



Wallace Fields Junior School

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Parent Update June 19th 2020

Learning at Home:

Thank you for all those comments that it is a good balance of academic, artistic and creative tasks that has formed a good routine at home – thank you again for your efforts.

The provision has been learning at home (not home schooling as school cannot be replicated at home) and all staff have been busy ensuring learning at home with a balance of maths, English, online platforms such as Spelling Shed and Times tables Rock Stars. The teachers have managed to balance the teaching at school with the online monitoring and with the return of year 6 instructed by the government we now have one teacher maintaining the online checking. This is clarified on this table;

Year Group	Week 1	Week 2	Home based children
3,4,5	Teacher 1 teaching	Teacher 2 teaching	Online daily greeting and Hive games.
3,4,5	Teacher 2 online provision	Teacher 1 online provision	Most tasks are possible offline.
3,4,5	Online submission of tasks checked every two weeks. Parents contacted if children not engaging online or submitting a task per week.		Tasks not marked or formally assessed. General feedback on Google Classroom.
6	Teacher 1 and 2 teaching in school	Teacher 1 and 2 teaching in school	Online daily greeting and Hive games.
6	Online provision monitored by Miss Anderson. Online submission of tasks checked every week. Parents contacted if children not engaging online.		Tasks not marked or formally assessed. General feedback on Google Classroom.

Covid-19 Safe Schooling: I want to make it very clear that school here is nothing like school as it was. The staff are in covering Year 6 and key worker staff and the majority of children are not with their class teacher or friends (though the Year 6 teachers have tried to strike a balance the groups). The children eat, play and work with the same small group to maintain a low risk strategy. Many children are missing their friends and those in school have seen some new faces but not their friends and play is within a set small zone. Lunches are sat apart and the children play within set zones (if it wet the children sit in their classes for lunch).



Transition for the new Year 3: We are currently working with the infant schools to ensure a smooth transition with the newly arriving Year 3s in September 2020. A joint letter is going out to all relevant parents. This has some details on our plans to ensure the happy and calm induction of our new Year 3 pupils arriving in September 2020.

Transition Sessions: We understand that some children are keen to return to school, even though it is very different from what they might expect. We are currently looking at how we can provide transition sessions to find closure on their current year and meet their new teachers. The priority for us lies with Year 5 and we will be sending out details on these plans soon. Staffing is extremely tight and if any covid cases arise in school then all subsequent plans will be shut down. Details will be emailed out to relevant Year groups.

Cessation of Year 6 and Key Worker Provision July 2020: In the light of no further detailed guidance or support on the children's September return, in order to make transition and induction possible for other years we are stopping Year 6 provision on **Thursday 16th July 2020**. The Key Worker provision will stop on **Friday 17th July 2020**. The Year 6 attending school will be doing some special activities in the last week of school to finish the year off and the key worker children will finish at their usual time after lunch on that Friday.

Live Steaming: Firstly, we would like to thank you all for the engagement and enthusiasm we can see on our virtual classrooms. It is lovely to see the children sharing and submitting fantastic work on a daily basis, engaged with all our hive games and Time Tables Rock Stars, and approaching the different activities we set in such a variety of creative ways. We are missing them all very much, so seeing their excellent learning online has been lovely.

We have received a few emails recently regarding video call lessons (or live streaming) and whilst teachers have replied to these individually, we felt it was important to give everyone the same message. Unfortunately, at present, we cannot provide video conferencing / streamed lessons for a number of reasons. **Effective Learning:** The junior children engage well with the online tasks and communicate effectively through Google Classroom as their online hub – contrary to common perception, the junior school classroom cannot be replicated by streamed lessons and although used in secondary schools and private schools (with smaller classes) it is currently not a practical option for us or other local schools.

Safeguarding restrictions: The age range of the children dictates that a responsible adult must be present to supervise throughout a streamed call. **Accessibility:** Some children are not able to access streaming online, thereby excluding them from the activity – it's also a problem if they have access but their parents are using the computers in the house for work at the given times.

Google Classroom: The government guidelines released this week mention the use of the Google Classroom platform – which we have already implemented from back in March, and streaming lessons are only recommended in the guidelines for secondary school.

We are very aware that those parents who have committed themselves to putting part of the day aside to help their child access and engage with the work set online have been doing an amazing job and you have shown that the current system can work extremely well. The comments from the children to their teachers reflects this – along with the projects they are producing and the projects and task they are sending in.

Comparison with other schools: As I have already explained, schools are all different. The majority of schools locally have followed government guidance – as was expected though some have not. Some schools are huge and have many more staff, some have broken the rule of no rotas and made minimal provision for their Year 6 (one day per week), and some schools have the benefit of having a primary cohort with no Year 6 at all. To reaffirm the situation, the government made the statement of returning all children to school without consulting schools and when they realised it was not possible mainly due to number of classrooms (as with us) left the responsibility to the school. Washing their hands of the direction and ignoring feasibility of their plans is not something I have been overly appreciative of and I thank you for not presuming that provision



can be easily switched to fit the needs of individual year groups in our small junior school. A lot of hard work has gone into making the provision work and we have excelled in the setting, checking, interacting and supporting our children and parents. I share parental frustration and still await guidance on many other issues affecting school. The only guidance currently to schools is that we expand our provision "if feasible" and it is not feasible. We are still trying to find ways of ensuring transition and induction sessions for the remaining year groups (before the end of term) and will let you know details if it becomes possible.

Child Socialisation: We do understand that ordinary school life provides a place for children to socialise and learn all those things in the 'hidden curriculum' such as empathy, sharing and general communication. However, during this strange time, the current version of school is focussed on learning and completing their online set tasks, with physical activity each day and outdoor learning. It is nothing close to the idea of school that many imagine.

We have seen lots of children discussing on the Google Classroom about quiz nights and weekly video chats that they have organised with their friends which is a lovely idea - one which we think is extremely important to maintain those social aspects of conversing and seeing their friends. So we hope that those streamed meetings will continue in your homes.

Thank you again for all your support during these challenging times.

Kind regards

Steve Lee
Head Teacher
Wallace Fields Junior School

