

Wellbeing and Safeguarding Briefing for Parents April 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you and your extended family are well and finding some magic to sustain you in these difficult times.

We are living in unprecedented times and are having to adapt quickly to new ways of being and working. Behind the scenes at School we are working hard to offer ongoing support to pupils who are dealing with a very unfamiliar situation. In this uncharted water we would like to support you as parents as well. You may be struggling to cope with the new normal as we all adjust to deliver lessons to pupils in new and innovative ways online.

We are trying to look at the opportunity in this as well as accepting the difficult reality. Part of this is looking for new ways for members of our community to come together in real time, albeit remotely. Who knows, maybe there are some solutions we are coming to that we will want to carry on when life resumes some normality and we will have grown in some way in this seemingly unfertile soil.

We still have a duty of care in Safeguarding your children in this time and it becomes especially important that we offer you the information you need to support your children to be **safe online**.

This briefing outlines our support in the following areas:

- 1. Keeping your children Safe Online**
- 2. Child Protection Procedures during social distancing/isolation**
- 3. Your Child/ren's Wellbeing**
 - A note on being aware of your child's emotional health
 - Resources links
- 4. Your Wellbeing**
 - Tuesday Tea at Four - *open drop in to say hello.*
 - Wednesday Movement at Four - *contemplative movement for all.*
 - Thursday Tea at Four- *Advice and support network.*

We are already hearing from helplines that there has been a rise in calls concerning cyberbullying in particular and, unfortunately, we are also aware that there has been an increase in attempts to coerce vulnerable young people into sharing inappropriate content.

1. Keeping your children Safe Online

We are proposing free online **Internet Safety courses** for parents through Wise Kids, who have undertaken some online safety training with pupils in the School in the past. These will take the form of 2 x 90 minute interactive sessions in small groups of ten where there will be opportunity for questions and discussion. The courses will be run over consecutive days and will take place the **week of 27 April**. Details to follow. **We would strongly recommend that you attend these classes.**

If you would like to take part in one of these **please would you email me by Friday 24 April** at miranda.knight@cardiffsteiner.org.uk to reserve a place. This will allow me to arrange an appropriate number of courses to run. You will be grouped on a first come first served basis.

We are also arranging for Wise Kids to deliver some age appropriate online safety training directly to the Classes during this time. Details to follow.

In the meantime please take note of this clear and simple information to reassure yourself that your child/ren is/are keeping safe on line.

- Make sure you have some sort of filtering either on your device or at modem/network level to protect your child/ren from inappropriate content. Further details on how to do this can be found here www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/
- Please take note of these mechanisms we have in place to support pupils and/or parents facing online safety issues. **Please report any breaches of safety to the Designated Senior Person for Child Protection, Miranda Knight by:**
 - email miranda.knight@cardiffsteiner.org.uk
 - telephone 07969 140 390

If you are worried about online sexual abuse or the way someone has been communicating with you or your child/ren online you should contact the **Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command or CEOP** at www.ceop.police.uk and follow the advice available on their comprehensive and accessible website.

- Children may occasionally have to deal with a variety of sometimes challenging issues online and as parents it is sensible to be aware of potential situations. These might include cyberbullying, the pressure to take part in sexting, encouragement to self-harm, viewing pornography, along with various others. But there are positive things you can do to equip yourself and your child, support them in resolving any issue they may face. One of the most comprehensive sites I have found is the site “internet matters” who can be found at www.internetmatters.org/issues/ This page has individual advice hubs on various distinct topics that are easy to read and easy to understand. The whole website is good source of helpful and practical information and has age appropriate material you can share with your child/ren.
You can read more about cyber-bullying and our approach to it as a School in our [Anti-Bullying Policy](#)
- www.thinkuknow.co.uk is the education programme from CEOP and has age appropriate information that children can access for themselves in 4-7, 8-10, 11-13 and 14+ hubs as well as a hub for parents.

- The School's [E-Safety for Parents webpage](#) has additional links to information about how to keep your child safe online.

2. Child Protection procedures during social distancing/isolation

Escalating concerns

I (Miranda Knight) remain in post as Designated Senior Person for Child Protection (DSP) and Gail Chester as Deputy DSP. We are available, as in normal times, for advice and support around any issues that you have regarding Child Protection and Safeguarding. I can be reached at all times on 07969 1403 90 or at miranda.knight@cardiffsteiner.org.uk Gail can be reached at gail.chester@cardiffsteiner.org.uk

If you are worried that a child or young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm you should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Person as soon as possible.

If for any reason you cannot contact the DSP or Deputy DSP you must phone the local authority Children's Services and report your concerns. **You can telephone Children's Services on 02920 536490 from 8.30am to 5.00pm. You can telephone the Emergency Duty Team on 02920 788570 during all other times.**

If you believe that a child or young person is at immediate risk of harm phone the Police on 999.

Google Suite for Education

The professional on-line learning platform we are using, Google Suite for Education, has appropriate settings and controls in place to ensure that children's information is secure within the platform. It is a "closed" system with information and data remaining within itself. It is set up for school work /communication only.

Middle/Upper School students may also use additional platforms/apps which have been assessed by the School for security and data protection.

Our staff understand the need to have a clear boundary between their professional and personal life, including ensuring that any online communication with parents/pupils is only done using their School email addresses or their school based profiles on G Suite or assessed platforms only.

For Data Protection and Privacy with G Suite see the [G Suite for Education Privacy Notice to Parents and Carers](#)

Everyone who uses the platform agrees to the [Student IT Acceptable Use Policy \(AUP\)](#) prior to using the online platform.

Any questions you have about Google Classroom or other apps your child may be using in conjunction with this can be directed to gadmin@cadiffsteiner.org.uk.

Staff know that:

1. Communication with children both in the “real” world and through web and telecommunication interactions should take place within explicit professional boundaries.
2. All lessons delivered live, in real time, will involve two members of staff.
3. They should:
 - a. Not seek to communicate/make contact or respond to contact with pupils outside of the purposes of their work
 - b. not give out their personal details
 - c. use only the services provided or approved by the School, unless School policies state otherwise
 - d. only use internet-enabled personal devices in line with School acceptable use policies
 - e. follow the School’s acceptable use policy and online safety guidance
 - f. not discuss or share identifying personal data relating to children/ parents / carers in staff social media groups

Our staff understand that under no circumstances should they be expected or allowed to use their personal equipment to take images of pupils at or on behalf of the School.

This means they will not:

1. take images of pupils for their personal use
2. display or distribute images of pupils unless they are sure that they have parental consent to do so (and, where appropriate, consent from the child)
3. take images of children using personal equipment
4. take images of children in a state of undress or semi-undress
5. take images of a child’s injury, bruising or similar (e.g. following a disclosure of abuse) even if requested by children’s social care
6. make audio recordings of a child’s disclosure
7. take images of children which could be considered as indecent or sexual

3. Your Child/ren’s Wellbeing

For the Classes, we will be introducing an updated weekly timetable for each Class from the end of the Easter break, Wednesday 23 April. This will have designated times for whole class check-ins, a daily opportunity for children to connect with their classmates and feel part of this familiar scene, share experiences of social distancing, smile at each other and just say Hi! We think that one of the most important aspects of our online offering is the opportunity for you and your children to feel that you remain part of the community you are used to seeing every day. That sense of connection to others in this time of isolation.

The weekly timetable is in part intended to give a daily routine and a rhythm to the children’s week. We anticipate that the whole experience of lockdown is made easier when purpose and activity is offered through an external structure, and one that is not imposed by you.

Older pupils from Class 6/7 up should be largely able to access this for themselves, apart from any technical help they may need from you, and be self-directed in their activity through carefully designed and described tasks.

We ask parents of younger pupils, Classes 1-4/5, to provide support to help their children remain engaged in learning and assist in submitting assigned work. This may include ensuring your child understands the learning task, has the required resources, and is located in a productive learning space. It is helpful to be interested in their involvement but don't worry unduly if they are not completing all the work yet, especially in the younger Classes.

There will also be a daily slot for parents to contact your child's Class or Guardian teacher where you would be able to flag up any wellbeing or educational issues that you think we could help with, as well as all day access to other staff members who can help.

I am also going to timetable daily open **Pastoral Care 'Office Hours'** where pupils can contact me in my pastoral care capacity on a drop-in basis. There will be a link to this sent via Google Classroom. A second staff member will be present in a quiet capacity.

3.1 A note on being aware of your child's emotional health

Most children will manage well with the support of parents and other family members, even if showing signs of some anxiety or concerns, such as difficulty sleeping or concentrating. Some children, however, may have risk factors for more intense reactions, including severe anxiety, depression, and suicidal behaviours. It is normal to react in some way to these extraordinary circumstances, but children who have experienced more adverse childhood experiences, trauma, loss, family instability, can be at greater risk of a stronger reaction. If you are concerned that your child may need some extra support www.meiccymru.org as detailed below, is a good place to start.

Look out for and consider the following signs of stress.

- **Kindergarten and Classes 1 to 3 (approx)** - unusual thumb sucking, unusual bedwetting, clinging to parents, sleep disturbances, loss of appetite, unusual fear of the dark, regression in behaviour, withdrawal.
- **Classes 4 to 7 (approx)** - increasing irritability, aggressiveness, clinginess, nightmares, poor concentration, withdrawal from activities and friends, obsessive compulsive tendencies including self-harm.
- **Adolescents (Classes 8 up approx)** - sleeping and eating disturbances, agitation, increase in conflicts, physical complaints, unusual defiance, poor concentration and obsessive-compulsive tendencies including self-harm.

Consider the following strategies to help them find some resilience and a sense of safety:

- **Focus on the positive.** Celebrate having more time to spend as a family. Make it as fun as possible. Do family projects. Organise belongings, create masterpieces. Sing, laugh, and go outside, if possible, to connect with nature and get needed exercise. Allow older children to connect with their friends virtually.
- **Establish and maintain a daily routine.** Keeping a regular schedule provides a sense of control, predictability, calm, and well-being. It also helps children and other family members

respect others' need for quiet or uninterrupted time and when they can connect with friends virtually.

- **Identify projects that might help others.** This could include: writing letters to your neighbours or others who might be stuck at home alone or to healthcare workers; sending positive messages over social media; or reading a favourite children's book on a social media platform for younger children to hear.
- **Offer lots of love and affection.**
- **Let your children's questions guide you.** Answer their questions truthfully, but don't offer unnecessary details or facts. Don't avoid giving them the information that experts indicate as crucial to your child's health. Often, children and young people don't talk about their concerns because they are confused or can't articulate what they are feeling or don't want to worry loved ones. Younger children absorb scary information in waves. They ask questions, listen, play, and then repeat the cycle. Stay with this cycle and answer questions as they arise, then patiently as they return to them later. A sense of understanding in their own way reduces fear.

Make sure that you offer answers to their questions in an age appropriate way. The following might be a brief guide:

- **Kindergarten and Classes 1 to 3.** Provide brief, simple information that balances COVID-19 facts with appropriate reassurances that adults are there to help keep them healthy and to take care of them if they do get sick. Give simple examples of the steps people make every day to stop germs and stay healthy, such as washing hands. Use language such as "adults are working hard to keep you safe."
- **Classes 4 to 7.** This age group often is more vocal in asking questions about whether they indeed are safe and what will happen if COVID-19 spreads in their area. They may need assistance separating reality from rumour and fantasy. Discuss the efforts international, national and community leaders as well as immediate contacts are making to prevent germs from spreading.
- **Class 8 and above.** Issues can be discussed in more depth. Refer them to appropriate sources of COVID-19 facts. Provide honest, accurate, and factual information about the current status of COVID-19. Engage them in decision-making about family plans, scheduling, and helping out at home.
- **For all children, encourage them to verbalise their thoughts and feelings.** Be a good listener!

3.2 Resources links

There are also good online sites where you and children can access support and advice.

- **Meic** is the national information advice and advocacy helpline for children and young people in Wales. This service is open to those aged 0-25 years and provides information, signposting to other services and access to an independent professional advocate as and when needed to support them with their concerns. Children and young people can access Meic 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
 - **080880 23456** (24 hr freephone number, also free from mobiles - won't show up on the bill)
 - **SMS Messages: 84001** (again, completely free and anonymous)
 - Website: www.meiccymru.org (instant messaging option for contact via webchat)

- **Kooth** Many of our pupils are already aware of **Kooth.com** where children aged 11 to 18 can sign up for free, safe and anonymous online support or access articles written by other young people on a variety of challenging situations. They can also access this to get advice on helping a friend. Kooth can be found at www.kooth.com
- **Youngminds** are a UK charity working to support children's and young people's mental health. They can be found:
 - www.youngminds.org.uk
 - They also have a **Helpline for parents** on **0808 802 5544** (Monday to Friday 9.30am to 4pm) which is free for mobiles and landlines.
- There is also a lovely site for **yoga for children** that you can find at www.blissbyrobin.com

4. Your Wellbeing

We are setting up Parent Classrooms on Google G Suite to allow ease of access for you to the offerings below.

The sudden change to work remotely for so many, and the demands of supporting our children indefinitely at home, throws up a lot of challenges. We think that one way we can offer to support your wellbeing is to give you opportunities to connect in real time with each other in an easy way - giving you virtual access to those at the 'school gate' when you have an opportunity to engage with each other or just smile at each other.

We are offering to do this with the following. You will be sent directions on how to access these in due course.

- **Tuesday Tea at Four.** Open drop in to say hello. Anyone is welcome, you set your own level of involvement and there is no pressure to 'share' or be visible if you'd prefer to just listen in and drink tea with us. Just make yourself a cup of tea and pop in and say hello.
- **Wednesday Movement at Four.** Contemplative movement for all. A chance for you carve out a special time and place apart from daily preoccupations and allow the mind to calm through attention to simple movement. Led live this will include guided stretching, breathing and visualisation. This offers the potential to lower stress and anxiety by allowing yourself to be in an intentionally sustained mental state of focused attention and concentrate on you, being you, standing and moving with your feet on this earth.
- **Thursday Tea at Four.** Advice and support network. This is an invitation to active conversations where your voice matters. We will start by looking at how we can come together as a community sharing the same concerns - supporting the wellbeing and future of all and sharing the wisdom living in our collective. What are the inner attitudes we need to adopt to support ourselves and our communities at this time? What are the practical steps we can take to support ourselves and others? Our children are scared too. Their regular schedules and school routines have changed overnight. They are no longer allowed to hang out with their friends. Lessons have moved online. How can we support their emotional wellbeing, find lockdown friendly ways of being active, whilst keeping our children safe, protected and happily engaged. We are looking at other ways parents can share their interesting / helpful (or other appropriate adjective) links, thoughts, recipes, to extend the engagement.

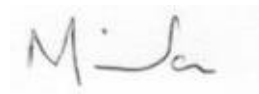
And to finish, a grounding verse for these times

Inner Quiet

Quiet I bear within me,
I bear within myself
Forces to make me strong.
Now I will be imbued with their glowing warmth.
Now will I fill myself
With my own will's resolve.
And I will feel the quiet
Pouring through all my being
When by my steadfast striving
I become strong
To find within myself the source of strength
The strength of inner quiet.

~Rudolf Steiner~

Kind Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Miranda". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line under the name.

Miranda Knight

School Administrative Manager / Designated Safeguarding Lead