



Wallace Fields Infant School & Nursery

Wallace Fields, Ewell, KT17 3AS
0208 394 0647 www.wfis.co.uk
office@wallace-fields-infant.surrey.sch.uk
"High achievement and success with a smile."



14th January 2021

Dear WFIS & Nursery Parents and Carers,

We do very much hope that everyone in your family is staying safe and well. We appreciate that this is (yet another) difficult and anxiety raising time for everyone in our school community. Thank you so much for all the comments and messages of support for the staff and the school over an 'interesting' first week of term! These have been very much appreciated by the whole WFIS & Nursery team who have continued to work tirelessly and creatively to support your children and yourselves as best we can. The purpose of this letter is to give you a short update on the new arrangements in place with regards to remote learning for your child/ren.

Children currently attending school

As you will be aware, last Thursday we opened our 'Ocean Club' provision for children identified as 'vulnerable' and for the children of critical workers. The number of pupils eligible to attend schools in the current national lockdown is much greater than in the lockdown last year. This is because the list of occupations under the government critical worker list and the children who the government identifies as 'vulnerable' has expanded significantly. Nursery provisions like our Shining Stars Nursery have also been directed by the Government to remain open. As a result we currently have 48 per cent of our 253 children on roll in attendance. Following a second round of applications for children where there is one critical worker in the family, we have had to prioritise applications for those in the NHS and Education sectors, in line with Surrey and National Association of Head Teacher (NAHT) guidance. This will take the total number of children at WFIS & Nursery to over 50 per cent of children on roll.

You may be aware from reports in the media that there are many schools across the country in a similar situation to ours with large numbers of children still in attendance. While we whole-heartedly want to support all of the families that the government has identified as needing additional support during the lockdown, we share a similar concern to our professional body, the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT), who are currently pressing the government to be clear about what proportion of pupils they think can be in school while still achieving the aim of significantly reducing the R rate. We will of course update all of our families if there is any further information issued by the Department for Education.

Remote learning

Thank you for your patience as we set up our new remote learning platform. We sincerely hope that a week into remote learning you are getting used to the format and daily timetable. Feedback on the content produced by the teachers and assistant teachers has been really positive and we know that the live individual reading sessions via Zoom have been particularly well received. **Please remember, as we said during the first lockdown, undertake as much or as little of the remote learning as is appropriate for your child and your family circumstances.** We would, however, really appreciate all children joining the live 1:1 reading sessions, **and as a minimum we would ask that you continue to read with your child every day.** In the coming weeks we will substitute an 1:1 reading session with a group activity for the children so they have the opportunity to meet virtually and enjoy time with some of their classmates (further details will be emailed at a later date).

Wallace Fields Infant School & Nursery is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.





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The Department for Education has published guidance to state that children in Key Stage 1 should be receiving around 3 hours of remote learning, both teaching input and independent learning activities to complete, each day (for Reception children it should be less than 3 hours).

- 3 hours a day for Key Stage 1 (years 1 and 2 when pupils are aged between 5 and 7)
- 4 hours a day for KS2 (years 3-6 when children are aged between 7 and 11)
- 5 hours a day for KS3 and KS4 (secondary school up to age 16)

Those hours include both direct teaching and time for pupils to complete tasks or assignments independently.

The 3 hours a day does not imply 3 hours of teaching clips or videos, but also includes the independent work in response to the tasks set out by the teacher. We sincerely hope you will agree that we are providing a comprehensive range of activities each day and throughout the week, and supplementing pre-recorded teaching videos with live 1:1 reading sessions. We know from some of the feedback we have had that many parents appreciate the ability to pause video clips for children to work independently, or to come back to later, and we agree that the approach is appropriate given the young age of our children.

We are very hopeful that your children will continue to develop their learning over this half-term whether they are in school or learning from home.

Technical issues

As ever with IT, we have had a few 'teething troubles' with several parents unable to access some of the resources. Class Dojo is popular with many of you, while some have found it harder to use and so we are uploading all resources on to our 'One Drive'. We are looking at restoring the links posted on ClassDojo to the teaching clips and resources saved on the One Drive. Please bear with us as our IT technician looks at this for us. In the meantime, all the resources continue to be saved in folders for each week on the One Drive.

In order to support you to know which activities to complete each day, teachers are now posting a helpful list of daily tasks in the same ClassDojo daily welcome video.

A couple of parents have mentioned that teaching videos have not loading, are slow to load, or do not restart quickly after being paused. Unfortunately, even for those of you who may have faster broadband connections, poor bandwidth and 'buffering' can be a problem. At the end of the letter is a short guide with some suggestions on how to reduce 'buffering'. One parent we have spoken to has solved the issue by downloading the clips to their computer the evening before so that they are available to watch for their child the following day. This may assist some of you with this problem.

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We want everyone to have the best access they can to our online resources. Therefore, in order to support any WFIS parent experiencing a technical issue with opening links or downloading resources, we have arranged for Chris Webb, our amazing IT technician from our service provider *EduThing*, to be available to support with troubleshooting. If you need this support, please email the office (office@wallace-fields-infant.surrey.sch.uk) with a brief outline of your issue and we will ensure that Chris will endeavour to make contact with you.

Department for Education laptops for schools

You may have read that schools across the country have been allocated laptops for identified children to use at home. While this is a fantastic scheme, unfortunately the government has sadly decided not to include infant aged children in the allocations and so we have not been provided with any to loan out to families.

Free School Meal entitlement

There has been a lot of coverage in the national media about the quality of free school meal support during the national lockdown. As in the previous lockdown, parents and carers entitled to this support will be contacted by Mrs Pasley with information about the voucher system we have in place.


Upcoming INSET days

We have two INSET days planned in the Spring Term. At this point we can confirm that the INSET day on January 29th will go ahead as planned so that we can continue with our plan for staff professional development and training on that day.

We trust that the information in this letter reassures you as parents that we really are "pulling out all the stops" to ensure that the remote learning for our children is the very best that it can possibly be. As always, if you do have any concerns or queries regarding remote learning for your child/ren, do get in contact with the school office in the first instance who will be only too happy to help in any way they can.

Finally please remember to not worry or feel too anxious about the remote learning you are able to provide at home - we do recognise that every family has differing circumstances and there is not a one size fits all approach to learning at home with your child.

With very best wishes,

Jamie Hallums & Nicky Mann

Co-Headteachers

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What is 'buffering' and how to reduce it

Buffering is something that occurs when downloading a certain amount of data before playing a video. Possibly the most common form of buffering occurs when your internet speed is too slow to download the amount of data needed. There are several ways to stop and prevent buffering on your network, such as upgrading your router, reducing background processes, and removing malware from your system.

- **Pause the video for a few minutes.** This allows your streaming video to build a bigger buffer. This allows the video to play longer before it needs to buffer again.
- **Quit all other background programs.** Other background processes and downloads will consume extra resources and bandwidth that could otherwise be attributed toward live streaming. Even if they are running in the background. Quit any games and applications that may be running in the background when streaming videos.
- **Limit the amount of devices connected to your network.** Multiple devices being used on the same internet network will consume that network's bandwidth and cause buffering, especially if your router is unable to support a heavy traffic load. When streaming videos, make sure internet usage is limited across devices. Power off any internet-connected devices that are not needed
- **Restart your router.** Performing a hard reset on your router allows it to re-establish an internet connection. To restart your router, simply unplug it for about 10 seconds and then plug it back in. Allow a few minutes for the router to boot back up and for your streaming device to reconnect to it.
- **Move your wireless router closer to your streaming device.** If you move too far away from your wireless router, your internet connection will start to become unstable. Walls, metal objects, and electric devices can also interfere with your wireless connections. Try moving closer to your wireless router, or place your wireless router in a centralized location where it isn't blocked by as many walls, and other objects.
- **Consider increasing or improving your internet speed.** If you frequently have problems with buffering and a slow internet connection, upgrade your internet router or internet plan with your Internet Service Provider (ISP).
- **Wait until a less busy time.** When lots of people in your area are trying to use the internet all at once, it can slow down your internet speed. This frequently happens during the evening prime-time hours. Try waiting a few hours and resume streaming during a less busy time, or download the files to your computer prior to when you need them.
- **Ensure your operating system is up-to-date.** Whether your streaming from a Windows computer, a mobile phone or tablet, a game console or a smart TV, make sure your system has the latest updates installed.

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