

# Wednesday Whistle



I open this week's 'Whistle' by celebrating your fantastic work and recognising the number of children attending our schools each day. We are now seeing about 1500 children in WeST schools on a daily basis – a blend of Educare and curriculum teaching. Our 'return' rates are significantly above the national average and I think that is due, in no small part, to how you are acting to build parental confidence and deliver a great experience despite the obvious barriers.

Thank you to everyone that contributed to the recent WeST staff survey. Your responses have received careful consideration and we hope to improve what we do by listening to your collective voice. One example being that we are planning to offer training before the end of term in the proficient use Microsoft Teams.

Our collective attention is now turning to the new academic year in September and how we will return with all children in school. I've deliberately not called this a normal return because, quite simply, it won't be. What we do know, though, is that the government has a clear intention for all children to return in a safe fashion. We now await the next round of DfE advice and guidance which we anticipate being released on Thursday. Many of us may have read the 'leaked' document with interest and we now know that the actual guidance document will

have strong similarity to that that was leaked.

As with the partial return in June we will endeavour to produce and share a WeST toolkit to guide our work for a full return. Each school will, of course, use the toolkit as a reference point but implement operational structures and routines at a local level that are appropriate for their school and context.

I close by reaffirming a couple of recent key messages for those of you who might have missed them at the time.

Firstly, that WeST are not opening schools over the summer holiday period to provide Educare.

Secondly, the last day of the summer term for children for all WeST schools is Friday 17<sup>th</sup> July.

Finally, I am again pleased to publicise our recruitment campaign for an Executive Assistant to join the core team with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September or a soon as thereafter.

Best wishes

Rob Haring



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## iTrent Information:

The schools below that operate their Payroll through HR On iTrent, please be aware of the following information:

- 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
- Yealmpton Primary School

## Employees returning from family absence

If a member of staff is returning from a period of family absence (such as maternity, maternity support or adoption leave) during the summer holiday, this should be notified to Payroll via the online form before the school closure period. The form can be completed in advance of the actual return date to ensure that employees' pay is correct in July and August.

## Access to Employee Self Service (ESS) after leaving

Staff have 42 days from their date of leaving in which to access ESS. This is to allow staff to download copies of any payslips or P60s that they require, and also their P45.

## Declarations of Staff Status & Test and Trace

Thank you to those of you who have completed your Staff Status Declarations and submitted these locally to your schools and business units. This information is extremely valuable in informing our leadership teams and Trustees of the availability of staff across WeST over the remainder of this term and as we move into the next school year. For those of you yet to complete a form please could we ask that you do so as soon as possible.

As you may be aware, the new Test & Trace system has started and members of staff may be required to self-isolate if they have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for Covid-19 and who is not part of their household. This status has now been added to the form in order that we can capture this if/when the need arises moving forward. This will only be relevant for staff updating their status using the Staff Status form in future and we would ask please that you ensure a new form is completed and submitted if at any point your status changes. This will ensure the information we hold is update and relevant.

Many thanks.

## Guidance for Managers and Staff on Quarantine on Entering or Returning to the UK (correct at 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020)

The government are expected to imminently announce relaxation on travel abroad. We expect this to include the cessation of compulsory quarantine for inbound travellers from countries deemed "safe" according to a new traffic light system.

It is not possible at this point to ascertain what the exact position will be in August and therefore whether (or not) staffing in September will be affected by quarantine requirements that may still be in place (or perhaps reintroduced) on re-entering the UK from some countries. (Please see e-mail attachment for further guidance).

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## Kindness matters more than ever

### Hello WeST Colleagues

Kindness is a principle that makes all our lives better and it's important to us that we are kind to each other at work and to ourselves.

Being kind can mean asking someone how they are or helping out with a task. It can also mean taking care of ourselves and asking for support if we need it. If you want some more ideas about how to be kind to yourself and how you can look after your mental health. WeST has partnered with Able Futures and they are available to provide support at no cost to you.

- 1) **Take your full lunch break** – eat something nutritious, go out for a short walk and don't start back at work until you've had your full lunch break.
- 2) **Ask someone you work with if there's anything you can help with** – sometimes just sharing some ideas about a new task is a good way to help someone you work with relax and feel more confident about what they are achieving.
- 3) **Arrange to take your tea break with someone you've not caught up with for a while.** Having a quick virtual chat while you're both making a cuppa could be a way to ask someone if they need to talk about anything that's on their mind.
- 4) **Share an inspiring story of kindness** that you've seen in action with us by replying to this email so we can share some of the kind things you are all doing and feeling at the end of this week.

For more information on how kindness affects our mental wellbeing, [visit the Able Futures website.](#)

Able Futures delivers the Access to Work Mental Health Support Service which can give you nine months support from a mental health professional at no cost to you.

There's no waiting list and you can apply online or by calling **0800 321 3137**.

If you are experiencing issues such as anxiety, depression, grief or stress, or are struggling to deal with problems such as debt, disrupted sleep or relationship breakdowns that may be affecting your mental health, Able Futures can help you build resilience, tackle issues, feel better and learn new ways to manage your mental health throughout the ups and downs of life.



**\_able  
futures**



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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



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## Still keeping data safe

Your data is valuable, the more information you give away the more valuable it becomes.

This week the WeST DPO managed to open a deceptive phishing email and promptly went into a flat spin and changed every password available. Why did this happen? Because I am human and for a moment my "dodgy email" radar was down because I was probably distracted by something happening outside my window. Thankfully this time the WeST IT team rescued the situation, no damage was done and order quickly restored.

World-wide the cyber community estimate that there is a cyber-attack every 30 seconds and 75% of attacks are financially motivated. Email continues to be the entry point of choice and today we continue to explore the range of "phishing" techniques employed to help you to recognise a possible attack and keep your personal data safe.



Not all phishing scams embrace "spray and pray" techniques at the expense of personalisation. Some ruses rely on a personal touch quite heavily. They wouldn't be successful otherwise.

Enter spear phishing schemes.

In this type of ploy, fraudsters customise their attack emails with the target's name, position, company, work phone number and other information in an attempt to trick the recipient into believing that they have a connection with the sender. The goal is the same as deceptive phishing that we mentioned last week: trick the victim into clicking on a malicious link or email attachment so that they will hand over their personal data. Given the amount of information needed to craft a convincing attack attempt, it's no surprise that spear-phishing is commonplace on social media sites like LinkedIn where attackers can use multiple data sources to craft a convincing targeted attack email.

To protect against this type of scam, organisations discourage users from publishing sensitive personal or corporate information on social media. Companies should also invest in solutions that analyse inbound emails for known malicious links/email attachments. WeST schools employ a range of measures to protect school email users but hackers are often one step ahead and all users should be aware of this threat.

### How to reduce the risk of spear phishing emails?

- Review and update all social media accounts to know what you are sharing
- If you receive an email that appears to be an attack delete it
- Report the email to your IT support as soon as possible

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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/>

#### Hele's School

- Learning Support Assistant

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

#### Plymstock School

- Personal Assistant to Headteacher

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

#### Westcountry Schools Trust

- Exexecutive Assistant

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

#### Yealmpton Primary School

- Teaching Assistant (temporary)

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



**GMB**

**UNION**

GMB Union have asked for all of their members within WeST Support Staff to check you are receiving their member emails (at least once per week). This includes the current online secure ballot for the national NJC Support Staff Pay Award, with e-voting now underway. If you aren't receiving GMB Union emails please first check your junk or spam folder, and if emails are found there, please add to your safe senders list. If you still cannot find any emails, please email: [myra.jones@gmb.org.uk](mailto:myra.jones@gmb.org.uk) with your name and workplace to provide GMB with your current personal email address. Thank you.

### 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.



### 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.

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.

