

Wednesday Whistle



We remain in a form of 'lockdown' and know that this is not going to soften for at least three weeks. However, despite the adversity and unprecedented challenge, our community spirit is strong and we exhibit a buoyant and supportive culture across various branches of everyday life.

Our schools appear to have formed a new rhythm of working that is now becoming the temporary norm. We continue, through the WeST hub structure, to do our best to provide Edu-care whilst protecting as many staff as possible by allowing them to work from home. Our established rota patterns are thoughtful, protect the most vulnerable, support families but still enable a positive staffing ratio at each hub.

Attendance at WeST Edu-care has risen significantly this week as we now see more than 160 children in school each day.

In trying to protect staff and minimise the risk of spreading infection we are trying to maintain the hub structure through the coming weeks.

Through this very unusual period it is important that we maintain links with other schools, trusts, and Local Authorities such that we fight corona virus together and work to ensure no school feels isolated.

Through liaison with our external agency partners we know that some families are finding the current situation extremely challenging and that more children are becoming vulnerable for one reason or another.

Despite recent media publications we have been assured that schools are not close to reopening. The Secretary of State has been clear that, for schools to reopen and function as close to normal, five conditions need to be met.

- First, we must protect the NHS's ability to cope and be sure that it can continue to provide critical care and specialist treatment right across the whole of the UK.
- Second, we need to see the daily death rates from coronavirus coming down.
- Third, we need to have reliable data that shows the rate of infection is decreasing to manageable levels.
- Fourth, we need to be confident that testing capacity and personal protective equipment (PPE) are being managed, with supply able to meet not just today's demand, but future demand.
- And, fifth, and perhaps most crucially, we need to be confident any changes we do make will not risk a second peak of infections.

We also know that we will be given advance notice of when the time is right to reopen. Through my involvement in several conference calls it has been clear that there is NO expectation that these conditions will be met before the end of May. There is, however, a chance of a partial opening in early June following the traditional May half term break.

Stay safe.

With best wishes,
Rob



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Exiting the European Union



As you may be aware, the UK left the EU on 31 January 2020 and the

UK is now in a transition period (which is also known as the implementation period) until 31 December 2020. During this period, the UK will continue to follow all of the EU's rules and its trading relationship will remain the same.

It's important that our UK-based EU employees are aware of the process of making applications for the government's EU Settlement Scheme in order that they are enabled (as EU citizens) to get the immigration status they need.

If you are an EU citizen, you and your family members need to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme to continue living in the UK. The EU Settlement Scheme allows you and your family members to get the immigration status you will need to continue to live, work and study in the UK and you will continue to be eligible for:

- public services, such as healthcare and schools
- public funds and pensions
- British citizenship, if you want to apply and meet the requirements

Employees who are EU citizens may wish to take the opportunity to confirm their status ahead of the June 2021 deadline – the online systems are expected to be overwhelmed with applications in the transition period so early action is recommended. A summary of

key points and comprehensive advice and guidance on why and how to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme is available via the following links:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eu-settlement-scheme-factsheet/eu-settlement-scheme-factsheet>
<https://www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families>

In the meantime, if you have any questions or concerns please do bring these to the attention of your senior leaders, or contact the HR team directly, so that we can ensure we provide the support you need.

Many thanks
The HR Team



A big, colourful hello from the Yealmpton Team to their school community— a brilliant way to stay connected!

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HR Update

- **Microsoft Teams** – We are all developing our ways of working and I think most of us have now experienced to differing extents the benefits of using Microsoft Teams in keeping connected. The HR Team have pulled together a general guidance document (attached) which covers many of the questions we've been fielding and I hope this proves useful.
- **Pension Automatic Re-enrolment** – You may remember a previous Wednesday Whistle article which highlighted that we have a window within which we are required to automatically re-rolle staff who have opted out of our pension schemes. We had settled on 1st April 2020 as our re-enrolment date, but, not surprisingly, recent events overtook this and reenrolment did not occur. However, we have now agreed with our three payroll providers to reset the date to 1st May 2020. Any affected staff will be automatically re-enrolled as part of the May pay-run. Those affected will be notified to us following closure of that pay-run (after 20th May) and will then be contacted on how to opt out should they wish. Full details can be found here <https://www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/en/business-advisers/automatic-enrolment-guide-for-business-advisers/re-enrolment>
- **Revised Proposed NJC Pay Award for Support Staff** – On Thursday last week the National Employers made a final pay offer to the unions representing the NJC workforce. The Headline figure is an improved 2.75% applicable from 1st April 2020, plus an additional one day's leave which would increase the minimum entitlement from 21 to 22 days per year (plus public holidays). The National Employers 'hope that the unions accept this final offer so that employees, who are providing such critical support to their communities during this national emergency, can receive a well-deserved pay rise as soon as practicable'. We were further updated on Friday that the

unions have responded asking for further consideration, and National Employers will be reviewing the union's response before replying. We don't have any further information at present on the detail but will keep you posted as matters become clearer. In the meantime the Trust is committed to adopting the NJC pay award once agreed and finalised and any award will be backdated to 1st April 2020. Further updates will follow as they become available.

- **All Year Round NJC Staff - Annual Leave and Long Service Guidance** –New government regulations came into effect on 27 March 2020 meaning that in any leave year where it is not reasonably practicable for a worker to take leave as a result of the effects of coronavirus (including on the worker, the employer or the wider economy or society), the worker can carry forward up to four weeks' leave into the next two leave years. Whilst this exception is available to all industries we would not ordinarily expect it to apply to WeST staff. This is because the key driver of the regulations is to ease the requirements on business to ensure that workers take statutory amount of annual leave in any one year so that industries, such as food and healthcare, will not be short-staffed at a time when granting annual leave would impact on their ability to provide essential key services. The key workers in these particular industries will be able to continue working in the national effort against the coronavirus without losing out on annual leave entitlement. For WeST staff, there should be adequate flexibility within our interim staffing arrangements to allow for the taking of annual leave as normal now and for the remainder of the leave year, and we would not expect you to be unable to take your annual leave entitlement as a result of work commitments over the period 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021.

Thanks

HR Team



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NOTICE BOARD

Vacancies

The following vacancies are currently being advertised within our organisation:

Chaddlewood Primary School

- Site Caretaker
- 2 x Cleaners

https://www.chaddlewood-primary.plymouth.sch.uk/web-pre-sent_vacancies_and_application_forms/45730

Dunstone Primary School

- Headteacher (internal recruitment)

Please e-mail admin@westst.org.uk for a recruitment pack

Ivybridge Community College

- Teacher of English (maternity cover)
- Teacher of Mathematics (maternity cover)

<https://www.ivybridge.devon.sch.uk/news/?pid=9&nid=3>

Plymstock School

- Head of Performing Arts

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

Woodlands Park Primary

- Class Teacher

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

Workout of the Week

Go Noodle

Have a look at these free videos and activities that encourage

physical activity anywhere! With children being at home



now, this is the perfect tool to get a physical activity break into the day for your little ones!

[Click here to explore](#)



Discounts for all colleagues

Savings for Education Staff!

All WeST colleagues are eligible to sign up for FREE to the Discounts For Teachers service online to get access to hundreds of exclusive discounts with online retailers.

They have a number of exclusive offers running in recognition of the current circumstances and to reward key workers. Please share with all colleagues to access this fantastic opportunity.

Sign up online at: <https://www.discountsforteachers.co.uk/>

