

Our vision is to ensure all our pupils are safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included, so that each individual can be fulfilled and reach their potential within a supportive and proactive community.



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Dear Parents/Carers,

It has been a relatively smooth return to education, in no small part due to the patience, help and support of our parents and carers. Thank you for all you are doing. The sound of laughter and learning in school is an absolute delight and we feel very privileged.

Symptoms:

If your child has a temperature or is unwell you must keep them at home. If a child becomes unwell during the school day, they will be settled in the medical room away from their peers until they can be collected. Please follow government guidelines on isolation. We remain super vigilant and we are really impressed with how carefully the children are following handwashing guidelines. We continue to keep the school well ventilated and where possible ask the children to socially distance from adults. Where that is not possible adults are wearing masks and masks are permitted for everyone who wishes to use one.

Drop off and Pick up at School:

Everyone has followed the guidelines as requested, to the letter, thank you. Following the incident of a speeding car last week, we suggest that parents and carers don't park next to the fencing where the wall has come down as this narrows the road and leaves less space for pedestrians. As you will have noticed, work is well underway for the wall to be repaired and should be completed soon.

Learning:

We are back into the swing of things and the gap in learning is not looking too bad. To arrange the pupils into their reading and spelling groups we always do a wee assessment at the start of the year. Teachers also assess through marking and observing work. As you know, from the very first school day after lockdown, every pupil had access to daily school work with the teacher available online for five hours every school day to give feedback, help with issues and keep in touch generally. The assessment data is showing that those who engaged in learning, either through Purple Mash or with schoolwork supplemented by parental input, have made progress.

Since returning to school we have reviewed our approach to online learning as we are keen that the many skills the children gained during lockdown should be grown and developed. We use Microsoft Teams for Friday assembly and it has some useful features for online learning that could be adopted if required.

Clothing:

Again everyone has been carefully following the guidelines and arriving in school in clean clothes every day. We have lots of spare uniform in school, email us if you would like some

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sent home for your child. It is a good idea not to send your child to school in expensive branded clothing as we cannot promise we won't spill paint on it! Please remember our playground has four seasons in one day so appropriate outdoor clothing is always required. Every item of clothing must be named.

School Dinners:

The full menu returns next week. We have introduced stickers for good eating in the dinner hall and we are encouraging the children to eat their lunches. We understand that they might be full and want to throw away the last bit, but recently we have had children scrape away almost the whole meal, which means they are feeling hungry and tired the afternoon. We can't allow a child to choose to go hungry.

Our Pupil Equity Funding is awarded every year and is based on the number of children in school who take free school dinners. Please check to see if you are entitled as it makes a huge difference to the funding for the school. The system is set up so that there is no way for pupils to know who has a free meal and who does not.

Resilience and Cooperation:

Last year our assembly theme was resilience and we will be keeping this going alongside *cooperation*. In the main our children are incredibly resilient, and they have bounced back after lockdown better than we had predicted. Lockdown has, however left a legacy. We have noticed, across all ages that the art of give and take in playing has been diminished. It has been such a long time since the children were able to play together in the playground that many have forgotten their cooperation skills. We are problem solving outside issues with them to rebuild these skills.

Some simple points about resilience that will really help are:

- It is normal for an adult in school to speak to a child about their learning or their behaviour. This happens so frequently that we would not be contacting parents about the day to day interactions in school.
- Reminding children about behaviour and manners is part of our job, we are educating future members of society.
- We really like the children and we always want the best for them. When your child is discussing their school day, please assume this as you try to work out the full story they are giving you. In short, we have no reason to 'pick' on your child unfairly.
- Children learn to be resilient if they are given strategies for interacting. They do not gain these strategies if they never have tricky moments, if the adults in their lives fix their problems for them or if they adopt inappropriate responses such as hitting someone they don't like.
- Children are incredible people; they can be independent and brave and inspirational.

Community Partnership:

We are grateful to the community council and everyone in the village for the way we have been helped and supported throughout this pandemic. We always feel like we are part of the life of a very vibrant village. We are keen to give back, and this week our classes are litter picking to keep our village tidy. Give them a wave if you spot them out and about.

We also have a community gardening project planned so watch this space!

Breakfast Club:

On a Friday at 8.30am we serve toast, cereal, fruit and pancakes for breakfast. We have it set up so pupils remain in their bubbles and everything is carefully cleaned. It's a lovely start to the day and everyone is welcome. If possible we ask for a donation of £1.

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Nurture:

As you will have read in our improvement plan, published online, we plan to further our training in nurture to develop skills in Emotion Coaching. This links closely to resilience. The specialised team in Mintlaw have a Facebook group dedicated to excellent information regarding nurture and resilience. It is called Mintlaw Cluster Nurture and Wellbeing. And is well worth a follow.

Despite the restrictions we are determined to keep school as normal as possible and we are already making plans for next term's events to allow us to have all the fun we usually have, within the Government Guidelines. We will keep you posted with our exciting plans as they begin to unfold.

Kind Regards,



HELEN JAMES
Head Teacher