MEADOWS FIRST SCHOOL
WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

A Message from Mrs Hewitt

From Monday, the Government have announced that all staff will have to be tested for COVID twice a week. The tests have arrived this week, and we will begin the process on Monday. Staff have to take the test before school. If any results are positive that morning, the bubble may have to be closed immediately, so that staff and children can self-isolate while we work with Public Health England. Obviously, we understand that this does not give you much notice to sort child-care but we hope you understand the situation we are in as a school. You will be notified by text that morning. We must see this as a positive measure to help reduce the spread of the virus.

Well done to everyone who is trying to cope with juggling their jobs alongside supporting your child with home learning. Please remember there is the opportunity to collect a paper copy of work each Monday if you are finding the online work difficult to access due to technological issues, but **this will not be the same as the online work on offer.** Please email your child's class teacher if you need a copy. The children do not need to do both paper and online learning.

Support Even though school is only open to the children of key workers, our staff are still available and willing to support our families. If you have any concerns or issues please do not hesitate to get in touch via class emails or Tapestry. Some parents have contacted me about how to ensure that their children are keeping themselves safe online. Below are some leaflets to support you.

I hope that you all have a lovely weekend, and we can't wait to see you all again back in school. Stay safe.

Improve your internet speed at home: Lourdes IT have sent us a few helpful hints and tips to make the most of your connection:

Check your broadband speed
Especially if you are working on Wi-Fi, where you locate yourself and your device will massively influence your internet speed. When uploading videos or other work - your upload speed is the key indicator.

Use a cable.
Cable is always better for a faster and more stable connection, if you can run a network cable from your router to your device - you will see a big increase in speed and reliability. You can buy network cables of various lengths from Amazon or similar for under £10.

If using Wifi ensure:
You place your router away from home phones, away from anything metal (radiators etc) - and as high up as you can. If your Wifi is being used heavily, a Mesh home Wifi system is the way to go, although expensive. If not - an extender is always useful.

Not using a school/work device?
Give your device a health check - install any Windows Updates or device updates, and try pressing Ctrl - Alt - Delete and clicking the start up tab, and disabling any program you don't need in the background.

Key messages for parents re COVID
book a test if you or your child are displaying symptoms. If someone with symptoms tests negative for coronavirus then they should stay at home until they are recovered from their illness but can safely return thereafter. The only exception to return following a negative test result is where an individual is separately identified as a close contact of a confirmed case, when they will need to self-isolate for 10 days.

If someone with symptoms tests positive, they should follow the guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection and must continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms and then return to school only if they do not have symptoms. The 10-day period starts from the day when they first became ill. Other members of their household should all self-isolate for the full 10 days

Family Learning Courses

Family Learning Courses are **FREE**

Spring 2021

Please check the "*been referred*" box to book on free

Please book onto each course by searching for the course title:

www.worcestershire.gov.uk/courses   or call 01905 728537

Family Learning

Supporting you
with Young Children

Fun Phonics - introduction to phonics in Early Years & ideas to use at home
Starts 4th Feb Thur's 1pm

Magnificent Maths - intro to Early Years maths & making resources to use at home
Starts 4th Feb Thur's 11am

Making & Using Story Sacks - supporting imagination and story telling
Starts 4th Feb Thur's 7pm

Zog's Fire Breathing Adventures - art & craft *Starts 19th Jan Tue's 11am*

Supporting your
Mental Health and Wellbeing

Marvellous Me - supporting you during lockdown
Starts 2nd Feb Tue's 1pm

Art in Your Heart - Colour Therapy
Starts 2nd Feb Tue's 7.30pm

Time for You - Mindfulness activities & offloading
Starts 28th Jan Thur's 7.30pm

Heartful of Art - more complex art for those with current knowledge
Starts 20th Jan Wed's 7pm

Supporting you with older children
in Secondary School

Family Memories COVID-19 Time Capsule - making memory box to remember this time
Starts 2nd Feb Tue's 1pm

Numeracy Skills for parents - refresh old skills and learn new to support your child
Starts 1st Feb Mon's 7pm

English Skills for parents - feel confident to help your child at school by learning skills
starts 4th Feb Thur's 7pm

Book & Cook - affordable cooking ideas
Starts 31st Jan Sat's 4pm

Supporting you with Special
Educational Needs & Disabilities

Nurture course for parents of children with SEND - nurture your own health & wellbeing
Starts 1st Feb Mon's 7pm

Managing Mindfulness - anxiety management & coping with meltdowns - take away techniques
Starts 1st Feb Mon's 7pm

Stimulating Sense for SEND - ideas & activities
Starts 3rd Feb Wed's 7pm

TA strategies & Techniques for supporting SEND children - transitions, managing anxiety, timetables, increasing wellbeing & self-esteem
Starts 3rd Feb Wed's 7pm

REMOTE EDUCATION
10 TOP TIPS FOR CHILDREN

Remote education ensures continuous learning outside the classroom. For students, it's the perfect way to ensure they still get the education they need, despite not being at school. However, it also requires a level of discipline and careful planning. That's why we've created this guide to help pupils understand different aspects of remote education and to support them in ensuring their experience is as safe and secure as it can be.

1. TREAT REMOTE EDUCATION THE SAME AS CLASSROOM LEARNING

Despite being at home, it's important to remember the same rules apply as being in the classroom, particularly in respect of behavior and conduct. Focus on learning and don't get distracted by your surroundings.

2. USE CLASSROOM LANGUAGE

If you are encouraged to communicate through emails and online messages, don't use shorthand text speak and write as though you would speak in class. Remember to be respectful and polite and avoid posting negative comments or spamming the chat.

3. TAKE REGULAR SCREEN BREAKS

Whilst remote education might be an exciting experience to begin with, having prolonged periods of time in front of a screen isn't always healthy. Remember to have regular screen breaks where possible and in your spare time, try to get some fresh air and enjoy other activities away from electronic devices.

4. ALWAYS CONDUCT VIDEO LEARNING IN AN OPEN SPACE AT HOME

To get the best experience from remote education, it's important to create the right environment around you. Try to set up a mock 'classroom desk' at home in an open space so parents can supervise if necessary. Avoid bedrooms as this could be considered inappropriate.

5. ONLY COMMUNICATE THROUGH APPROVED SCHOOL PORTALS AND PLATFORMS

It's important that you send messages and any pictures or images required for class through approved school channels, such as internal learning portals or approved platforms. This will help to keep your personal information safe and secure.

6. STICK TO TEACHER RULES AND GUIDELINES AROUND REMOTE EDUCATION

Your school should issue you with guidance on remote education and the rules to follow. Always maintain classroom behaviour and try to remember that you are in a learning environment and not a social setting.

7. DRESS IN SCHOOL UNIFORM

As part of your learning environment, try to maintain school uniform/dress. This will help as part of replicating classroom learning in the home. Try to avoid wearing anything too casual as this could be deemed inappropriate for school.

8. DON'T SHARE PASSWORDS OR OTHER SENSITIVE INFORMATION

In order to begin your online lessons or to gain access to learning materials, you may be provided with login details and passwords. In the same way you keep your personal details private, always keep these safe and never share them with others.

9. DON'T USE SCHOOL PLATFORMS TO DISCUSS PERSONAL MATTERS.

It's important to keep your school communication channels separate from your own personal communication with friends and family. Don't be tempted to engage in casual discussions or send images, videos or links via official school apps or platforms that aren't associated with your learning.
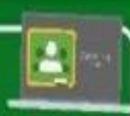
10. LOOK AFTER YOUR MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING.

Remote education ultimately means working alone and missing out on daily social interaction with your friends. If you ever feel frustrated, low or sad, it's important to discuss how you feel with your parents or your teacher. Keeping in touch with friends over the phone or on social media can also help to keep your spirits up.

Children are using smart devices from a much younger age than ever before. It's why it's essential we talk to our children about how to use them safely. There are so many positive benefits to the new technology at our disposal these days - however there are plenty of downsides too. As a parent, it's important you understand these risks and how you can take steps to protect your family against them.

1. PUT YOURSELF IN CONTROL

Make use of the parental control settings available to you. With most devices, you're able to change the settings to control the content your child has access to. This isn't difficult to do, as you'll often find guidance in the instructions that come with the device. By setting a private pin code on certain devices, you can make sure your child can only access it when you allow it.

2. PROTECTING ANDROID DEVICES

You can set up restricted users on Android tablets through a Google account. Open the settings menu (look for a cog icon) and select the 'Users' option. Here you can add a new restricted user. After setting up a password and username, select which applications you want to restrict access to. On an Android smartphone it's similar, but first select 'Parental Controls' in the play store.

3. PROTECTING APPLE DEVICES

For Apple devices, you can simply visit the preferences/settings menu and within 'General' there is an option for 'Restrictions'. Here you can turn off any applications or features on your child's device that you do not want them to have access to.

4. THINK ABOUT ALL YOUR SMART DEVICES

As well as tablets and smartphones, you should think about any device in your home connected to the internet: a games console, a media hub, or a personal computer. In each case you can usually find parental controls in the settings. Think carefully about how much access you want to allow your child, especially when it comes to accessing the internet.

5. MAKE SEARCHING MUCH SAFER

Most search engines, such as Google, Bing or Yahoo, have a 'safe search' setting. You should activate this. Otherwise, it's extremely easy for a seemingly harmless search on the internet to return unexpected and inappropriate results. Depending on the browser you're using, go to the settings and search for 'safe search'. Make sure you save the change so it defaults each time you open the browser. This will seriously reduce the chances of your child being exposed to something they shouldn't be.

NOS National Online Safety®
#WakeUpWednesday

9 Top Tips To Get Smart About children's devices

6. REGULARLY CHECK SOCIAL MEDIA SETTINGS

Before you allow your child to use social media, you should discuss the dangers with them. You should also make sure you're able to access their profile and privacy settings and check them regularly. The companies behind social media platforms often make privacy changes without making it very obvious to the user, such as Facebook's introduction of facial recognition software.

7. DON'T LET PEOPLE SEE WHERE YOU ARE

Location software sounds useful for seeing where your child is, but it also provides the opportunity for others to locate your child too. For safety, it's a good idea to disable location software on all devices or at least turn it off when it's not required. Also, be mindful of specific apps that record running routes or locations where your child might be playing a game. Talk to your child about why these can be dangerous and how to turn the setting on and off as required.

8. WATCH OUT FOR FAKE PROFILES

Sadly, social media presents an enormous opportunity for the likes of paedophiles to set up fake profiles and interact with children. Keep a track of the people your child interacts with on social media and if you do not recognise a user as a friend, consider blocking them.

9. KEEP A CHECK ON SCREEN TIME

Managing how much time we spend on screens is a new challenge for us all. It's critically important when it comes to children, especially younger children who are still developing. It's not just a case of setting arbitrary time limits. Guidelines published by The Royal College of Pediatrics and Child Health suggests it's more important to consider the 'context and content' of what the screen is being used for. Still, it is helpful to put limits on devices using 'Guided Access' functions, which you can find in the settings of certain devices.

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REMOTE EDUCATION
10 TOP TIPS FOR PARENTS

Remote education ensures continuous learning outside the classroom. For parents and carers, remote education isn't always straightforward and there can be a number of factors they need to consider, especially around ensuring their children feel comfortable and are familiar with the whole concept. That's why we've created this guide to help parents and carers support their child in getting the most out of their remote education experience.

1. TAKE AN ACTIVE INTEREST IN YOUR CHILD'S LEARNING

As a parent or carer, your school may have explained how remote education works already, but children may still need help. Take an active interest in their learning and help support them whenever they need a helping hand.

2. MONITOR YOUR CHILD'S COMMUNICATION AND ONLINE ACTIVITY

It's important to remind your child that despite being at home, the same level of behaviour and conduct exists as if they were at school. Encourage them to remain polite, remember their manners and not to post or send any negative comments just because they are behind a computer.

3. ESTABLISH A DAILY SCHEDULE AND ROUTINE

Working from home and trying to learn in a more casual setting that children might associate more with play and a degree of freedom might take a bit of getting used to. Try to stick to a daily routine and use the timetable/schedule that schools have sent home to help children keep on top of their daily learning.

4. ENCOURAGE SCREEN BREAKS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AWAY FROM DEVICES

Remote learning will inevitably require more interaction with computers, laptops and tablets. Teachers will invariably advise on screen breaks; however, it doesn't hurt to keep a check on their time online or encourage them to get some fresh air/exercise.

5. ENSURE YOUR LEARNING DEVICE IS IN PUBLIC SPACE IN THE HOME

It's important to consider where your PC or laptop is placed if live video is being used. Try to keep the background neutral, with no personal information visible and move learning devices out of the bedroom as this could be deemed inappropriate.

6. IMPLEMENT SAFETY CONTROLS AND PRIVACY RESTRICTIONS ON APPS AND SOFTWARE

Dependant on how your school implements remote education, your child may be required to download certain software or apps. Whilst these are likely to be relatively safe to use, like any other new app or platform, parents should still implement safety controls as a precaution.

7. ENSURE YOUR CHILD ONLY USES OFFICIAL SCHOOL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

It's important that all communication with teachers and school staff is directed through approved school channels, whether that be through the school's online portal or the relevant secure messaging site.

8. FAMILIARISE YOURSELF WITH RELEVANT SCHOOL POLICIES

Schools should have a policy on remote education that they can share with parents. Familiarise yourself with this and ensure you know what is expected of teachers and your child during lessons, both online and offline.

9. MAINTAIN FEEDBACK WITH TEACHERS

Engage in communication with teachers where possible, and try to feed back progress and development as well as any helpful suggestions around the learning process. Be transparent but remain professional and only use official channels to communicate.

10. MONITOR YOUR CHILD'S WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH

Remote education will likely mean that your child won't get the same level of social interaction and might not see their friends for a while. Keep a check on their wellbeing and try to encourage them to get out as much as they can. Whilst learning from home might seem fun and exciting to start to with, missing out on seeing their friends every day might take its toll.

HM Government

NHS

Got any coronavirus symptoms?

Isolate and book a test.

Use the NHS COVID-19 app or go to gov.uk/coronavirus

High temperature

New continuous cough

Change/loss of smell/taste

STAY ALERT
▼
CONTROL THE VIRUS
▼
SAVE LIVES