



South Gloucestershire Council
Longwell Green Primary School
 Ellacombe Road, Longwell Green, Bristol, BS30 9BA
www.longwellgreenprimaryschool.co.uk
enquiries@longwellgreenprimaryschool.co.uk
 Tel: 01454 866460/Fax: 01454 866462

Headteacher: Mr D Brown

18th August 2020

.....putting Every Child Matters into Action

Dear parents and carers,

We hope you have been able to enjoy the summer, it has certainly been a mixed one but we hope that it has been an enjoyable one for you all. With certain lockdowns being eased and mostly the weather being pretty kind (ish!) it has been lovely to see certain parts of life returning to some sort of normality.

In terms of schooling, it has been a challenging time for those of you with children going through GCSE and A Levels and my Secondary Headteacher colleagues have been fighting hard to get fairness for those impacted. I hope if this has had an impact on your families, that it has been resolved positively. I am pleased to hear that schools are top priority for the Government and it seems at least that if there is a second wave (we all hope not) or the need to tighten restrictions, that schools may well be one of the last things to close. Great news from my perspective and I imagine from yours too!

It is not long until we all return to Longwell Green Primary School and I know I speak for all of the staff when I say we really cannot wait to have everyone back. My staff have been busy working on catch up programmes and structuring of the first days, weeks and months to ensure we give the very best to each child in our care. We have been working with specialists to gain the best advice, for example with the Boolean Maths hub (one of only 37 DfE specialist hubs in the country) to plan a detailed approach to our return, and we have put similar reflective and research driven approach to other areas of our curriculum too. However, school will not just be a series of catch up delivered in a Victorian style classroom! We have and are spending a lot of time ensuring that we build back our in school community and support pupils and families in as many ways, both academically and non-academically as we can. We have been planning how we will work with a wide range of providers to ensure social and emotional support at a high level as well. Do remember that we were the first Primary School in the County to win the prestigious Mental Health award and since then, we have continued to boost our provision in this area ready for the upcoming new academic year.

What will it look like in September?

Our key areas of focus on return will be to ensure the mental health of each child, to support them back into a primary school and all that this entails such as routines, social interaction, carefully targeted support and challenge and more within the boundaries of current restrictions. We want each child to remember why they enjoyed coming to school and to re-engage with their learning and to sensitively and rapidly develop to a point they would have been if lockdown had never happened. This is no small task and it is uniquely uncharted waters for us all in education. It will not be straightforward and the complexity of the task (the variation in needs of pupils on return both academically and emotionally for example), will mean that things will not be fully back to normal for a while in school. We have worked hard however to appear like swans gracefully gliding so that hopefully from your child’s perspective it will be school as usual and they will not notice too much change!

As I said above, things are not yet fully back to normal and we will need to continue with keeping pupils in bubbles and having the allocated time slots for arrival and departure as were explained before the summer holiday (as well as a whole host of other measures which can be viewed on our website <https://www.longwellgreenprimaryschool.co.uk/coronavirus-updates/> . As soon as we can lift these restrictions, we will do so.



Home school links and communication

I have thanked families repeatedly during lockdown as I know you have all gone above and beyond in so many ways and it has not been easy for anyone. Staff and families alike have commented positively on the home school working over the last few months and we will look to continue this excellent relationship as it is certainly the best for your child/ren. As you know, all teachers use dojo and although we will not be supplying home learning in the way we did during lockdown, we will continue to use this as a primary tool of communication at a class teacher level and we encourage you to do the same. Of course, we will still write our newsletters, send emails and texts as before too.

If you are unsure of anything, please do contact school and we will do our best to answer those queries as swiftly as we can. We do anticipate the first week or so back being exceptionally busy in the office, it always is after a holiday and so it stands to reason that it will be more so in September. Please take this into account when contacting us and make use of all of the methods mentioned above.

Returning, how to help your child.

Often I say to new Reception parents that how your child starts school in the first few days will have a lot to do with how you prime them and how you as a parent and as the key adult/s in your child's life respond on those first few days. In many ways, this will be the same for everyone this year! I know for many of you, what I am about to say will be me teaching you to suck eggs, so sorry if that is the case, but just in case it helps even one child it is worth it.

Every child is going to be anxious, they won't sleep in the lead up to the first day, they will have questions and they will look to you for reassurance and also how to respond. Much of these feelings will be coming from change. No-one really likes change, and this year your child has potentially not been in school for many months, school will have different systems AND they have all the 'usual' change of moving classes, moving year groups and having a new teacher. As you know, after a few weeks, this change becomes what is normal and your child will be settled and relaxed. They have managed these changes successfully every year before this, including moving from pre-school to school and so on. They were fine then and they will be fine now; however to a child it does not seem like it will be, but we all can help them with this!

Another part of their anxiety will come from the unknown. The media has spent a long time telling us all how dangerous Covid19 is. As an adult, we can rationalise this, but for some children this is be scary. At Longwell Green, we will do our best to ensure that they are safe; there have been no confirmed outbreaks in South Glos schools and all of the pupils who returned to Longwell Green (or in the case of Keyworkers those who never left) last year were all safe and happy. We know what we do in Longwell works and reassure your child of this if that is a concern of theirs.

Your child will look to you for reassurance. I was food shopping last week with my wife and we overheard a family (not from Longwell Green or from her school I add) who were asking their child how nervous they were about going back to school. They said things such as "I bet you are really worried about going back. You're going into Year X now, oooh, you'll have to be so much more grown up. Are you worried about your new teacher? Don't worry, I know some people say she is strict, but that's ok, you don't need to worry, I'm sure she isn't as bad as some people say." All the poor child was hearing was the word "worry" over and over again, along with the words "strict" and "bad"! The poor child really did look worried!

A better way would be to say, "What things have you missed about school? What are you looking forward to most of all? Tell me the best thing you know about your new teacher. What is your favourite part of school? How excited are you to be going back / seeing all your friends / getting back into school etc.?"

Your child may well say negative things "I hate all of school, I find maths difficult, my favourite part is breaktime etc." This is all linked to nerves. As a caregiver it's tempting to empathise and say things like, "Yes, I hated maths at school too", but what this does is say to your child that it is ok to have a negative view of school, which at this time is the last thing we want. I would instead say, "What do you mean? Look at what your school report says



South Gloucestershire Council
Longwell Green Primary School
 Ellacombe Road, Longwell Green, Bristol, BS30 9BA
www.longwellgreenprimaryschool.co.uk
enquiries@longwellgreenprimaryschool.co.uk
 Tel: 01454 866460/Fax: 01454 866462

Headteacher: Mr D Brown

.....putting Every Child Matters into Action

about your maths, look at all the progress you have made. Think how much more maths you can do now than when you started in Reception. You may have to work hard at times, but I am really proud of you for working hard and pushing yourself, well done.” (Sorry Miss Cranmer our Maths Leader for picking on maths, it is just an example any subject could have been there!).

You could talk about what they want to get better at this year, or what they want to achieve. Help them set goals, these could be get a pen licence, learn a new times table, or simply remember to smile every day, get up on time etc. Talk about the structure of the school day. Ask them what lesson is usually first, second etc. (it is usually English and maths in the morning, with other subjects in the afternoon.) How long is lunch (an hour)? This will get them back into thinking about school routines and all children (and adults) see security in a known routine, so this can help calm the nerves about so much unknown – they know more about the school day and what to expect than they may think. Perhaps ask what their favourite school lunch was last year or which friends they have missed and so on. Perhaps talk about your child’s favourite thing from last year and use that to imagine what might be their favourite thing from this year. All of these ideas are getting your child to think over what they know about school, and do this is a positive way, so that the void of unknown does not seem so big, as I said, really the only major changes your child will notice will be keeping in class bubbles and a new teacher – they know the rest!

There are many supportive websites out there and we have shown many on our weekly newsletters. The following link is for an American company where you can buy items and also if you sign up to their newsletter, get loads of free items to help with positive mindset and resilience. <https://biglifejournal-uk.co.uk/pages/freebies> They have created some items linked to returning to school after lockdown.

Uniform

We want to get school feeling like a family again as soon as possible. Part of this will be having everyone in the correct school uniform from day one – in case you are not sure what this is, it is described here:

<https://www.longwellgreenprimaryschool.co.uk/uniform/>

Please remember PE kits are to be worn on the day of PE and we ask that it is the correct kit not a sports kit such as a football kit. We will be doing increased House team competitions and the PE kits will be an important part of this, in addition to simply needing to wear the correct uniform! As a note, teachers will do out the correct days for PE in the final week of the holiday.

Mainly, the purpose of the same uniform for all is to bring us all together as a family, and to remind us all that we are all part of the same school team and it will help settle us all back in as a group more quickly. Thank you in advance for supporting this.

I have waffled enough. Clearly, I have missed you all as well! I wish you all a great remainder of your holiday and I look forward to welcoming you all back on the first of September, which by the way is a Tuesday!

Kind regards, Mr Brown and everyone at Longwell Green.

