

# Wednesday Whistle



I open this edition of the Wednesday Whistle by expressing how strange I am finding the experience of working from home on certain days. Call me old fashioned but I'm struggling with not meeting face to face!

In contrast to my 'itch' regarding home working, WeST staff have risen magnificently to the challenge of providing care in a somewhat foreign manner. Colleagues have been calm and reassuring at all times – fully understanding our crucial role in this national crisis.

It was only this time last week that heard that all our schools were closing, and Monday this week that our entire country was placed into a sense of 'lockdown' – whilst our schools reopened to provide care for critical key workers.

Somehow, together, we have navigated a path such that those children who need care are not only benefitting from it but with such a degree of empathy and positivity.

Above all, we have all taken onboard the key government message of staying safe and doing all we can to prevent further spread of the virus. We have the safety and welfare of our staff and children as our utmost concern.

Stage 1 of Edu-care is halfway through and I have been heartened by the activities offered to our young people and by the way you have introduced 'social distancing' as a matter of course.

The number of children attending WeST 'Educare' has fallen sharply since day one but seems to have stabilised today. I think this is good as it suggests that families are really taking heed of the government's strong advice.

Given that the numbers seem to have settled, we are now able to plan staff rotas with a greater degree of accuracy as to how many staff are required at any one time. I stress here that in our decision making we need to use as few staff as possible and thus ensure that as many staff as possible are safe, not adding to the risk of spreading

infection, and are working from home. Having spoken to some of you it appears that the 'call' on some staff is extremely limited – this is terrific news.

As we approach Easter we have pulled together to provide 'Edu-care' over the Easter break. In doing so we embark on Stage 2 and adopt a hub approach. We have landed at the Hub structure below to deliver provision over the Easter period:

- Plymstock Hub: Hosted at Dunstone Primary School
  - ⇒ Provision for Dunstone, Wembury, Oreston, Coombe Dean and Plymstock School
  - ⇒ Sherford Vale will also remain open to provide local capacity
- Plympton Hub: Hosted at Chaddlewood Primary School
  - ⇒ Provision for Chaddlewood, Plympton St Maurice, Glen Park, Woodford and Hele's.
  - ⇒ Boringdon will also remain open to provide additional local capacity for Boringdon children.
- Ivybridge Hub: Two centres, Ivybridge Community College and Stowford School.
  - ⇒ Provision for ICC, Stowford and Woodlands park
- South Hams Hub: Hosted at Yealmpton Primary School
  - ⇒ Provision for Yealmpton and Holbeton
- Callington Hub: Hosted at Callington Community College
  - ⇒ Provision for CCC
- Ashburton Hub: Hosted at Ashburton Primary School
  - ⇒ Provision for Ashburton Primary School, The Atrium, Buckfastleigh Primary and SDCC

Thank you for everything that you are all doing to support our local communities during these unprecedented times.

Take care and stay safe

Rob Haring

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## Saltram Meadow construction continues!



Our school doors are currently closed to the majority of our students and staff. 'Business as usual' already seems to be a thing of the past. However, we are delighted to share with you that business continues on our new school site for Dunstone Primary.

We are now able to share with you photos of the Saltram Meadow construction works. As you can see the steel frame for the structure is now going up. There has been a lot of work going on (both construction and planning wise) behind the scenes, however assembly of the steel frame definitely marks a key point in the whole progress. You can also see that work for the 3G pitch has commenced and is progressing well – the foundation is in and the sand layer is now being laid.

Assuming all goes to plan, in less than a year this steel frame will be a fully operational school. Several construction projects have stopped across the country, but for the meantime this project continues. Watch this space for further updates...





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## FUN IDEAS FOR LEARNING AT HOME



**Today's Challenge**  
**Make a blanket fort**  
**And read your**  
**favourite book in it!**

This week's fun idea comes from Dunstone Primary School.

Dunstone Primary's students have been combining creativity and a love for literature by completing the challenge 'Make a blanket fort and read your favourite book in it'.

Well done to all the students who took on the challenge. We are really happy to share your wonderful forts.

Keep up the creative work!



### DARTMOOR ZOO

#### FACEBOOK LIVE ANIMAL TALK

MONDAY—FRIDAY 2PM

Tune in to listen to an informative and engaging video talk about zoo animals.

A unique opportunity to ask the zoo keeper your animal questions!

Visit the Facebook page 'Dartmoor Zoological Park' to join in.



### Do you have an exciting idea for learning at home?

To share your idea in the Wednesday Whistle please e-mail [admin@westst.org.uk](mailto:admin@westst.org.uk) with your ideas and photographs!

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## GUIDANCE FOR STAFF (25th March 2020)

The situation continues to evolve daily and this latest guidance updates and replaces that previously issued on 20th March.

### SOURCES OF GUIDANCE & SUPPORT:

It is natural that you will continue to feel anxious about the developing situation. Please do be mindful and stay focused on what is within your control and the difference you can make. It is important to take care of yourself and support each other. Please try and avoid speculation to reduce anxiety and stick to official sources of information.

If you are concerned or worried, you of course have access to your line manager and the HR Team. It might also be useful to access the free confidential telephone counselling service; available to staff, governors and their family members.

Staff updates will continue to be posted in the Whistle and will be available on the WeST websites staff portal.

As a reminder, as the situation develops the most up to date information and guidance can be accessed directly by this government webpage:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>

Check the latest NHS advice here on when employees should stay at home, how long for and social distancing:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

In addition, there is specific guidance on staying at home here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-advice/>

Trust policies and guidance particularly relevant to the situation include:

**Managing Sickness Policy and Procedure:** All aspects of this policy continue to apply to those who are unwell

with the exception that all instances of sickness absence recorded as a result of Covid-19 will be counted separately and disregarded in respect of triggers and contractual sick pay entitlement, and there will be no detriment as a result of any absence linked to the Covid-19 pandemic. It will be particularly important to participate in return to work discussions/meetings, to properly consider the appropriateness of, and fitness for, a return to work.

**Dignity at Work Policy and Procedure:** Please be mindful to the possibility of inappropriate behaviour towards others at work for any reasons connected with the outbreak of the virus.

**Occasional Homeworking Guidance (NEW):** This guidance has been developed specifically to support schools in considering homeworking parameters.

### REPORTING, RECORDING AND ABSENCE CERTIFICATION:

It is extremely challenging, but we are doing our best to track and record absence. We would therefore ask that you continue to follow your school's local notification arrangements for the reporting of absence and fitness to return to work. We will undoubtedly at some point be required to report on the impact of Covid-19 on our workforce.

**The latest guidance is that staff should be available for work unless they are:**

- Unwell with Covid-19 (or any other illness)
- Displaying symptoms of the coronavirus and have therefore self-isolated in accordance with NHS/ government guidance
- Been advised to self-isolate and follow social distancing guidance because:
  - ⇒ They are in an increased risk group, or they have a serious underlying health condition \*, or
  - ⇒ They live with and/or have caring responsibilities for people in either of these two groups \*

\*where possible, staff in these groups should work from home.

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If you are not able to work from home, you will be recorded as absent. This will allow us, in future, to quantify the number of people absent as a result of sickness or the requirement to follow government/national guidance on not attending work.

**NOTE:** this will be used for the purposes of capturing absence as a result of the virus, it will not be counted as part of any sickness absence triggers or for contractual sick pay purposes and full pay will continue. No member of staff will be at a detriment as a result of absence for reasons related to Covid-19.

For those who are absent due to COVID-19 symptoms or related factors, further details are now available on accessing the Isolation Notes which will replace the traditional Statement of Fitness to Work certificates (GP Notes) for the specific purposes of COVID-19 related sickness absences. In these circumstances, you will need to access the online portal at <https://111.nhs.uk/isolation-note/>

The Isolation Note should be submitted to your school at the earliest opportunity using locally agreed arrangements. We appreciate this may not be immediately possible but would ask that all efforts are made to ensure employment records, including payroll, are updated to reflect absence for this period.

All remaining staff will be considered fit and available to work at home (where this is possible) and/or to be included in staff rotas to support the need to provide 'Edu-care' and normal pay will of course continue. If you are working at home, please familiarise yourself with the **Trust's Occasional Homeworking Guidance** and the associated **Risk Assessment/Checklist**.

As stated previously, staff may bring their own children into your school for 'Edu-care' provided the key stage is being catered for on your site. You may also use any other WeST school that caters for the appropriate key stage.

## CASUAL STAFF:

If you are engaged in a casual capacity, continuing to work and fall ill, you should follow the local arrangement

for reporting sickness absence so that this can be processed in accordance with any contractual and statutory sickness pay entitlements.



If you have a clear pre-planned schedule of work and that work is no longer available, your manager may seek to deploy you to other reasonable alternative duties.

If your manager is unable to do this your normal pay will continue in accordance with planned work patterns. This will need to be reviewed on a month by month basis with your manager. You must inform your manager immediately if you take up alternative work outside of the Trust which coincides with your normal working pattern.

## AGENCY WORKERS:

In the event of a school closure, whether an agency worker will remain entitled to be paid will depend first on whether they are entitled to be paid under the **Agency Worker Regulations 2010** and, also whether there are any contractual obligations with the agency concerned.

Please check with your manager in the first instance, who will be able to access further detailed advice from the HR Team.

If you are uncertain or concerned about any aspect of this information, please contact a member of the HR Team for support and advice. We are currently observing Government guidance on social distancing and working from home, however, the HR inbox at [hr@westst.org.uk](mailto:hr@westst.org.uk) is being monitored and we are happy to call you to discuss any specific queries.

With best wishes

Joss

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## NOTICE BOARD

### Vacancies

The following vacancies are currently being advertised within our organisation:

#### Hele's School

- Finance Officer

<https://www.heles.plymouth.sch.uk/category/vacancies>

#### Oreston

- Class Teacher

<https://www.orestonacademy.com/current-vacancies/>

#### Plymstock School

- Deputy Head—Pastoral
- Deputy Head—Teaching and Learning
- Teacher of Mathematics

<https://plymstockschool.org.uk/vacancies/>

#### Woodlands Park Primary

- Class Teacher

<https://www.woodlandspark.devon.sch.uk/vacancies>

#### Yealmpton Primary School

- Year 4 Teacher—temporary

<https://www.yealmpton-primary.devon.sch.uk/page/?title=Vacancies&pid=107>

### Workout of the Week

#### P.E. with Joe

Joe Wicks, otherwise known as The Body Coach, has gone viral with his YouTube based live PE lessons.



Children across the country have completed these fun workouts, and the best thing is they are 100% free!

Share the link to Joe's YouTube page with staff, parents and the wider community so children can stay active from the safety of home. Live workouts take place every day at 9am.

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLyCLOPd4VxBvQafyve889qVcPxYEjdSTI>

