supports people who are experiencing mental or emotional distress in Cornwall. Every day, 5.30pm - midnight.

01209 901438

If you, or someone else, is in immediate danger call 999

Samaritans: 24h

Emotional support to anyone in distress, struggling to cope, or at risk of suicide.

116 123

Shout: 24h

Text service, free on all major networks, for anyone in crisis anytime, anywhere.

- If you're over 18, text the word **SHOUT**
- Under 18s, text **YM**

Text: 85258

www.cornwall.gov.uk/mentalhealth

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.

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: multiagencyreferralunit@cornwall.gov.uk

To stop the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19), you should try to avoid close contact with anyone you do not live with.

This is called social distancing.

Stay at home as much as possible.

It's very important to stay at home as much as possible.

There are only a few specific reasons to leave your home, including:

- for work, if you cannot work from home
- going to shops to get things like food and medicine, or to collect things you've ordered
- to exercise or spend time outdoors
- for any medical reason, to donate blood, avoid injury or illness, escape risk of harm, provide care or help a vulnerable person.

When outside your home, it's important to try to stay 2 metres (3 steps) away from anyone you do not live with.

<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.



family action | Family Line
0808 802 6666



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**.



ChildLine
0800 1111



0800 678 1602
ageUK
Love later life

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 Veryan 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
mind
for better mental health



citizens advice
0344 411 1444



"It's alright to ask for help"
SAMARITANS
116 123



NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HELPLINE
0808 2000 247
24/7 CONFIDENTIAL FREEPHONE



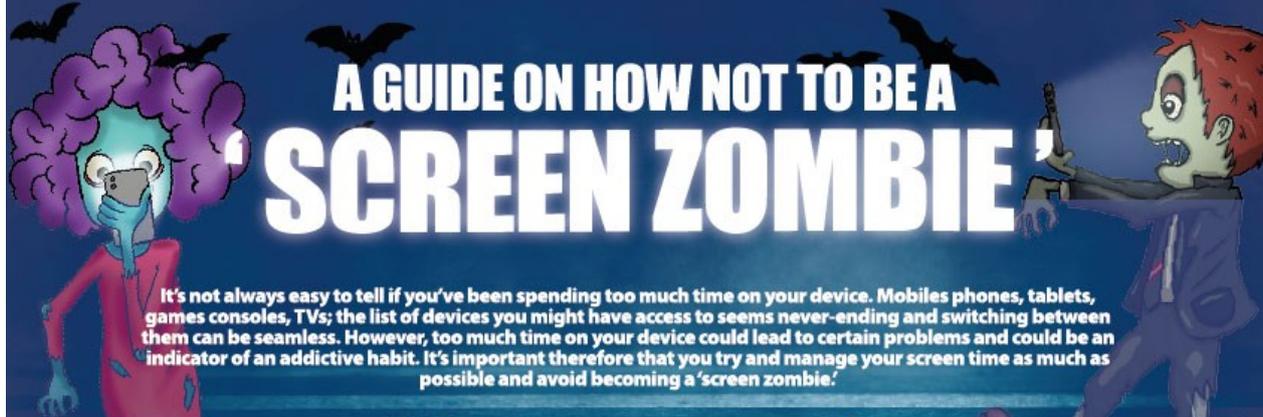
HM Government
AT HOME SHOULDN'T MEAN AT RISK
#YOUARENOTALONE
FIND SUPPORT AT: gov.uk/domestic-abuse

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.



It's not always easy to tell if you've been spending too much time on your device. Mobiles phones, tablets, games consoles, TVs; the list of devices you might have access to seems never-ending and switching between them can be seamless. However, too much time on your device could lead to certain problems and could be an indicator of an addictive habit. It's important therefore that you try and manage your screen time as much as possible and avoid becoming a 'screen zombie.'

TAKE CARE OF YOUR BRAIN

Spending too much time on social media, watching YouTube or playing games online can result in you becoming a screen zombie. This can affect your mood, how much sleep you get, how you perform at school and how you behave around others. Limiting your screen time will keep you alert, limiting your screen time will keep you alert, keep your mind focused and help to look after your own mental health and wellbeing.



BE PRESENT, NOT A ZOMBIE

Screen zombies often find that they spend a lot of time alone in front of their tablet or their mobile phone and reduce the time they spend with their friends or talk with their family. Zombies often lack communication skills. Always try to limit your screen time as much as possible – there's so much fun you can have with others!



SCREEN-FREE BEDROOMS

Keeping your phone in your bedroom means that it can be tempting to check every notification you get. Your phone could be the last thing you see at night and the first thing you see in the morning. This can contribute towards poor sleep and a lack of focus the next day. Try to keep your phone out of your bedroom or turn off all notifications before bedtime. This will mean you'll get a good night's rest and be ready for the next day.



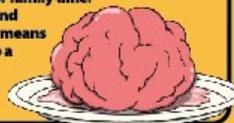
DON'T GET TRAPPED INSIDE

Screen zombies usually find that they spend a lot of time inside as they lose interest in other things that don't include their device. It might seem obvious, but meeting your friends outside or doing outdoor activities like playing sports, trampolining, camping or just going for a walk are all healthy replacements for screen time and can help keep your mind fresh and active.



ZOMBIE-FREE MEALTIMES

Mealtimes can be seen as a good time to sit down, relax and switch on your tablet or phone as you eat your food. But it can also mean that you're not interacting with others, sharing jokes at the dinner table or just talking about your day. Keep mealtimes for family time. Eating your food and staring at a screen means you're turning into a zombie.



BEWARE OF OTHER DANGERS

Spending too much time on your device and online can increase your chances of potentially encountering other online dangers. This could range from viewing inappropriate or harmful content to online bullying, grooming or fake news. Controlling how much time you spend online will reduce your risk of exposure. If you do see anything that makes you upset or if you're concerned about contact with others, always report it to a trusted adult.



BEWARE OF SNEAKY TRICKS

A lot of apps and games use certain ways of keeping you online and using their platform for long periods of time. This can include simple things like unlimited scrolling on a newsfeed, 'streaks' or uncovering hidden levels. Be mindful of how much time you're online and try to remember you're in control. You decide when you've had enough, not your device.



SAVE YOUR PARENTS!

Even though your parents will often be the ones telling you to limit your screen time, turn off your tablet or switch off your phone, sometimes they will forget to take their own advice. So it's up to you to make sure you remind them of the dangers of becoming a screen zombie!



UN-ZOMBIFY YOURSELF

If you think that you've already become a screen zombie, then don't worry, it's never too late to get help and support from your friends and family. Talk to your parents if you feel you've become addicted to your device, try to understand why and work with them to help you limit your screen time so that you can leave your zombie character behind.



Meet our expert

Pete Badh is content specialist with over 10+ years in research and analysis. He has written various expert pieces around online safety for children and parents and previously worked in a specialist role for the police, contributing work which was pivotal in successfully winning high profile court cases and writing as a subject matter expert for industry handbooks.



National
Online
Safety®

#WakeUpWednesday

Free School Meals

At this time, many families may find themselves eligible for Free School Meals and Pupil Premium who previously did not meet the criteria. Please read this page carefully to find out if you are now eligible. Our Pupil Premium Parent Guide is being sent home alongside today's newsletter to provide you with more information.

Cornwall Council are continuing to process new applications for Free School Meals. **Please ensure that you read the eligibility criteria before applying** and complete the online application form if you are eligible.

<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/education-and-learning/schools-and-colleges/school-meals/application-for-free-school-meals-and-pupil-premium/>

Postal applications are currently not being accepted but, if you are unable to apply online, you can call the Free School Meals team on 01872 323298 and a member of the team will call you back to complete the application over the phone. Please make sure that your phone will accept calls from a private number.

NB All Key Stage 1 (Reception, Year 1 and Year 2) pupils are entitled to receive a free school meal as part of the Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) initiative, regardless of what benefits are being claimed. Whilst schools are closed to most pupils during the current Covid-19 pandemic, schools are not required to provide meals or vouchers to Key Stage 1 children who usually receive free meals under the Universal Infant Free School Meals scheme but are not currently attending school.

However, some children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 and receiving Universal Infant Free School Meals (as well as all Key Stage 2 children) may have an underlying entitlement to benefits-related Free School Meals. Schools will make arrangements for these children to receive free meals through food parcels or supermarket vouchers.

Your child may be eligible for benefits-related free school meals if you, or the child themselves in their own right, receives any of the following benefits:

- Income Support (IS)
- Job Seekers' Allowance (Income-Based) and equal based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income Related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA-IR) and equal based Employment and Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit (CTC) with an annual income of less than £16,190
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Guarantee Element of Pension Credit (GPC)
- Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 (IAA) Support
- Universal Credit - Your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get) as assessed by earnings from up to three of your most recent assessment periods

If you are claiming the benefits listed below you are **NOT** eligible for free school meals, regardless of what other benefits/credits are being claimed:

- Working Tax Credit
- Contribution-Based Job Seeker's Allowance and/or Contribution-Based Employment and Support Allowance

However, you will be temporarily eligible to claim free school meals if you receive a **Working Tax Credit run-on**, which is the payment you may receive for a further four weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit.

If you think that your child is eligible for Free School Meals, we strongly recommend that you contact Cornwall Council as detailed above.