

Dear Parents

Welcome to the April edition of our monthly school newsletter. It feels awfully strange to be writing this at home, knowing that the majority of you are also in the same position of working from home. The times we find ourselves in at the moment are unprecedented and, I am told, that this is the biggest challenge the nation finds itself in since World War Two. I am sure that many of you are joining me in applauding the NHS every Thursday night at 8pm and I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank them for working on the front line to keep us all as safe as possible – you are all heroes and we are indebted to each and every one of you. Thank you also to all of our key worker parents who may be working in other fields of equal importance, playing their part in keeping our country going – drivers, shop workers, care assistants, probation and prison officers, postmen and postwomen, benefits agency staff, refuse collectors, emergency services, carers...the list is endless. Thank you to our staff who have all been working really hard to keep school life as normal as we possibly can for Thingwall children, whether they are learning via the VLE at home with you or in school with our rota of staff. Your support as a group of parents has been overwhelmingly supportive and we are really enjoying seeing what you are all getting up to at home- we miss the children dearly but the photographs, messages and comments we are seeing via the school website, the POTS Facebook pages and Twitter are really making us smile! We need to remember that, although we are working away with our families in our own separate homes, we are still a formidable team that is showing great determination and community spirit. We are still TEAM THINGWALL... we just happen to be part of this wonderful team in different buildings than usual.

The following information may be of interest to you. Please contact the school office if you have any queries at all.

Free School Meal Registration:

Never before has the following generic letter from Wirral LA been of more importance. We are aware that family circumstances are changing on a weekly, if not daily, basis and we do not want anyone from our school community to be worrying about money when we can help to secure Free School Meal Status for you. We have set up an on-line voucher system which, fingers crossed, seems to be working well for our families who qualify.

If you think you are now eligible for free school meals, please apply by following the instructions below. If you run into trouble with your application, please ring the school office for assistance.

Apply for Free School Meals...
it's quick and easy using the online form at:
<https://www.cloudforedu.org.uk/ofsm/sims-wirral>.

If you are receiving certain benefits, a FREE tasty and nutritious school meal is available for your children at Thingwall Primary...BUT YOU MUST APPLY!

Look at the benefits:

- A free school meal for your child, which is good for their health and could help their learning.
- Savings for you, worth over £350 a year.
- Extra money for the school through Pupil Premium, worth at least £900 a year.

Remember. Just registering your child for Free School Meals means that Thingwall Primary receives the extra money even if you don't take up the free meal. No one will know you have registered and it will not affect any other benefits you are claiming.

If you want further information then please email the address above; everything you say will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Do you qualify?

Your child will be eligible for Free School Meals if you get any of these benefits:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The Guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit, provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual income (as assessed by HM Revenue & Customs) that does not exceed £16,190
- Working Tax Credit 'run-on' - the payment someone may receive for a further four weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit

Pupils can qualify for Free School Meals if they get any of these benefits themselves.

Please telephone us at school if you're not sure.

How does it work?

1. Checking whether you qualify and registering is really quick and easy – do it online at:
: <https://www.cloudforedu.org.uk/ofsm/sims-wirral>.
2. If you want your child to have a free, healthy meal at lunchtime that's great – they will get the free meal (saving you more than £350 a year) and the school gets extra money to help your child and others in their class.
3. If you don't want your child to have a free school meal they can continue as normal – as long as you qualify, and are registered, the school still gets the extra money.

PCSO Megan Buckland:

PCSO Megan Buckland of Merseyside Police has recognised that, as most children are currently working at home, they may be more exposed than usual to on-line challenges. She has asked all Wirral schools to circulate the information below...

Online Safety Advice for Parents

During the current Coronavirus (Covid19) situation many parents are working from home including home learning with their children. Many children will increase their online activity time during this period due to being at home more, so it is important that families incorporate time to learn about how to keep safe when going online. It is highly likely that online offending will increase during this time, so it is important that children and young people know how to learn, socialise and play online in a safe way.

Below are some top tips on how to help keep your child safe when going online:

- Use parental controls**-Adding parental controls will allow you to monitor and limit what your child sees and does online. Visit www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/ to access step by step guides on how to set up parental controls.
- Start a conversation about online safety**-Show interest and understand what your child likes to do online and who they like to speak to. To learn more about the most popular apps and games that kids are using visit www.net-aware.org.uk
- Set time limits**-During this period it is important that your child isn't spending too much time in front of a screen, plan activities that don't include using an electronic device.
- Set device-free zones**-Only allow your child to use their device where you can monitor them, don't allow them to take their devices to their bedroom.
- Report**-Make you and your child aware of where to go to report online crime.

Below is a list of resources you can use to help educate your child about how to stay safe online and be a good digital citizen:

- CEOP**-Download home activity packs and use the resources to help you learn about online safety at home with your child.<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/Support-tools/home-activity-worksheets/>
- Childnet**-Online activities you can do from home, there are a number of resources aimed at different age groups. Broken up into age appropriate categories explore different online issues such as fake news, bullying, strangers online and more. <https://www.childnet.com/resources/online-safety-activities-you-can-do-from-home>
- Be Internet Legends**-Google have launched a resource containing online safety activities for the whole family. The programme is designed to teach children the skills they need to stay safe and have a positive time online. The programme is split in to 4 categories: Think Before You Share, Check It's For Real, Protect Your Stuff and Respect Each Other. https://beinternetlegends.withgoogle.com/en_uk/parents

Meeting Frank Cottrell Boyce:

KS2 children had a super morning at Irby Primary where they were able to meet Frank Cottrell Boyce and hear him talk about his new book, 'The Runaway Robot'. All concerned (staff included) had a fabulous time, it was a great way to continue to promote our love of reading by being able to meet a real life author! Many thanks to Irby Primary for hosting us and also to Lingham's book shop for organising the visit.

Federation Car Bumper Sticker Competition:

We were pleased to welcome Councillor Mike Collins and PCSO Inman into school last month, along with our winners from the Federation Car Bumper Sticker Competition for a celebratory assembly. The year group winners were congratulated and awarded book tokens for their efforts. Well done to Thomas from our Year Six class who was selected as the Year Six winner across the six schools who took part. Congratulations to the two overall winners from Irby Primary and Gayton Primary. Their two entries will be combined to make a car bumper sticker for every family across the Federation (as well as Ladymount Catholic Primary). Thank you to Councillor Collins for organising this competition and also to Wirral Together for funding the bumper stickers.

Federation Quiz:

Last month was very busy as we also hosted our very first Federation Trivia Quiz. Each school entered two teams of Year Six pupils and every round focussed on a different National Curriculum subject, including current events and a picture round. The competition was closely fought but finally, after a nail biting final, we crowned Team A from Heswall primary and Team B from Gayton Primary as the overall winners.

Federation Maths Quiz:

Last month we also hosted our annual Federation Maths Bee at Thingwall. Again, this was a close contest but eventually Gayton snatched victory away from Barnston at the last moment. Congratulations Gayton Primary and thank you to all who took part.

Diary Dates:

Obviously the vast majority of things we had planned will not now go ahead as we are currently closed due to Covid-19. Please keep an eye on our Twitter, our class pages, our VLE and the POTS Facebook pages for more exciting updates and challenges. If you haven't done so already, please enter our Easter challenges. We have invited children to...

- Create an Easter bonnet
- Create an Easter garden
- Design and make an Easter bunny out of recycled materials
- Bake an Easter cake
- Decorate an egg (if you can spare the egg!)

We are thrilled that POTS have generously agreed to provide the prizes for each category. Winners will be announced on Easter Monday and prizes will follow shortly after.

Useful Phone Numbers:

The following numbers may be useful to some of you...

Childline – 0800 11 11

Samaritans – 116 123

Domestic Violence Hotline – 0808 2000 247

The Survivors' Trust – 0808 801 0181

Mind – 0300 123 3393

Age UK – 0800 169 6565

Wirral's Safeguarding Referrals (for if you feel any child is at risk) – 606 2008

Finally, can I please take this opportunity to wish you and your families a Happy Easter. Please stay safe and we will see you all again very soon.

Take Care

With Best Wishes

Mrs D L Evans