

Willow Brook Contact

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Good morning everyone!

It felt important today to be in touch after a very unusual week apart. I hope you are all well and happy and have started to get used to a rather different way of living. I also hope that your little people are being delightful and are managing to work, rest and play in the sunshine which, I'm sure you'll agree, has been a god-send this week. I've driven home down the Fairway most nights this week, just so that I can see the rainbows in the windows and the chalk messages on the pavement. Well done – your handiwork makes people smile.

The small group of children who have been in school over the past 5 days have been amazing. I applaud them as much as their parents as they share our company and adapt to life without the security of their friends. Like many of you, they have jogged along to Joe Wicks, been very arty, planted seeds and mastered strategy games and jigsaws. Blokus has been our favourite game. I'd recommend it! The only other job of the week has been to rake the field... Ask your children to imagine the joy of making one pterodactyl sized 'nest' where no one pinches your grass! Joy!

We have delighted in some of the happy news received from you this week, from photos of sunflower seeds being planted and Willow Brook poems, to litter-picking walks and even a parcel of freshly baked cupcakes left on the doorstep. Little bits of brilliance that have added a smile to the day.

Some new input on learning challenge that may find useful in the next school week:

If you are keen to change those reading books and find some new materials (including audio books) please log on to our reading scheme providers and join the Oxford Owl. <https://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/for-home> You will have access to levelled ebooks and matching activities. Under other subject headings, you'll also have learning guidance and some quality parent support strategies. There are some quality books narrated for all ages. I'm currently listening to White Fang... it's been a while since I read it.

I'm sure you'll be aware that Audible have also made some free books available for children (although these seem quite limited).

If you're a David Walliams fan, please be aware that once you've finished your Joe Wicks workout, he is reading books every day at 11am. Log into the site to catch up on this week's chapters: <https://www.worldofdavidwalliams.com/elevenses/> For younger children, a good activity is to draw the story as they are listening. As well as showing some comprehension skills, you end up with a great illustrated book of your own at the end.

A smart maths resource that also features a daily lesson from Carol Vorderman can be found at www.themathsfactor.com/ Again, a recommended, curriculum-based product that will guide you well on age related learning and something interactive that would be great to build into your weekly structure to keep maths skills sharp.

If Mr Wicks' voice ever starts to irritate, head over to gonoodle.com. This is a resource we use at school for our younger children for work breaks and wet playtimes. The gonoodle videos are also available on Youtube.

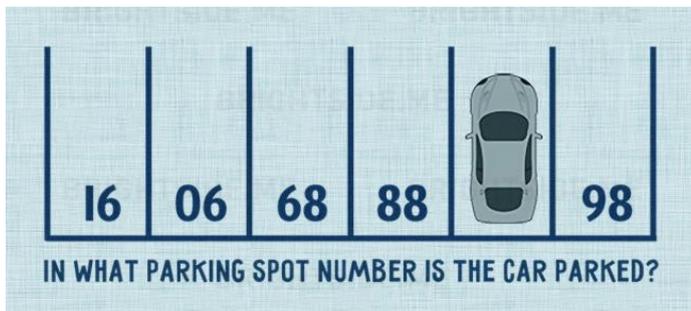
If you're up for some Willow Brook challenges in the week ahead:

- Put your art skills to the test and see if you can rival the staffs' Easter paper creations. This was Mr. Boyd's! I'm told that if it involves a rabbit there's bound to be a Crème Egg delivery in return... well, that's what happened at school, anyway! The link for instruction on making the 'boingy' rabbit and other great paper games can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/100001652200902/posts/2847659311965781/?d=n>
- I'll be back with a news communication at the end of week 2, but can you produce a newsletter for me in return from your house? Edit a page on Publisher, Word or work on paper and send a photo... The more original, the better!
- If you have the resources, get that sunflower seed planted! Plot a graph as it grows, and we'll find a Willow Brook champion!



Mr Jones and I have been challenging each other with puzzles yesterday lunchtime. Here's a few for the dinner table tonight:

Beginners level...



Intermediate level...

Which way is the bus travelling?



Advanced level...

Joe Wicks, known as The Body Coach, is on a mission to get people fitter, healthier and happier. So, Joe Wicks is the nation's PE teacher with 30-minute YouTube lessons every weekday at 9am aimed at primary and secondary school students. With the first lesson having been on Monday this week, if a child does 30 minutes a day for 5 days a week, on what specific day and month will they have completed 24 hours of working out?

I hope the first week at home has been a good one and I wish you well for the second. Whilst the Easter Holidays is somewhat irrelevant now, we will be working over the next couple of weeks to have new resources and opportunities of contact in place for the summer term. We know that caring for our young people is the prime objective but maintaining a sense of community during our time apart is an equally important goal for the staff and governors of Willow Brook. We will continue to do our best.

Again – a huge Willow Brook thank you to all families who are working on the frontline, especially in the NHS; to the teachers, TA's and support staff at school who have been incredible this week and to you for being so understanding, positive and supportive as we work together at such a difficult time.

With best wishes to you all,

Louise Ballard