



West Jesmond Primary Newsletter 5th March 2021

Back to School March 8th

Thank you everyone for spending the time to read the rather lengthy update on Wednesday about the wider opening of school on March 8th. We are also sending some specific year group reminders today. I am sorry about the amount of information and repetition of some messages, but we want to ensure everyone understands and is able to follow the guidance and help us in our efforts to open safely.

Catch-up or Bounce Back

We have had some concerns about some of the language of catching-up with education and the undue pressure it might put on some of our children and families. We prefer to talk about a positive, forward looking **West Jesmond Bounce Back Curriculum**.

Our prime focus over the next few weeks is to welcome our children back to a school in a way that helps them to happily fit back into routines, classroom patterns and friendship groups. At the same time we will, from day one, be working hard to make sure our learning is as exciting and engaging as possible and children are helped to retrieve and build on the knowledge and skills they already have.

We believe that maintaining the breadth of our curriculum, valuing every subject and supporting our teachers to allow them to focus on great teaching in the classroom is the most effective way to ensure our children develop the skills, knowledge and understanding to enable them to move forwards in their learning.

We do not want our children to face lots of tests and formal assessments when they return to school. Instead we will quietly and sensitively continue to use low level on-going assessments (questioning, work in books, discussions, mini-quizzes..) to help us to find out where there are possible gaps in learning and to guide our thinking about how we can most effectively close them. This may not be fully achieved in a few weeks, but with time, careful planning and effort we know we will get there with all of our children.



The bouncing rabbits image is one that I think perhaps reflects what the return to school will be like for our children. Looking at how they have responded throughout the last year, we know that they are incredibly resilient and most will bounce back with vigour. However, there will be some of them who, for a wide variety of reasons, will find this more difficult and we will need to be there to catch and support them. As a school we acknowledge that the impacts of the lockdowns will be felt differently by each child and we are carefully planning how to provide accelerated learning to support those children whose education has been most affected and also to provide extra well-being support where it is needed.

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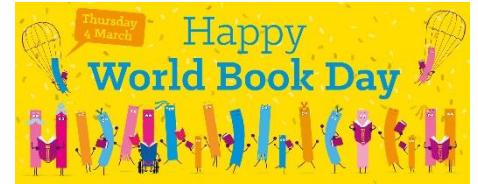
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Masked Readers

Did you guess who all the Masked Readers were? If you and your child haven't had a chance to watch some of the mystery readers celebrating World Book Day, then you can catch them on Tapestry, Seesaw, twitter and Facebook. Will you get them all right?



Driving and Parking Around Our School

Driving and parking around schools across our city is and has been a challenge. Schools like West Jesmond were built in a place and at a time when traffic was not the issue it is now. With 600+ children, limited parking and other schools nearby we have additional challenges to overcome. The pandemic has thrown a sharper focus on many areas of our lives and driving around schools is one of them. The need to social distance has forced many of us off pavements and into roads and the use of different school entrances makes us even more aware of traffic flows. Alongside the immediate physical danger to our children, the possible impact on our children of fumes from cars has never seemed so relevant. There will be many conflicting views on this issue, but I know every parent wants the start and end of the day to be as safe as possible. I will be working with the local authority, governors and all of you to continue to look at all options to make the journey to and from school happy, healthy and safe for our children.

In the short term, can I ask that parents who absolutely need to drive due to the distance they live away from school to take extra care (including of the added hazard of E-Scooters) and please make every effort to try to **Drive and Stride**. Find a safe place park 5, 10 or 15 minutes away from school that allows you a happy and healthy walk in with your children.

The West Jesmond Family Working Together
Picking Up and Dropping Off at School

6 Things you can do to help us all keep safe

1. Please, if you are able, wear a mask or face covering.
2. Maintain social distancing.
3. Stick tightly to pick up & drop off times.
4. Try not to mix with other households.
5. Keep your children with you.
6. Try not to drive or park near our school

West Jesmond's Got Talent

Thank you for all the entries to WJGT. We have really enjoyed watching them. What a talented bunch in so many different ways! We hope everyone has a chance to look at the acts on Seesaw and Tapestry and hopefully by seeing their classmate's faces it will help children feel even more excited about the return to school. Many apologies about the standard of the Headteacher's magic trick!



Welcome to our new families and children

We are very pleased to be able to welcome a number of new children to school on Monday. It has been especially hard for these children and their families who officially joined the school and then had to work from home over the last term. Can I offer a warm welcome to the West Jesmond Family to all of you who are joining us next week. I hope you and your children are very happy during your time with us in the years ahead and I know all of our children and families will make you very welcome and that you and your children will quickly feel a part of our school.

Have a lovely weekend everyone! I look forward to seeing all of you on Monday.

Matt Ward (Headteacher)