

Willow Brook Contact

20th April 2020

head@willowbrook.notts.sch.uk



Good morning!

I sincerely hope that you are all well and have found some special moments and family happiness in the midst of these difficult days. Willow Brook has been open over the past fortnight as we have continued to make sure that our NHS and keyworker parents have the support they need to carry on their vital roles. I have often been moved to tears and in awe listening to them talk about their working days. My drive home has often included a drive down the Fairway and Mount Pleasant to see the simple but uplifting rainbows and messages in your windows.

My first newsletter of the summer term is traditionally full of dates for the 3 months ahead. Thoughts turn to sports days and residentials, academic tests, music concerts, graduations and transition. We have 30 brand new children who now know that Willow Brook will be their new home and are excited about their first days at school, and a Year 6 who wait expectantly to explore pastures new. Speculation over recent days over schools reopening leaves us no clearer and so we move forward and look forward to such days as confidently as we can.

As well as working in school when required, teachers have been working over the past week to plan and prepare for the next 3 weeks. I know from your emails that there's a real balance to be struck between not overloading and complicating family days, where parents are occupied working from home... and making sure that children are thinking and learning and making productive use of their time. My central thought is that I want positive, happy young people to return when our doors reopen and, back in our hands, every individual will be ready to start from where we left off. With this in mind, teachers have been instructed to prepare a series of initial tasks that should open up the summer term curriculum for their year group. I have asked that these tasks are practical, motivating and not reliant on technology or constant adult input. My goal was that they should inspire children to think rather than complete aimless worksheets and I hope that you will work as positively as you are able to or feel is appropriate for your child. As in all homework, battles are counterproductive and tangents that take you down different creative avenues are always welcome!

Today teachers will be in touch via Parentmail. They have letters for you which I hope will reignite our sense of community. A learning letter will also guide you through their planned tasks. I hope that the Willow Brook Creative Curriculum will stand at the heart of what they prepare. I know that the BBC are today introducing new materials to support home education and the newly formed virtual 'Oak Academy' (which brings online teaching and lessons for all year groups to your screens) is a venture we will be exploring and recommending as it launches this week.

I have appreciated your emails over the past few weeks – especially in response to our #weareone upload. I've particularly enjoyed the messages and humour I've received from your children! It's at times like this that the young entrepreneurs start to shine... We've received works of art, jokes, home made cakes, videos, poems, Easter treats and cards. One of our talented Year 5's has even started her own keep fit business to rival Miss Phillips and I've sat and admired her professionalism... who needs Joe Wicks! If your child wants to follow the new trend, her parents have asked if I would share a link to her new daily work out. Give it a go!

<https://youtu.be/zCetqzOzvcg> <https://youtu.be/Hb4vc3IT6cU>

As some of you may know, Miss Weston returns from her year's maternity leave today! I'm so sorry that we can't make her feel special on such a poignant day. She will be job sharing with Mrs Sampson in our Early Years department and was really looking forward to taking on outdoor learning and embarking on her Forest School training. With that on hold for now, I'm sure she will be adding a fresh energy and enthusiasm to Reception planning over the term and will enjoy getting to know the new Willow Brook families. Mrs Jones has moved to new projects, but we will make sure that she receives the thanks and send off she deserves from us all when we are back together.

I will leave you to start your week and hope that you enjoy spending some time with the words and resources that will be coming your way from your child's teacher. We continue to travel through uncharted territory. I can only assure you that we will do our best to look after you all. If you need anything at all, please get in touch.

Stay well and do all that you can to make sure our community can come back together again in safety very soon.

With our very best wishes,

Louise Ballard.