



# Spalding Parish Church of England Day School

1<sup>st</sup> June 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

## COVID 19 Wellbeing

As we continue to look at the feasibility of a wider reopening to pupils, one of the key elements of our provision during this time will be that of our curriculum. You will know from my earlier letters that any return for any groups of pupils will look significantly different to school prior to the pandemic. Not only will this be true in terms of organisation of classes but also in terms of the curriculum that we will deliver. We also know that pupils and families' experiences of the pandemic will have been very different, some working from home with pupils at home, others continuing to work and accessing our key worker provision, some safe in lockdown with no symptoms, others having been ill as a result of the pandemic. Many of you will know at least one person who has been ill with the virus and some of you will have experienced loss of family members, friends or others you know during this period. Supporting pupils and families and their wellbeing during the coming weeks and months will be crucial and a key part of any curriculum.

**"There is no health without mental health." (World Health Organization, 2009)**

Our emotional and physical health can be severely compromised during these unsettling times. It's particularly important at this time to enable us to manage and alleviate our children's worries, and to provide them with re-assurance. With this in mind, as we move towards schools re-opening, we wanted to outline our guiding principles for how to move forward through this transition as smoothly as possible using the SWAN approach as detailed below (based on the work of Pooky Knightsmith).

**Be the SWAN!**

**Safe**

**Welcoming**

**All Togetherness**

**Nurturing**



**Safe**

We want you and your child to feel safe, calm and re-assured and to know that it will be okay to come back to school. So, we are already working on creating an environment that is and feels physically and emotionally safe for all of us. We want to build up predictability and consistency around hygiene and other safety rules which school staff will role-model noticeably, and praise your child for following



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accordingly. We will support any child through any misunderstandings and refer to the benefits of what we are doing.

We want to invite suggestions from you and work in partnership so that you have a genuine voice in building this new normal for your children. We want you to feel involved and invested and to start to re-inforce these rules and messages at home in advance of the children's return. We are already creating a FAQ sheet to try and anticipate some of your concerns; detailed guidance and regulations will follow.

We hope to involve the children to some extent in co-creating rules surrounding playtimes; if we work with them, they will have a sense of ownership and the rules would have more meaning for them.

### Welcoming

When the children return, we want them to feel excited and happy coming into school and we want them to know that we are genuinely delighted to have them back and to be able to see them again. We have sincerely missed them. They will need to know that they belong, and feel a part of things and we will do everything we can to enable this. Our SPCEDs values will be ever-present and more needed now than ever.

### All Togetherness

So, how can we create these warm, welcoming feelings of care and nurture when we can't touch and need to keep a safe distance? We need to create a truly inclusive environment in which the children feel surrounded by support, and know that they can rely on all the adults around them and that we are all reinforcing the same messages and sense of togetherness.

### Nurturing

Recent research conducted at Reading University highlights the importance of allowing the children time and space to play and to re-connect socially with their peers. A key point is to play the long game here, and not rush ahead with trying to make up for lost time or to add intense academic pressure and stress to the children, some of whom are already in a high alert state.

We will focus primarily on settling your children in, on meeting their social and emotional needs first and foremost, and on their readiness to learn skills. The general expert consensus is that we should be laying the foundations for them in terms of nurture first and foremost, not solely teaching them in the plain, traditional sense.

This Covid generation of children are going to be unique, and we want to enable them to flourish which will not be an overnight job. We have the potential to do a lot of good here, and to repair the significant rupture that this virus has caused and to prepare our children to be strong adults in the future as well as happy and resilient children in their present.

### Anticipating their concerns

It's important to recognise that each child is unique, and that they may have had very different experiences of home learning and staying at home, even within the same family. Many children will naturally have mixed feelings and attitudes about coming back to school.






A tip is to be alert and attuned to how your child is feeling as they might have a particular worry about returning to school that can be addressed. With younger children (3 – 7 years old), playing together may be your best way of identifying what their concerns are. They often play and draw what they are thinking about, sometimes repeatedly. With older children talking can be easier through a shared activity like walking the dog or baking a cake.

As I've said in many of my letters over the last few months, the priority needs to be on health and wellbeing, on your child feeling safe and happy. Whilst this can be a challenge given the current circumstances there are many ways that this can be supported with children while at home and the NHS has produced a simple 5 Steps to Wellbeing that I thought was worth sharing with you all.

## 5 Steps to Wellbeing

<https://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/Pages/improve-mental-wellbeing.aspx>

If you give them a try, you may feel happier, more positive and able to get the most from life.

-  **Connect** – connect with the people around you: your family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. Spend time developing these relationships. Learn more in *Connect with other people* (in the above link).
-  **Be active** – you don't have to go to the gym. Take a walk, go cycling or play a game of football. Find an activity that you enjoy and make it a part of your life. Learn more in *Be physically active* (in the above link).
-  **Keep learning** – learning new skills can give you a sense of achievement and a new confidence. So why not sign up for that cooking course, start learning to play a musical instrument, or figure out how to fix your bike? Find out more in *Learn new skills* (in the above link).
-  **Give to others** – even the smallest act can count, whether it's a smile, a thank you or a kind word. Larger acts, such as volunteering at your local community centre, can improve your mental wellbeing and help you build new social networks. Learn more in *Give to others* (in the above link).
-  **Be mindful** – be more aware of the present moment, including your thoughts and feelings, your body and the world around you. Some people call this awareness "mindfulness". It can positively change the way you feel about life and how you approach challenges. Learn more in *Pay attention to the present moment* (in the above link).

Thank you for your continued support throughout this period and as we look towards a wider reopening. It is very much appreciated by myself and the whole team at SPCEDS. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you all for everything that you are doing and have done to support your child during their time at home. Please don't forget that if you would like any support or advice or have any questions, to contact school either via the Year Group emails or via [feedback@spaldingparish.lincs.sch.uk](mailto:feedback@spaldingparish.lincs.sch.uk). Take care and I look forward to seeing you all soon.

Kind Regards,  
Diane Mulley  
Head Teacher



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