

28th May 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

We have come to the end of a very busy and successful half-term and I would like to thank everyone involved in the Western community for the contribution they have made in so many different ways. Please find a range of information below regarding current developments.

Track and Trace

As we have done in previous holidays, the SLT will continue to monitor the Covid email address until 12.00 midday on Wednesday next week. If your child tests positive for Covid before this time, please inform school by contacting covid@wes.rkit.co.uk **Please note that this is a new email address – the old one no longer functions.** We will need to know your child's name and class and the day their symptoms first started, or the day of the positive test if they are asymptomatic. We will then be able to establish close contacts at school and inform those parents and colleagues who will need to self-isolate. I sincerely hope this will not happen and that everyone can enjoy the half-term holiday. If your child receives a positive test result after midday on Wednesday, there is no need to contact school on this email address. However, your household will need to self-isolate and you will need to contact school before 8th June to advise them that your child will not be attending for the first few days until their isolation period has ended.

Post-Covid Western

I sincerely hope I am not being too optimistic with this heading but I am sure that we are edging closer to a time when current restrictions/practices are no longer required in school. Having said that, the pandemic has changed practices in virtually every industry and, as is often the case when change is forced upon us, some of these practices often turn out to be a change for the better. One example of this is virtual parents' evenings for which we received very positive feedback from parents and staff. If we continued with this format, I would ensure that times were built into the school year where parents/carers could pay informal visits to their child's classroom, as I recall this is something many parents said they would miss.

A further example is start and finish times. Now, don't worry, I don't intend to keep the system we have now which stretches out over 40 minutes. However, given the congestion which occurs at the end of the school day on the side playground, I am wondering if a 10-minute gap between the times when Early Years/KS1 start and finish and the start and finish times for KS2 would alleviate this and make, particularly the end of the day, a calmer and safer time for all concerned. We would of course make provision for those parents who have children in both parts of the school.

To this end, we have released a very brief survey which we would encourage all parents to complete. You can find the survey by clicking on the link below.

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=xGL72LHrcE2snrs6Z-u4wU7IHoiZKHxOlv8R2Uswk99UQjNLS1NBTjNKSFlaUzU4MVk2RTBQQjQyVS4u>

Twitter

Many of you will be aware that the school has its own Twitter account which we use to access valuable professional development resources for staff, to exchange ideas with other schools but also to promote our wonderful school by posting descriptions, pictures and videos of some of the exciting, educational activities our children are involved in each day. I am not a great user of Twitter myself but, on a weekly basis, I will scroll through, to like and retweet posts from Western. I also follow other local schools and I love looking at posts from Coppice Valley school because they are always full of pictures of children with excited and animated faces engaged in some great learning activities. By contrast, posts from our school are full of pictures of pupils engaged in similarly exciting and engaging activities, but with their faces obscured by sunflowers!

The reason for this is because a significant number of parents/carers have yet to visit the permissions page on Arbor and make a decision around permissions for social media (note that the school only uses Twitter). Due to this, it is very difficult for staff to know which of their pupils are allowed to have their picture posted on Twitter and take the sensible precaution of obscuring their faces. I am of course aware that many parents/carers would prefer for pictures of their children not to appear on Twitter (please note that we don't use names without the express verbal permission of parents) and I do respect this. However, if you haven't yet made your choice on the Arbor permissions page, I would encourage you to do so and hopefully this will make it easier for staff to feel more confident in how they post.

Air Quality

I am sure you will all have noticed the increased traffic on Cold Bath Road in recent weeks, following the closure of some other roads nearby. As well as the increased collision risk, this also brings with it added pollution and, when I stand outside school each morning and afternoon, I can smell and taste the fumes. After half term we will be installing an air quality monitor which will measure the concentration of several gases in the environment. The device will download the data onto a computer and we will also be able to link it directly with our website so parents can see the results. Ultimately, I would like to use the data to put pressure on the Council to take action to reduce traffic, particularly at key times during the school day.

Kids Club

Just to remind parents of children in KS2 who have been accessing before and after-school care this half-term that, unfortunately, we will not be able to provide this after the half-term holiday. We hope to be able to inform parents very soon of the outcome of our viability study around potentially offering this provision from September.



Training Day

And finally, just a reminder that Monday 7th June is a staff training day – school will reopen for pupils on Tuesday 8th June.

I hope that everyone enjoys a sunny and restful weekend and that all our pupils, staff (and hopefully some parents!) have a wonderful half-term.

With kind regards,

Tim Broad

Headteacher

