

Wednesday Whistle



This edition of the Wednesday Whistle reaches you at exactly the half-way point of this term. In short three and a half weeks to go!

We are now seeing a greater number of children in our schools, both primary and secondary, as parents and the wider community have confidence in our approach.

I once again thank everyone who is playing a role in how we record and report each days attendance. I know how complex and time consuming these processes are, but it is important that we get it right! We are now seeing over 400 children in 'Educare' on a daily basis and our overall return rate for those that are eligible is far stronger than the national average.

The government has now shared how it is planning to further relax the constraints of 'Lockdown'. Whilst there is much talk of 1m or 2m we are going to maintain our existing approach until the end of term on Friday 17th July. We have collectively done well in keeping safe, building confidence, and reducing the spread of infection. We now have approximately 1000 children in our schools each day and we have not yet had a confirmed case of COVID-19. It is for these reasons that we will stick with what is working well!

We do seek, however, to increase the number of children in our primary schools where we have the capacity to safely do so. The first step will be, where possible, to increase the amount of days that our Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 children have in school. If schools have the available resource to welcome more children back to school it is highly likely to be those children in Year 5.

We will continue to reach out to our vulnerable children and either encourage them into school or ensure that we keep in regular contact.

I am pleased to confirm that once we do reach Friday 17th July, this is the last day of term and that our schools will be closed to children over the summer holiday. There is no requirement or expectation from the government to provide Educare!

Further good news is that we are seeing new laptops arrive in our schools from three sources. The very first are those supplied by our Local Authorities to our most vulnerable children. The second are those laptops from the DfE for our Year 10 children for whom we believe are eligible. There will be 93 students who receive a DfE laptop and they will have this device until they leave school. The third strand are those that we have procured from Dell as a school trust. I hope that these are quickly distributed to support your work.

My final piece of news for this weeks 'Whistle' is that Beth Alford is leaving her post at the end of August to embark on our Initial Teacher Training programme with Teach South West. So, you will find in a latter page of the 'Whistle' an advertisement for her successor!

Best wishes,

Rob Haring



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Staff Survey

Thank you to everyone who participated in the recent staff pandemic survey! As you may recall from last weeks edition of the Wednesday Whistle, we received a fabulous response rate of 36% and we shared some of the percentages of responses. This week we are pleased to share key themes of the comment questions. 800 individual comments have each been read and considered in compiling the following summary of themes, which have been listed in order of the most to the least mentioned:

Question: Is there any specific training or CPD that would be useful to support you in working through the remainder of this term?

Theme:
IT / Microsoft / Teams Training
Resilience / Wellbeing / Mental Health Training
Virtual Lesson Delivery / Home Learning Delivery / Online Learning Delivery
BSL / Sign Language

Question: Is there anything else you think the Trust or school could realistically be doing to support your work and wellbeing at this time?

Theme:
Improvements to IT / ICT Provision
PPE Provision in School
Provision of a laptop / device
More frequent meetings
Communication
Health / Wellbeing concerns
Concerns for staff childcare plans
Social Distancing
Holiday Provision (for staff to have a break)
Leaving Plans - for staff / for students

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Question: What are the biggest challenges you anticipate you will have in supporting the needs of pupils or other service users (applicable to non-school based staff) over the remainder of this term?

Theme
IT Support / Provision
Wellbeing / Mental Health / Personal Support
Social Distancing / Site Safety / PPE Provision in School
Engaging students
Closing the gap in learning
Communication
Home Learning Delivery
Anxiety of circumstances
Balance / Juggling responsibilities
Supporting students to catch up

The Executive Team are now working with local leadership teams to develop an action plan to ensure continuous improvement and shape the plans for the next phase of education provision. Further information on the action plan and outcomes will be shared in future editions. **Thank you once again for taking the time to contribute and for making the survey a success.**



Latest News on Pay Awards

The trade unions for our support staff (UNISON, GMB and Unite) have entered into national consultations with their members on the final pay offer of 2.75 per cent (made by the national employers side in April). The consultations will be completed in August and we must then await news on the outcome. This means that a conclusion to this year's pay negotiations is unlikely until the end of August at the very earliest (and this assumes that all three unions are able to reach a joint position on whether to accept the offer).

For the teachers' pay award, the proposals will be issued for national consultation at some point in July and will remain open for 8 weeks. This means that the final pay award will likely be laid in statute at some point in September. What we know so far about the proposals for teachers pay can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evidence-to-the-strb-2020-pay-award-for-school-staff>

In either case the Trust will unfortunately not be in a position to process annual staff pay awards until they have been fully agreed and finalised through each respective national process. Please be assured that further news will follow as it becomes available.

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Keeping data safe

Data protection and cyber security will never be glamorous headline grabbing news I'm afraid but while the world is a little bit upside down the IT security systems of organisations across the world are being tested by ever more sophisticated scams and hacks. Cyber crime is estimated to cost companies in the UK £27 billion annually, however the cost to individuals goes beyond the financial impact and in a school the loss of access to data because of an attack is an expense in terms of time, knowledge and reputation.

One of the most frequently tested systems are our emails. The world of emails scams has moved on and the emails announcing inheritance from long lost relatives in sub-Saharan Africa have been replaced by focused attacks that look very real and maybe harder to spot. Scammers now employ a range of "phishing" techniques and over the next few weeks we are going to take a closer look at a few so that you are able to recognise and hopefully not get caught out.

Deceptive phishing is by far the most common type of phishing scam. In this type of ploy, fraudsters impersonate a legitimate company in an attempt to steal people's personal data or login credentials. Those emails frequently use threats and a sense of urgency to scare users into doing what the attackers want.

As an example, PayPal scammers could send out an attack email that instructs recipients to click on a link in order to rectify a discrepancy with their account. In actuality, the link redirects to a fake PayPal login page that collects a victim's login credentials and sends them to the attackers.

The success of a deceptive phish hinges on how closely the attack email resembles a piece of official correspondence from the abused company. As a result, users should inspect all URLs carefully to see if they redirect to an unknown and/or suspicious website. They should also look out for generic salutations, grammar mistakes and spelling errors scattered throughout the email.

What if I receive a deceptive phishing email?

- Do not click on the link
- Do not provide any information
- Delete the email and delete it from your deleted items folder
- Report the email to your IT support as soon as possible

Deceptive Phishing



Most common type
Email from recognized sender
Steals info by imitating a legitimate provider

Users should inspect URLs carefully
Check for legitimate redirection
Look out for:
Generic salutations
Grammar mistakes
Spelling errors

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Free Tes Portal Training Session—Last chance to book

On Monday 29th June at 11:00am, Product Training Specialist Diana Park will be showing Westcountry Schools Trust's Tes Portal users how to get the most of their Tes Recruitment and Staff Pulse Subscription by showing Portal users how they can utilise features that are included in their subscriptions.

The training (via zoom) will take approximately 45 minutes and will be covering how to book an advert, the Applicant Tracking System, smartMatch, smartReach, how to control access rights, the school career site, getting access to the Tes magazine, and Staff Pulse.

To book your free place please contact Diana via her e-mail Diana.Park@tesglobal.com



EdTech Festival on Monday 6th and Tuesday 7th July 2020

The virtual EdTech Festival is free and hopefully relevant to all who work in Education; from Early Years through to HE and from teachers, administrator, school business managers through to school leaders and governors.

Across both days there will be the opportunity for staff to choose between over one hundred sessions; comprising keynote speakers, presentations, panel debates and live lesson workshops. The sessions are organised into ten key strands, of leadership & governance, safeguarding & wellbeing, computing & coding, learning platforms, devices & tech, SEND and Inclusion, wider curriculum, STEM & science, Early Years & KS1 and business and admin, making this a fantastic opportunity you and your colleagues. It probably is about 80 hrs of free CPD delivered by some great speakers from across the world.

To register for the event please ask staff to [click here](#), and we will then send them a separate booking form for the individual sessions. The two days will allow staff to create a personalised journey of relevant professional development.

A key component of the EdTech festival is the showcasing of virtual 'live lessons' where delegates will be able to see the technology in use with children and will be able to interact with the teacher and children to ask relevant questions that will support them in the EdTech deployment in their own school.



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NOTICE BOARD

Vacancies

The following vacancies are currently being advertised within our organisation:

Ashburton Primary School

- Teaching Assistant (Maternity cover)

<https://www.ashburton-primary.devon.sch.uk/vacancies/>

Westcountry Schools Trust

- Executive Assistant

<https://www.westst.org.uk/news/?pid=7&nid=2&storyid=101>

Yealmpton Primary School

- Teaching Assistant (temporary)

E-mail admin@yealmpton-primary.devon.sch.uk for info.

ASCL members needing individual advice or assistance should contact the ASCL Hotline on 0116 299 1122. Hotline operates from 08:30 to 17:00 on weekdays and is also covered for emergencies only from 09:00 to 17:00 at weekends and on Bank Holidays to provide a 365 days a year service.

ASCL are officially represented on the WeST Joint Consultative and Negotiating Committee by David Fitzsimmons, an ASCL Field Officer in the South West and member of the Hotline team.

Should you wish to discuss issues relating to matters at the WeST JCNC you can e-mail david.fitzsimmons@ascl.org.uk

ASCL will provide training for an ASCL member within WeST, who would be prepared to be the local accredited representative for this Trust, operating alongside David Fitzsimmons.

www.ascl.org.uk



Free Microsoft Teams Training

Microsoft Teams is a brilliant virtual platform for holding meetings, sharing resources and keeping in touch with our colleagues.

For anyone who may be struggling to adapt to the software, there is a bank of free training videos online. [Click here](#) to access the training videos.

Virtual Armed Forces Day 2020

Saturday 27th June is Armed Forces Day, a national celebration of the Armed Forces and a chance to say a big thank you to all the men and women who make up the military community.

This year, Plymouth Armed Forces Day will still take place as a day of virtual events rather than the usual celebrations.

Sessions include:

- Plymouth's Military: Past, Present and Future
- Military Career Opportunities
- Support for Veterans

[Click here](#) for more information.

