

Offwell C of E Primary School

Our Core Values: Honesty, Loyalty, Caring, Sharing and Forgiveness.



Dear families and Friends

15th January 2021



As we near the end of our first full week back, after a tumultuous start, I want to congratulate everyone, on keeping calm and carrying on.

Today my parents will have their first vaccination! In order to defeat the spread of the virus and its newer variations, and give time for the vaccination programme to work, we need to carry on **staying at home, where we can, to save lives**. With cases in Honiton reaching high levels, we all need to take care of each other.

Current government advice regarding attendance at school is that anyone who can stay at home, should, including children of Critical Workers. However, within the safe limits set out in our Risk Assessment, we have accommodated a set number of children who fit the criteria and who have requested a space. Thank you to parents who have been able to adjust their child's attendance to fit their work and can reduce the time spent in school, as this protects all of us. There are more children in school than during the first Lockdown, but because we are using all four classrooms, the children in each class bubble are as well spaced as before. To maintain this, and so ensure the safety of the whole school community, places in each class are limited.

This means that most of you are learning at home, alongside us online, for at least this half term. Teachers are working hard to provide the required amount of work for home and school, as well as regular face to face sessions and support in class and you are working hard too. It has been brilliant to see you at home (and some of your pets:) on Google Classroom, where you will also find help and whole school information. So that nobody falls behind if we can help it, we are recording attendance at each check in point, and tracking work as it is handed in (NB: please use 'turn in' not 'share', as it has been tricky to locate some work). **If your child is not able to attend or hand in work, or you are struggling, please get in touch.** We will contact you to solve any issues, together.

This will sometimes prove challenging for all of us, but we are determined to help you and give our children the best we can offer. Therefore, a short survey will be shared, which I hope will help us to find out what is working well, as well as what can be improved. This newsletter contains a lot of information, I know, but it is important that you read it, so that, together, we can make home learning as safe as possible, and as possible as...possible!

Be Well:

Mental Health Support:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak#helping-children-and-young-people-cope-with-stress>

It's not a catchy title, but at least it is clear what it's for! (Use Ctrl +click to follow link)



Passive smoking

Please read this information if there is a smoker in your household.

Most second-hand smoke is invisible and odourless, so no matter how careful you think you're being, people around you still breathe in the harmful poisons. Any child whose clothes smell of smoke will have inhaled it. Second-hand smoke is a lethal cocktail of more than 4,000 irritants, toxins and cancer-causing substances.

Opening windows and doors or smoking in another room in the house doesn't protect your family. Smoke can linger in the air and in fabrics, for several hours after you've finished a cigarette, even with a window open. Also, even if you limit smoking to one room, the smoke will spread to the rest of the house where it will be inhaled.

Passive smoking is especially harmful for children, as they have less well-developed airways, lungs and immune systems and in addition, they breathe more rapidly than adults. Children who live in a household where at least 1 person smokes are more likely to develop asthma, chest infections and coughs and colds. Children are particularly vulnerable in the family car, where second-hand smoke can reach hazardous levels even with the windows open. This is now against the law.

For more information and for help to stop smoking, see:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/passive-smoking-protect-your-family-and-friends/>

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Learn Well:

Speaking and Listening at home:

Speech and Language Link have put together some games and activities for parents/carers to use at home to encourage their child's talking and listening. The speech activities develop a child's ability to hear speech sounds and the language activities focus on supporting understanding of language. For more information please visit: <https://speechandlanguage.info/parents/activities>

Lexia

This resource has been very effective, already helping many children to reach the Age Related Expectations (ARE) in the areas of reading, comprehension, spelling and grammar it covers. At the start of term, we had intended to re-assess most children, to identify if further support was required. Due to the situation, this is not currently possible, but one reason for purchasing this resource was its online capability, which allows for school monitoring of home learning. We still have a majority of children able to log on and most still need to complete the required work. This will help bring them up to ARE in these vital areas. Therefore, **those children who are currently able to log on to Lexia, should.** Please contact us if there are any issues with doing so.

Home Workspace!

Thanks to a very kind donor, our school now has a separate fund for a certain number of work stations, to encourage a more focussed approach to learning. We have the possibility of up to 12 desks. Ikea have a children's desk, Micke, 73 x 50cm, with a drawer for pens and paper and space for hiding away computer cables, for £40. Ikea flat-packs have very clear instructions and are very easy to construct (other home office suppliers are available!). Anyone who wants to take up this offer should contact admin@offwell-primary.devon.sch.uk. Hurry, as home office equipment is suddenly very popular, and this offer cannot last!

The Government are providing free internet connections through free mobile data increases or 4G wireless routers for disadvantaged students (those eligible to receive income based free school meals) who: do not have fixed broadband at home; cannot afford additional data for their devices; are experiencing disruption to their face-to-face education – so let us know!



PTFA Woodland Trail

If anyone has completed one of the PTFA woodland trail quizzes, but has not yet been able to hand it in, please place it in the grey post box on the wall by the steps outside school, if you live in the village, or scan and email it to us (and owe us the £1 entry fee)! The new closing date is Tuesday 19th January. A winner will then be chosen and notified.



Urafiki

The Urafiki trustees have written to us thanking you all for continuing to support Oscar and Ashley through their schooling. They sent some recent photos. Through our fundraising efforts last year, we managed to raise enough money to send through the full annual contribution to see the two children through schooling for another year. Thank you.

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Live Well:

Online Safety

As most children are having to learn online, we all need to be more aware of the possible risks, as well as what we can do, to make the most of all the advantages of technology. You can look at this website with your child for age appropriate help: <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

As a parent and carer, here are some important things to think about:

1. Content (what they may see/do):

- Exposure to inappropriate videos, pictures or messages which might upset, worry or frighten
- Searching for inappropriate content on purpose or stumbling upon it by accident (including voice activated tools)
- Inadvertently giving apps or websites permission to share their location or personal information
- Spending real money via in-app or in-game purchases

2. Contact (who they might communicate with):

- People they don't know, such as when gaming or using video chat
- People linked to those they know, such as friends of friends and family members
- People on the device's contact list – possibly sharing images or information inadvertently.

3. Conduct (how they might behave):

- Exhibiting unhealthy behaviours and around use of screens (e.g: resistance to acceptable boundaries, such as requests to log off or share passwords with you)
- Imitating harmful or inappropriate behaviour they see online
- Being unkind to each other online as well as offline; this could be using mean words or by excluding others from their games
- Using words or terminology which are not appropriate for their age
- Engaging in unhealthy relationships, which may involve elements of coercive control.
- As part of natural development, children may exhibit curiosity about the body; if this occurs via technology, children may be at risk of taking inappropriate or indecent images. Never save or digitally share such images, but seek advice via the link below.

4. Strategies to minimise risk (what you can do):

- Check apps, websites and search results before using them with children.
- Always supervise your child's access to the internet, by being there and checking regularly.
- Ensure safety modes and filters are applied - default settings tend not to ensure a high level of privacy or security. But remember you still need to supervise children closely.
- Role model safe behaviour and privacy awareness. Talk to children about safe use, for example: set family rules such as, asking permission before taking pictures or videos and using mobiles or portable devices in the same room as you, at set times.
- Check privacy settings to make sure personal data is not being shared inadvertently or inappropriately.



We are using an online learning platform, which is designed to be secure, with content uploaded for educational purposes. While supervision and vigilance are important at all times, it is essential to consider the four points (above) in relation to your child's use of the internet for recreational purposes, as well. Children will want to be in touch with friends, so it is about striking the right balance, for example, agreeing specific time for friends and daily screen-free time as a family, and sticking to it - parents too!

For more information and practical advice for parents, please follow this link:

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents> There is also a presentation on Google Classroom.



In Other News:

A Devon boy, Max Woosey, has been camping in his back garden since March, to raise money for The North Devon Hospice. So far, he has raised over £100,000! Amazing!

<https://www.northdevongazette.co.uk/news/max-woosey-fallen-soldier-donation-6897210>

Lorna Legg

'Be healthy in body and strong in spirit and may all go well with you...'