

Newsletter Friday 18th September 2020

Message from Mrs Garratt.

We have a number of pupils and staff who have autoimmune diseases or issues with their immunity. Obviously, this is a major concern during these strange times. We are therefore asking parents to keep their children with colds at home to limit the spread of them and to protect our school community. If some of these pupils or staff get low with a cold, they are more susceptible to other viruses. We know that this can be a major inconvenience but we need to protect each other. We are taking no chances at WFS, as we want to keep the whole school and residential open as long as possible.



COVID-19 Testing - as you have probably heard in the media, there is a shortage of COVID-19 tests. You should only get a test if you have symptoms - please click on this link to check <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/> We currently have staff at home waiting to get a test for either themselves or their family and they cannot return to work until they have a test and it's negative. Parents needs to be aware that it is highly likely that we will have to close certain classes or bubbles not because of a COVID-19 outbreak, but because we do not have safe staffing levels.

Face Coverings - some parents are feeling uncomfortable that not all parents are wearing face coverings. I am not going to enforce the wearing of face coverings when you drop or pick your children as I and the rest of the staff are concentrating on the pupils but please be mindful of other people's feelings and if you are not wearing a mask you must socially distance. If we still feel parents are not following these guidelines we may introduce a mandatory face covering wearing on school grounds.

Meet Molly!



The Governors have agreed for the school to have a Well Being dog. So, we welcome Molly, the whippet who was born 8th May 2020. She is still very much a puppy so is only moving around the school and meeting people at the moment and won't be working directly with children until she is bigger and finished her training. Molly lives with me and the policy and risk assessment that relates to Molly is on the website. If you do not want your child to interact with Molly, please let the class team know. All the pupils will be taught how to interact with her as she learns and grows and the importance of washing hands after stroking her.

There are many benefits of having a dog in school and here are just a few of them;

Physical benefits. *Interaction with dogs has been shown to reduce blood pressure, provide physical stimulation and assist with pain management.*

Social benefits. *A dog promotes greater self-esteem and focused interaction with other pupils and teachers.*

Cognitive benefits. *It has been empirically proven that dogs stimulate memory and problem-solving skills.*

Emotional and mental health benefits. *A recent national survey of adolescent mental health found that about 8 to 10 percent of teens ages 13 to 18 have an anxiety disorder. A dog can lift moods in the classroom, often provoking laughter. The dog is also there to offer friendship.*

While dogs have calming effects and reduced stress levels in most pupils, children with disabilities can present a unique challenge. Because of the wide range of intensity, behaviours can be unpredictable.

The classroom can be a stressful and overwhelming environment due to social challenges and peer pressure. Dogs can reduce the effect of this allowing a child with autism to feel more at ease and open to social behaviour. Researchers have found that children with autism are more social when playing with dogs as opposed to toys. New research offers further proof that animals can also have a therapeutic effect.

The kindness and the gentleness of therapy dogs help children with autism simply by being there. The child may not speak or may want to engage in compulsive behaviour and the therapy dog is by his/her side, ready to engage.



BEECH Class News



BEECH Class are enjoying their 'How does your garden grow' topic and have been exploring printing using vegetables this week. Great team work Beech class and no tears with the onions!



If you are entitled to free school meals please make sure we know as we can obtain additional funding for this.

Russell House News

We have some places available for pupils who can access an upstairs bedroom. If you think that you would like to find out more about our weekly boarding unit and prepare your child for independent or assisted living when they are older, please get in touch.

Summer Holiday Club

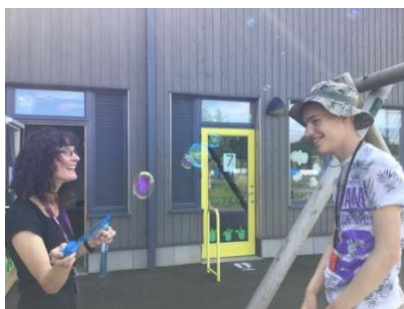
Holiday Club this Summer was certainly very different to anything we've ever done before! Not only did we run it for the entire six weeks but were also restricted to staying in school.

A heartfelt thanks goes out to all staff who worked incredibly hard to keep everyone safe in these uncertain times and went out of their way to ensure that everyone attending club had a great time - you truly are the best!

Also, a big shout-out to all the lovely children/young persons who attended. It was fantastic to see how well and quickly they all adapted to the new routines of more frequent hand-washing /sanitising etc. Seeing those lovely smiles every day made it all the more worthwhile.

Not long now till the next holiday club. All Parents should have received an email with the exact dates by now and we're hoping to see as many of you as possible again in October, where we once again, will make full use of all the amazing resources we have in school and at Russell House.

Thank you all for a lovely summer and continue to stay safe.



Wyre Forest School Term Dates

Academic Year 2020 - 2021

AUTUMN TERM 2020

**PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT DAYS**

Tuesday 1st & Wednesday 2nd September
2020

TERM STARTS

Thursday 3rd September 2020

**PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT DAY**

Friday 16th October 2020

HALF TERM

Monday 26th October 2020
Friday 30th October 2020

**PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT DAY**

Friday 18th December 2020

**PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT DAY**

Monday 4th January 2021

TERM STARTS

Tuesday 5th January 2021

HALF TERM

Monday 15th February 2021
Friday 19th February 2021

TERM ENDS

Thursday 1st April 2021

SUMMER TERM 2021

TERM STARTS

Monday 19th April 2021

HALF TERM

Monday 31st May 2021
Friday 4th June 2021

TERM ENDS

Wednesday 21st July 2021

