

Wednesday Whistle



I write these comments during what would have been, under normal circumstances, the Easter break. However, we are now experiencing a whole new 'normal' and you are collectively pulling together to provide 'Edu-care' for vulnerable children and children of key frontline workers doing their bit to address the spread of COVID-19.



We seem to have settled into a pattern of working based around each 'hubs' rota structure. The numbers of children attending has declined but now seems to have stabilised. I thank everyone for their continued commitment and the professionalism they are showing during these difficult times.

It is now becoming apparent that some of our attention will shift from the organisation of Edu-care and its daily delivery to include more of a social care role. Local authorities and RSC's are being tasked by central government to ensure that the care and welfare of our vulnerable children is carefully monitored. We could find ourselves working more closely than ever with our external agency partners in the coming months.

Once again, thank you for all that you are doing. Take care and stay safe.

Best wishes

Rob Haring



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Wellbeing and A Changing World

With both our work environments and work duties evolving rapidly due to the circumstances of

coronavirus (COVID-19), it's important to know it's OK to take a moment to think about yourself and your wellbeing!

During this extraordinary time, many colleagues are working from home or adapting their working routines.

These changes are happening at pace and constantly evolving to meet the challenges of the COVID-19 circumstances. However one thing is clear from the information and advice available so far, it's going to be a while! So we need to think about how we can sustain our wellbeing in these events.

Taking care of your mind as well as your body is important during these changing circumstances. You may feel bored, frustrated or lonely. You may also be low, worried or anxious, or concerned about your finances, your health or those close to you.

It's important to remember that it is OK to feel this way and that everyone reacts differently. This situation is temporary and, for most of us, these difficult feelings will pass. Staying at home may be difficult, but you are helping to protect yourself and others by doing it.

The tips and advice are available online through the One You pages and Every Mind Matters have developed a specific page at: <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/coronavirus-covid-19-staying-at-home-tips/>.

A number of blogs and resource guides are available online from those around the world who are also experiencing the COVID-19 changes. The importance of maintaining both physical and mental wellbeing in these times has also been endorsed by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge lending their support to Every Mind Matters in recognition of proactive approaches to wellbeing to continue feeling well throughout this period of change.

Further support is available from your line manager, HR representatives, or referrals to specialist support if you feel this may be beneficial for you.



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TOP TIPS FOR A GREAT REMOTE MEETING

Covid-19 means that for many of us remote working at home has become the standard for the foreseeable future. Platforms that utilise video conferencing such as Microsoft Teams are rapidly becoming part of our working day allowing us to keep in touch with colleagues and hold remote meetings at a time when effective communication has become more important than ever.

This technology has a positive impact in relieving the feelings of isolation some of us may experience. However, we have all heard the stories about remote meetings going horribly wrong. With the nation on lockdown many of us are increasingly likely to be sharing space with children and pets trying to get our attention and partners who have decided to noisily get on with some DIY projects in the room next door. This all results in the potential for interruptions that do not tend to happen at face to face meetings. That is even before we get onto the odd technical issue or considerations of how we look to the outside world.

To help you deal with some of the pressure this can result in here are our top tips for planning and holding a great remote meeting:

Be prepared – find the right space to minimise potential distractions where possible. Check your appearance on video in advance as this will give you the opportunity to move your device to provide the best lighting and avoid that double chin look. You may want to consider using headphones to avoid distraction from children, pets and partners.

Be comfortable with the technology - ensure the technology is working properly and that you are familiar with it. There is no harm in practicing beforehand. Arrange with your team a remote meeting with the primary aim of ensuring the technology works and everyone can use it. Remember there is no harm in asking

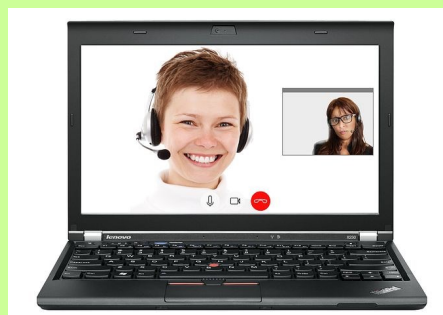
for help if you are unsure how something works. We have all been there.

Be mindful of timing - adjust meeting times so avoid peak WiFi congestion. To reduce band-width usage at peak times of day (9am, 10am, 2pm) it may be better to keep your webcam switched off. Scheduling meetings off the hour, for example at 10.10am, is a good idea as you will miss the peak infrastructure congestion times.

Be engaging – if you need to explain something at a remote meeting that is on your desktop you can opt to share your screen using Microsoft Teams. You remain in control of what you show them and it is a great way of engaging your audience as well as giving them the opportunity to learn something new. A picture can often be more effective way of getting your message across.

Be focused - Keeping these meetings focused can improve productivity. Instead of trying to achieve objectives together online as you go it can be better to have a short initial meeting to decide on next steps, go away, work on tasks and then come back to catch up.

Be social – to ensure everyone remains motivated and engaged leave time for a non-work related chat with your colleagues. Other suggestions for a bit of fun vary from having a low-tech hat competition to a spreadsheet pixel art competition.





WESTCOUNTRY
SCHOOLS TRUST

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NOTICE BOARD

Vacancies

The following vacancies are currently being advertised within our organisation:

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>

Westcountry Schools Trust

- Premises Manager

<https://www.westst.org.uk/news/?pid=7&nid=2>

Workout of the Week

#StayHomeStayActive

The Youth Sport Trust have put together a selection of resources to help parents keep their children active at home. If



you use them, why not upload your pictures and videos to social media with the #StayHomeStayActive to be able to inspire other families to do the same.

[CLICK HERE TO GET RESOURCES](#)



MINDFULNESS ACTIVITY

Rainbow Breathing



1. Place your finger at the bottom of the rainbow.
2. Breathe in through your nose and trace the red arc until you reach the top.
3. When you reach the top, begin to exhale through your mouth and continue tracing.
4. Repeat with each color or until you feel calm and grounded.



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