



Wimbledon Chase Primary School

Governors' Newsletter

Opportunity, Inspiration & Celebration

Dear Parents

We would like to send you our warm wishes for the beginning of 2021, particularly during this difficult time. We hope you are all managing as best you can, as we are all trying to do. The vaccination programme is at least a beacon of hope on the horizon.

Remote learning

We on the Governing Body were all very disappointed that the school was not able to open for all children at the beginning of term. We would like to thank you all for responding so well to the combined challenges of remote learning, and juggling work and other commitments.

We would like also to thank Keith Ellis and the Senior Leadership Team, Mrs Burnett, Mrs Warwick, Mrs Adamson, Mrs Newell, Mrs Ruffle, and all the amazing staff at the school, who have acted swiftly and resiliently to stay open for children of critical workers and vulnerable children (a larger number this time), as well as managing and improving the remote learning provision. We are very grateful to Mr Ellis stepping up to this challenge at the same time as taking over as Acting Headteacher. We are also grateful to the three phase leaders for taking on additional responsibility in their Assistant Headteacher roles temporarily to support Mr Ellis. The new arrangements are working smoothly so far, and we all remain in touch with Jill to ensure continuity where needed.

Mr Ellis has been in touch with you to get feedback on the remote learning provision, and there have been parent representative meetings going on last week to discuss issues arising. There has been much positive feedback to date, and also various areas for improvement identified. We know that Mr Ellis and the whole team are working to respond to this feedback and to continually improve the arrangements, and we would encourage you to continue to share your thoughts via those channels.

We on the Governing Body are continuing to review the provision, both alongside the DfE guidance and alongside feedback from children and parents. We are meeting on Tuesday 26th January 2021 as a full governing body and will be focussing on this issue as a priority. The co-chairs meet weekly with Mr Ellis as well.

CONTACT US: Please drop us a line at chair@wimbledonchase.merton.sch.uk if you have thoughts or feedback.

Well-being

At this time, we would like to encourage the whole community to remember to look after their well-being: for the children, for yourselves as parents and carers, and for that of staff at the school.

We are all facing a very tough few weeks and months, and resilience is key to this. We would encourage everyone to try to take some time every day to be outdoors if possible (despite the weather), and to ensure we connect with each other in a way that feels positive and restorative (such as sharing a family film, playing a game, cooking, reading or listening to music together, or any activity that you or your family enjoy). We know that Mr Ellis and the staff are fully aware of the competing demands on parents and children – both for those in school and for those at home – and that we sometimes forget that looking after ourselves is essential to everything else.

We also appreciate that it often seems that looking after our wellbeing needs to compete with - or comes at the expense of – work or learning tasks. But in fact research shows that the contrary is true. Taking time out to look after ourselves is likely to help everyone in the family to make the most of the working/learning hours they have together, and help us all get through this time. We have included some links on well-being for you and your children **below** in case this is helpful. Please do get in touch with the school (via parentsupportadvisor@wimbledonchase.merton.sch.uk if you think that you may need any additional help or support.

New parent governors

As you all know, we recruited two excellent new parent governors at the end of last term. Thanks again to everyone who voted in the election. Nese Soysal and Theodora Theodoratu will be great assets to the Governing Body, both bringing educational insights and specialist expertise to our group. We are very lucky to have them and their enthusiastic approach, particularly at this time, and we look forward to working together.

Permanent Headteacher recruitment

The Governing Body is working on recruitment plans at present and an advert will be released next week. The intention is that the new Head would start in September 2021, for the next school year. We are pleased to have the support of Merton's Head of School Improvement for this process. We will update you as things progress.

Update on the Standards, Teaching and Learning Committee

The STLC continues to support and challenge the school in securing agreed key priorities for the 2020-2021 academic year. These priorities include the well-being of children and staff, the quality and delivery of the remote learning platform, tracking progress and attainment for the children to ensure it remains high (particularly for any pupils disadvantaged by circumstances arising from Covid-19) and finally diversity and inclusion measures.

The STLC met in the winter term to scrutinise the school's plans in relation to the continuity of education to include if a further national lockdown were to be implemented (which has proved to be the case.) An analysis of gaps in pupil learning and how they were manifesting was undertaken as well as discussion of intervention programmes and how resources could be allocated to alleviate the conditions. Governors were pleased to note that despite the novel and significant challenges presented by Covid-19 pupil progress and attainment remained high and within reasonable expectations factoring in the circumstances. Governors were, and are, satisfied that the school has risen and continues to rise to the challenge of an ever-evolving situation.

We are continuing to keep this under close review, and to support the school to meet these challenges as best it can at the current time.

Please do get in touch if you have any concerns or queries at the Chair address below. In the meantime, we hope that you and your families manage to stay safe at this difficult time.

With kind regards,

Zoe & Tom
Co-chairs of Governors
chair@wimbledonchase.merton.sch.uk

Well-being links

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/make-it-count-guide-for-parents-and-carers>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/support-for-parents/mental-health-parenting/>

<https://www.annafreud.org/parents-and-carers-old/self-care-for-parents-and-carers/>

<https://www.wimbledonchaseschool.co.uk/our-learning/mindfulness/>