



5th February 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

Well-being Afternoon

Dear Parent/Carer,

I do hope that this letter finds you safe and well. As we move towards the end of term, I very much hope that the Government are able to confirm plans for how pupils will begin to return to schools from 8th March, which I know is their stated intention.

I really want to make it abundantly clear that you are all doing such an incredible job in managing to support your children with their home learning, amongst everything else that you need to do. These are indeed unprecedented times and as part of our school community, I hope that you feel very proud of the part you are playing as we continue to move forward together and embrace the challenges that are thrown our way. Do cut yourself some slack, you are doing an amazing job!

Whilst I write this letter to you as your son/daughter's Headteacher, I am also a mother of a son who is home-learning and I, myself, experience the daily highs and lows associated with remote working and supporting learning. I do sometimes question the appropriate use of screen time and recognise how our bodies feel when we are seated at a screen all of the day and engaging in fewer practical tasks. We are completely reliant on the use of technology to support the pupils in their learning and I am incredibly proud of what we have achieved at the Emmaus Federation as we are really at the forefront of providing lessons remotely which seamlessly match the provision in school. All of the staff provide excellent provision every single day and we are very fortunate to have such hard-working and dedicated professionals who want the very best for every single child.

However, I do recognise the fact that in some form, your child/ren may be working close to, if not in direct contact with, a screen for up to six hours a day and it is important to consider the mental health and wellbeing of the children alongside the teaching and learning of the national curriculum.

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I do recognise that we are offering lessons that do not involve direct screen-time such as PE and I have really enjoyed seeing the reception provision at our schools and how the children in EYFS are directed to child-initiated tasks or set challenges to complete.

However, in addition to our approach of providing live teaching, we are also introducing a 'Wellbeing Afternoon': one afternoon, during the week, where pupils (and staff!) will be asked to put their screens away. On this afternoon, rather than their usual afternoon of remote learning, pupils will not be set work by their teacher and instead they will be asked to engage in a choice of different activities, in a bid to promote mental health and wellbeing by actively encouraging pupils and staff to keep their devices switched off.

The teachers will provide a range of activities, which can then be uploaded onto Tapestry (for EYFS parents) or Class Dojo. Such activities might be to paint a picture, plant some seeds, bake a cake, read a book or go for an afternoon nature walk together.

I hope this slight change to our remote learning provision is welcomed by parents/carers. Some may very much welcome the opportunity for their children to learn away from their screens for an afternoon. Your class teacher will let you know what day your 'wellbeing afternoon' is and a list of suggested activities to complete. The children in school will also complete wellbeing activities similar to the ones provided for the children learning at home.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Claire Collett
Executive Headteacher

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