

# PILGRIMS SCHOOL NEWS UPDATE

15 May 2020



Over recent weeks I have alluded to the possibility of a Government announcement in relation to schools reopening. Last Sunday a (very) brief outline was given by the Government as to how/when this may happen and this has since been followed by a number of guidance documents. I would now like to thank you for your patience as we carefully plan and risk-assess what these guidelines mean for our school and your family.

Although the Government has proposed a date for schools to plan to reopen from (Monday 1 June), their message is clear that this can only happen if/when it is deemed to be safe to do so, and where schools feel confident that they can operate in a safe and secure way. This would be in line with the Government's guidance and with a clear and thorough risk-assessment in place. Given that the Government's announcement impacts the whole of Pilgrims School, we feel the safest way to reopen, would be to plan for a 'phased-return', thereby reducing possible anxiety and ensuring the safe introduction of year groups, staff and parents to the new routines and layouts. We are now planning to introduce Reception and Year 1 classes first, followed by Pre School and then Little Pilgrims. Over the next few days, the school will be working closely with the Governing Body, the Chair of Pilgrims' Parents (Mrs Henrickson), and The Harpur Trust, prior to finalising details. Our Health & Safety Committee will be 'meeting' on Wednesday where the school's Reopening Risk Assessment will be presented for their approval and this will be shared with parents in our next communication.

I am sure you can imagine just how complex reopening the school will be as it is vitally important that we carefully consider the needs of our whole school community. We appreciate that, during this planning stage, parents may have lots of questions and are looking for answers prior to making their own decisions for their family. While I am not yet able to provide you with the full details of how the school will operate, based on the information we currently have from the Government, I wanted to share with you the priorities and considerations which are 'front of mind':

- The welfare and safety of the children, parents and staff, including any possible pressures and anxieties re-opening the school will bring with it.
- Key Worker provision will need to continue for identified families, where necessary.
- The type of provision we are able to offer and from when, ie a phased-return.
- Health & Safety for all. A full and rigorous risk assessment is in place and understood prior to opening, including routines, processes and training, spacing and groupings, reallocation, organisation and preparation of rooms, resources and equipment.
- Everyone's emotional wellbeing: pastoral support, time to adapt and settle for those in school and at home.
- The importance of play and fun, both inside and out.
- The level and quality of education for the children, both in school and remotely.
- Transition, as we move towards the end of this academic year and into a new one.
- Familiarity and consistency – will your child be able to see/be with their familiar Key Worker/member of staff as we consider group sizes, staffing needs and availability.
- Support and understanding – the whole school community, listening to each other, respecting others' feelings, patience.
- Openness and transparency – communicating as clearly and quickly as possible.
- Continued need to review and refine, in line with Government updates and what we feel is best for the school.

I am sure you will understand that, as Pilgrims looks to reopen, it will inevitably need to operate differently; there will be different expectations around dropping off and picking up, parents will not be able to congregate on the school site, access to the school will be limited, we will not be able to hold social gatherings such as sports days, class assemblies etc. However, whilst looking to enforce and follow the strict guidelines given to us, there will be much of Pilgrims that will be, and needs to be, the same: familiar faces, level of care, educational expectations, creativity, and above all, a sense of fun and enjoyment.

Many of you may have read or seen images of what schools around the world are doing as they begin to reopen. Some schools have been quite ingenious in their thinking and planning, other interpretations, however, have been somewhat heart-breaking. Due to the age of our children we do not wish to stop or limit their innate and natural desire to be close to their friends and the grown-ups they know. However, we will encourage, support and role-model the best way to do this, ensuring the children feel safe and able to enjoy their time at school.

During the next week we will be finalising plans and preparing the school and our staff. We will, of course, be sharing these details with you and ask that you read all of the information provided very carefully. Please be assured we will not open unless, and until, we are able to do so safely and, importantly, we feel it is the correct thing to do for Pilgrims and its entire school community.

We understand that you have chosen Pilgrims for your child because of the exceptional level of care we can offer. It is very much my intention to ensure that this level of care continues, albeit delivered in a slightly different way. Thank you for patience and understanding and for staying with us on this rather unusual journey.

**Mrs J Webster**  
**Headteacher**

## **MESSAGES FROM OUR YEAR GROUP LEADERS**

### **From the Reception Team:**

We hope the children have enjoyed another 'Andy's adventure' to North America to find out about the Grizzly Bear. We have been so impressed with all the describing words, 'super sentences' and art work we have been lucky enough to see. A huge well done to all the Reception Super Stars for another brilliant week. We are all very proud teachers.

### **Evidence Me**

Thank you for continuing to send us observations of your child's work. We are regularly taking a look and making comments where relevant. Could we please ask that you aim to stick to the original emailed guidelines asking you to submit between 3 and 5 observations per week and by varying the content from week to week it will enable us to see a range of the task you are completing. Thank you.

### **From the Year 1 and 2 Teams:**

We have all continued to enjoy Teacher Time with the children and we know that they are enjoying the opportunity to 'show and tell' with the rest of their class. Please can we ask parents to check that the items the children wish to show are appropriate and remind the children that they should never be sharing their screen, this is a facility that is to be used by the teacher only. If your child has a photo that they would like to share with the class it must be emailed to their class teacher.



E-safety continues to be a school priority which is why the Microsoft Pupil 365 accounts are for children's use only and should not be used by parents to contact each other. However, a recent exception has been made in Year 2 for parents to be able to share resources for the Year 2 Yearbook. We would very much appreciate your support in not using these accounts for any other purpose.

## Mrs Morales' Wellbeing Blog

This week I thought I would reflect upon the importance of time. Our lives are usually very busy, often dashing from one calendar event to another and never really achieving that quality time for ourselves and our family that we dream of. Lockdown has actually given many of us more time, whether we have been furloughed or still working hard, we definitely have more time on our hands.

We are now taking lovely long walks with our family, making time to Zoom or House Party our extended family and friends, (especially elderly relatives or people isolating alone who may have too much time!) taking the time to exercise, bake, do puzzles, read books, learn a new skill such as home hair cutting, the list is endless! Making time to spend with loved ones and doing something we find relaxing is sometimes a huge sacrifice when other things seem to take priority and it quite often gets pushed aside.

However, making time for ourselves is so important for our mental health and wellbeing. Would we be making this time if it were not imposed upon us? Whilst I would not wish us to be in the situation we find ourselves in, we must try to draw some positives from it. Lockdown has made me really appreciate and value the simpler things life has to offer and really embrace time. I hope that as we gradually come out of lockdown and begin to return to 'normality' (whatever that may be) that we take a moment to reflect upon how we have spent our time before rushing back to our hectic lifestyles. The silver lining from this might be that we emerge as a kinder and more giving society who are willing to make time not only for ourselves but also for others.

I hope the children are taking the time to embrace Casey's Caterpillar Club. The 'Calm Time', breathing exercises and yoga poses are all ways to help the children (and us) take some time to relax during this very difficult period.



Here is another useful technique you may wish to try, kindly shared by the Mind Map Charity:

### Grounding

With so much change and turmoil occurring, it can feel like we are in emotional free fall. The best anti-dote to this feeling of helplessness is to practice 'grounding'. This involves mindfully 'feeling' the security of our physical bodies in the world, whilst practising a positive mind-set. Mindful grounding is similar to the 'Calm Time' experience we practice in the Casey stories. It involves focussing on the physical sensation of having our bodies centred in the physical world.

Children (and adults) can be encouraged to do this in the following way:

- Focus on the physical sensation of having your feet firmly rooted on the ground (or your bottom in a chair if you are seated);
- Press against the solidity of a hard wall with your hands or lean against it (or the back of a chair) with the length of your back;
- Wrap your arms around yourself and give yourself a strong, hard hug;
- Repeating phrases such as 'This is going to be ok', or 'We can do this' whilst practising physical grounding will help embed the feeling.

These are unprecedented times and there is so much that is unknown for all of us. We hope that these few tips will help you and the children in your care to feel more emotionally in control over the next few weeks and months. Self-care is also very important, and often the thing we neglect the most when we are caring for others. Please do try to rest and unwind when you can, and allow yourself the space to acknowledge your own fears and emotions as you guide yourself and others through this highly uncertain and turbulent time.

The Mind Map Charity Team

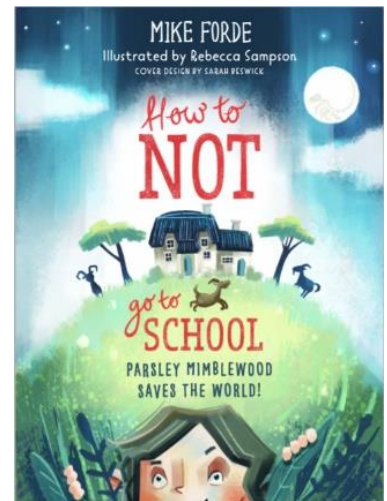
Some useful websites to help you relax with the children:

[Yoga at School](#)  
[Cosmic Kids Yoga](#)

And finally, a lovely free storybook helping children to come to terms with school shutdown. How to NOT go to School, Parsley Miblewood Saves the World –

<https://parsleymiblewood.wordpress.com/>

**Jacqueline Morales, Pastoral and SEND Coordinator**



### **Instructions on how to join one of our Closed Facebook Groups**

Once in Facebook, search for Pilgrims Pre Preparatory School Bedford and click +Join. You will then be asked a security question before approved to join. Once you are a member of the whole school page, you can then search the other individual groups as below.

Little Pilgrims  
Pilgrims Pre School  
Pilgrims Pre Prep Reception  
Pilgrims Pre Prep Year 1  
Pilgrims Pre Prep Year 2

You will then have to wait for final approval from us, before you can access/view/comment/post on the page(s).