

# Wednesday Whistle

**"How society treats its most vulnerable  
is always the measure of its humanity"**

Matthew Rycroft

Welcome to this edition of the Wednesday Whistle.

I start by again celebrating the strength of our collective spirit and determination to 'do the right thing' through these uncertain times.

We are pulling together to support each other and the young people in our care. I know from all of the different activities that I hear about that colleagues are working innovatively and adjusting to the 'new normal' of working from home where possible. There has been a huge team effort as we have adapted our working patterns. I know that all three strands of activity require careful thought and are time consuming.

Many of you are playing a vital role by keeping in regular contact through phone calls and email with our vulnerable children. Others are planning, preparing and delivering e-learning activities to ensure that our children remain engaged with their learning journey. Thirdly, there are also those of you on the 'rota' providing face to face care for our children in school each day. I also recognise the considerable support team who are working industriously in the background to enable and assist the three strands of our work. It is a colossal team effort.

Since so much activity is now undertaken remotely it is easy to forget how much thought, effort and hard work is being committed to help our children through these challenging times. I take this opportunity to acknowledge, celebrate and thank you for all that you are doing.

However, it is now becoming increasingly clear that our current mode of working is going to continue for some time. Whilst there is a national discussion of when schools can partially reopen there are five conditions that need to be met and some debate as to when these will be satisfied. Although the date of Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June has been mentioned for partial reopening through the various media channels, I continue to hear that this is becoming increasingly unlikely. As such it is vital that we 'keep on keeping on' and support our children through these unprecedented times.

The DfE has announced a scheme to provide laptops for our most vulnerable children with a particular focus on those in current Year 10. WeST are expecting 93 devices and Suzie Winter and Marcus Pasmore are liaising with schools as to how these should best be allocated and distributed.

The number of children attending WeST Edu-care each week continues to rise. To meet this increase in demand we are now opening more school sites to provide additional capacity and support social distancing. Oreston Community Academy opened on Monday and today sees Plymstock School and Coombe Dean School opening to provide Edu-care. We are also planning to open Woodlands Park Primary School on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May.

I close by wholeheartedly thanking you for all that you are doing for the children in the WeST community.

Take care and stay safe.

Best wishes,

Rob





WESTCOUNTRY  
SCHOOLS TRUST

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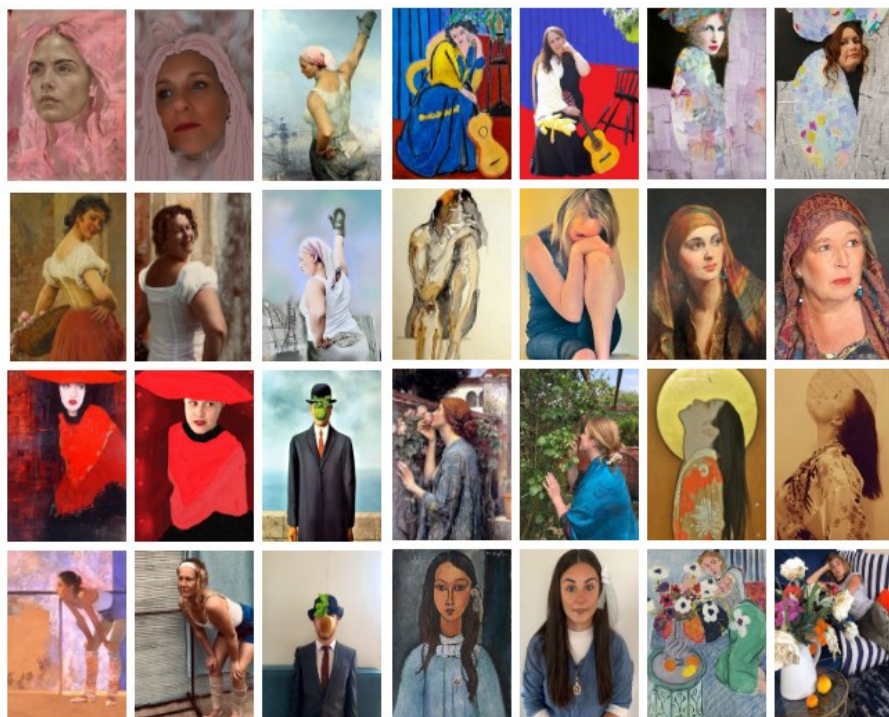
## Construction continues at Saltram Meadow

Whilst most construction sites are closed at the present, it is with great pleasure that we are able to say that construction of the new build at Saltram Meadow is, in part, still in progress. The build contractor is continuing to undertake works whilst ensuring to adhere to social distancing measures and keeping workers safe.

Although progress is much slower than would be the case in normal times, big progress has still been made. The steel frame is now complete, scaffold is being erected ready to install the roof, the 3G pitch has been laid and the fence has been installed along with the path from the school to the pitch.

Assuming works can continue, the contractor is hoping that the building will be enclosed by the end of May. Unfortunately it is not possible at this time to agree a handover date as we do not know how long the restrictions will remain in place. However, the build contractor is proving that in some cases it is possible to continue with construction works as long as the right restrictions are in place.

(More photos attached to e-mail)



To maintain well-being and creativity, teaching staff at Wembury Primary School were set an artistic challenge!



Each were sent a different portrait/ painting that they had to recreate and then photograph. The results are pretty amazing! We've now set a challenge for pupils and their families to recreate a scene or still life, and our TAs are already in the process of a different challenge. We're looking forward to all the results; it's been a great way of maintaining additional fun in these strange times, especially when we can't be together.



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## Arena Launches the Arena PE and Outdoor learning at home channel

As we are about to enter another week of home learning for the majority of our pupils we wanted to make you aware of our latest venture as a team.

In response to the current situation we find ourselves in we have set up the Arena PE and Outdoor learning at home channel to support children, parents and teachers with home learning. We hope to inspire young people to take part in PE, physical activity and wild tribe outdoor learning sessions. We hope the resource will add value to all those who are involved in the delivery of learning at home.

All the sessions have been filmed while we have been in lock down with resources we have had available to us. One thing that is consistent in all our video clips is our passion and commitment to support our children, teachers and parents at this time.

We will continue to add videos in PE, physical activity and Outdoor learning on a weekly basis and we hope you will subscribe to the channel and encourage your children to become involved in taking part in the activities on a regular basis.

Stay safe and we hope you have as much fun taking part as we have had in filming them. [Click here to access the channel.](#)

Many thanks, Arena Team

## iTrent Update

For those who are based at the following schools, your P60 has now been attached to your iTrent self-service record:

- Coombe Dean School
- Heles School
- Holbeton Primary School
- Ivybridge Community College
- Plymstock School
- Sherford Vale School
- Stowford School
- Wembury Primary School
- Woodlands Park Primary School
- Yealmlpton Primary School

To access your P60 please log in to your iTrent account – [please click here to access iTrent self-service](#). If you are having trouble logging on, please contact HR One of Devon County Council on 01392 383000.

Once logged in, please select 'Pay and Benefits' along the toolbar at the top. There is now a new section called 'P60' and you are able to download this document from here. This is now a separate document to your April pay slip like it has been in previous years.

Please ensure that you download/print/keep a copy safe for any tax credit claims and self-assessment returns.

## HR Matters – Wednesday 13 May 2020 @ 10am

WeST HR will be hosting a virtual HR Matters session in the HR Matters Teams channel for 1 hour on Wednesday 13 May at 10am.

A proposed agenda will follow shortly but if there are specific topics that you would like to discuss please get in touch with us by emailing [HR@westst.org.uk](mailto:HR@westst.org.uk) or by phoning us on 07449857998.

Should anyone require support on accessing the HR Matters channel in Teams please contact us using the details above and one of the Team will be able to assist you.

Please could you send your confirmations of attendance to the HR email address or phone number as above as soon as possible.

Thank you,

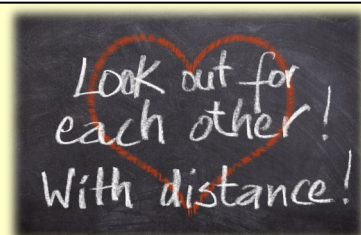
WeST HR



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## Supporting Each Other - Advice and Guidance

In these unprecedented times, most of us will be feeling some form of worry. Our lives suddenly feel uncertain, the world feels different; we feel concerned for ourselves, our loved ones, our friends and our colleagues.



It is inevitable that some of us will be feeling the full weight of our responsibilities as a parent, carer, family member, friend and colleague. With the added pressures of home schooling, health worries, new technology and an overwhelming amount of information to process, it's no wonder some of us may be feeling the strain.

Whether you are working from home, on a rota for Edu-care, self-isolating, shielding, unwell or caring for others. It is more important than ever to look after yourselves and each other.

If you are feeling unusually anxious, don't worry, you are not alone! These are unfamiliar circumstances and it is important that you take steps to help you to feel better.

### Routine

You may be attending work or working from home but there is no escaping it, life is different, the pace is different and it will take time to adjust. Make sure that you maintain a routine. Having a start and end to your working day is essential to maintain your well-being, especially when working from home.

Have a proper lunch break. Stop work, make something nice to eat, and move away from your work area to eat. Try and get outside and get some natural light if you can do so safely.



If you have children at home, this is an additional pressure to juggle. Prioritise what you can and cannot achieve during the day, be realistic and give yourself the freedom to make healthy choices. Stay hydrated and try to build some fun in to your day –laughter is the best medicine, find something that makes you laugh and keep your spirits up each day.

Eventually life will return to normal and we need to maintain a healthy mind in the meantime.

### Stay connected

It can be tempting to shut down and keep your worries to yourself. Find people to talk to who make you feel positive, share your worries, it will help to keep things in perspective. Check in on your family, friends and relatives regularly and share how you feel. Live in the moment and try to limit any negativity if it is having an impact on how you feel.

If you feel ok and are not worried, remember that the people around you may be struggling. Offer your support and comfort, if you get a call from someone who is feeling low, talk to them and signpost them to any sources of support if you feel they need it.

Social media is the source of many scary images and stories, if you are feeling overwhelmed with worry, panic or anxiety, try to limit your exposure. It is easy to catastrophise under these circumstances which will inevitably have a negative impact on your mental health. Try to stay positive, take a break from social media and access updates via reliable sources instead.



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## Exercise



Whether we are working at home or attending work on reduced hours, your movements are likely to be limited by the current social distancing measures. Try to build in some exercise to your day; if you usually go to the gym or swimming you will need to think differently to fit your exercise in. Try completing an online exercise video or join the nation with a 9am Joe Wicks workout via his YouTube channel.

Currently, Government guidance says that we are allowed outdoors for one form of exercise each day. If you can, go out for a walk, jog, run or bike ride. Some sunshine and fresh air each day is proven to have a positive impact on mental health and well-being.

## Worried about your own mental health and well-being?

It is important to recognise changes in your thinking patterns and behaviours. If you feel that you are increasingly struggling with sleep patterns, arguing more with family members, unable to concentrate on reading/TV/work; these could be early signs that you need to make some positive steps to maintain your mental health and well-being.



Follow the techniques above but importantly, find someone who you can speak to about your worries. You may wish to access the DAS telephone counselling service who are available free to all WeST colleagues 24/7. Please see the poster on the next page.

## Worried about the mental health and well-being of a colleague?



Maintain regular communication with colleagues both formally and informally. Check in on each other and recognise changes in their patterns of behaviour. It is very easy to become isolated under the current social distancing arrangements so regular communication with each other is essential.

If a colleague seems unusually withdrawn; not replying to emails, not answering calls or not engaging with conversations then it may be an indication that they are struggling.

If you are worried about a colleague, reach out to them. Try a telephone call or, if they are unusually quiet, send them a text or an email to arrange a time to call them. Verbal communication is much better than texts or emails to have an open conversation about feelings. On the call ask them how they are, try to get them to answer the question honestly and tell them that you are concerned. Seek advice and support yourself, especially if they say something concerning during your call. If you are concerned, please bring this to the attention of your line manager so that the situation can be monitored.

## Critical illness and bereavement

Unfortunately, given the nature of the COVID 19 pandemic, it is possible that our school communities and colleagues may be affected by critical illness or bereavement.

A toolkit has been developed which will be circulated soon for line managers and senior leaders, please read and understand this key information. Be kind to each other and reach out for support where it's needed.



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## Help and Support Available Through WeST

All staff and their families have access to the DAS telephone counselling service, please see the poster below.

You may also wish to liaise with your line manager / senior leaders to explore local support too.

Education support network have a free telephone service for education staff: <https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/helping-you/telephone-support-counselling>

The following online resources may also be of interest:

<https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/media/1960/coronavirus-mental-health-and-wellbeing-resources.pdf>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/looking-after-your-mental-health-during-coronavirus-outbreak>

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>



**DAS**

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## Problems at home or at work?

### Difficult to discuss with family or friends?

As an employee or volunteer of Zurich Municipal policyholder you and your family are entitled to use a free, confidential telephone counselling service provided by DAS\*.

If you would like to speak to a counsellor who will listen and try to help you clarify your difficulty, explore choices or provide support please call us.

### The service

- Highly experienced and professionally trained counsellors.
- All calls are handled in the strictest confidence.
- No limit to number of calls you or your family can make
- Available 24hours a day.
- Expertise if further assistance is required.

# 0117 934 2121

Free • 24 hour • confidential telephone counselling service

DAS are the UK's leading specialists in legal expenses and helpline services

DAS4411/2008

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## NOTICE BOARD

### Vacancies

The following vacancies are currently being advertised within our organisation:

#### Boringdon Primary School

- SENCO
- KS2 Teacher (maternity cover)

[https://boringdon-pri.eschools.co.uk/web/job\\_vacancies/399137/cHJldmld3x8MjAyMC0wNC0yNyAxMjoxMjo1Mg%3D%3D](https://boringdon-pri.eschools.co.uk/web/job_vacancies/399137/cHJldmld3x8MjAyMC0wNC0yNyAxMjoxMjo1Mg%3D%3D)

#### Buckfastleigh Primary School

- KS2 Teacher

<https://www.buckfastleigh.devon.sch.uk/page/?title=Vacancies&pid=77>

#### Callington CC

- Specialist catch up teacher for English and Maths
- Head of Communications: Curriculum Leader for English and MFL
- Assistant SendCo

<https://www.callingtoncc.net/news/?pid=3&nid=3>

#### Chaddlewood Primary School

- Site Caretaker
- 2 x Cleaners

[https://www.chaddlewood-primary.plymouth.sch.uk/web/present\\_vacancies\\_and\\_application\\_forms/45730](https://www.chaddlewood-primary.plymouth.sch.uk/web/present_vacancies_and_application_forms/45730)

#### Ivybridge Community College

- Teacher of English (maternity cover)
- Teacher of Mathematics (maternity cover)
- Teacher of Computer Science and ICT

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

### Workout of the Week

#### Mindfulness



Throughout this time, it is going to be important to

look after our well being and mental health.

Don't forget to take some time out for yourself and have a calm ten minutes where you don't look at screens or indulge in the media: [Click here for a mindfulness video](#)

### Testing for Covid-19



Tests are now available for our staff and members of their household who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms and are self-isolating. A test will provide confirmation of whether symptoms are caused by the virus and will enable you to decide when you are well enough to return to work.

Tests can be booked directly via the government's online system here <https://self-referral.test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk/> and guidance on how to do this is provided here [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/881043/covid-19-testing-self-referral-portal-user-guide.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/881043/covid-19-testing-self-referral-portal-user-guide.pdf)

In the first instance we would encourage you to book a test directly if you are able, however, as an employer we can also do this on your behalf if required. Please contact your line manager or the HR Team should you require support to do this.