



Monthly News March/April 2020

It's quite incredible how very quickly and how very significantly our world and our school has changed since I wrote our last Monthly News in February. Suddenly schools are closed, most of us are confined to our homes and it feels it's been that way for a long time already. It would be unthinkable for families to have to remain at home for the entirety of the annual six week summer holiday but that's what we've seen since the school closed and learning now looks very different.

As a Strategic Leadership Team we have always been keen to try to keep in touch with the children, and you their parents and carers, as best we can in the circumstances and to that end, here's our Monthly News for April with some reminders of the learning that happened before being forced to close in March. We hope that the opportunity for children (and adults) to look through and perhaps talk about the pictures might be another touchstone to the safe, familiar routine which will return for us all in the not too distant future. I also wanted to write with a few updates on the current situation. Stay safe and well.

Steve King, Headteacher

Stay Safe, Stay Learning

On Monday 20th April, the Welsh Government issued their 'Stay Safe, Stay Learning' guidance to schools, a broad outline of expectations around the continuity of learning. I have written previously to explain our school approach which was based firmly on including every child, ensuring none were excluded due to device availability or connectivity in their home as well as the flexibility for learning in hundreds of different family contexts with varying home and work commitments and the possibility of illness and challenging care arrangements. We were adamant that the onset of a global emergency was not the right time to start explaining to parents and children the intricacies of new technologies and digital learning platforms without the capacity to support technical issues and queries. Our provision ties in with the national narrative and has been welcomed by parents and carers. We hope you have found it familiar to our longstanding Home Learning provision and manageable in terms of expectations and challenge. From the start we have also highlighted the importance of wellbeing. It was therefore refreshing when Kirsty Williams, the Welsh Government's Education Minister talked about wellbeing being the priority for learners at this time but highlighted the importance too of learning continuing during the school closure period.

Staying in Touch

Staff have been in contact with every child in the school, usually on a number of occasions and where we have found this communication hard we have undertaken home visits to check on wellbeing, access to learning and to ensure children are safe. In a very few cases we have delivered paper based learning activities and we are making good progress in providing equipment where it is needed. Our Pastoral Support and Wellbeing team have been making additional calls to children who they support through our 3 Tier Wellbeing Intervention Model and we are working with these families to ensure wellbeing, support and continuity of learning.

Your Child's Home Learning

We know from speaking to parents that you have a range of views on home learning while schools are closed. Some parents are keen to replicate the structured school day and keep their children learning while others have said they just want their child to be happy and reassured and they won't be doing much learning. There is of course a wide range in between. While extended school closure is far from ideal for school based learning, for a little context, it's worth considering that in the USA, schools routinely break for a 10-12 week vacation every summer with no work being set or an expectation of any learning taking place. I know some parents will be concerned about their child 'falling behind'; I would say firstly don't worry, not only will all children of all ages be away from schools across the globe for this unavoidable period and secondly, if you ensure a routine of learning each day and cover a range of activities that keep children thinking, enquiring, talking and reading, the core skills of learning will sustain and they will quickly fall back in place when schools reopen. Do not overwork or work your child too intensely as this will almost certainly be counter-productive making them a little resentful and potentially turning them off learning. They will be fine. Talking to them, reassuring them, shielding them from excessive media coverage are fundamental aspects of wellbeing and that's so important for learning.

As a school we encourage parents to ensure their child keeps learning, ideally each day as that's in their best interests and provides much needed structure and routine. But we cannot monitor or enforce this. We'd ask that, as a minimum all children undertake a literacy and numeracy based activity each day, perhaps in the morning and then undertake another activity of their choice plus take some form of physical activity, perhaps in the afternoon. Again, use the Extended Home Learning menus as a guide for all of this activity.

You will have received your child's PHASE 2 Extended Home Learning Menu last week. Remember these menus are list of activities for your child to undertake over a three week period and they can be supplemented by additional activities and resources on our website which is updated regularly. If you have misplaced your menu, it is also on the website (see below).

Read Write Inc

We highly recommend that if your child is in Reception - Year 2 you visit our website and go to the Read Write Inc page and from there access the daily videos for your child. These will keep their phonic awareness sharp and help them develop their sounds. There are also websites offering free access to online books which again will help your child practise their phonics and word recognition. Reading is so important as well as being a very helpful and reassuring part of a child's daily routine. Reading to an adult (perhaps a relative via video call) is great and so is reading to a sibling.

Website

We are very aware that there has always been a wealth of information and resources for learning on the internet, but in recent times many organisations and companies are creating and

Happiness

Friendliness

Trust

Independence

Love

Respect

Courage

Politeness

publishing activities and home learning resources. While well intended, we are sure that so much information must be quite overwhelming for parents and children so we're using our website to showcase a few good quality websites and resources. Of course as parents you can use whatever websites and resources you choose to supplement your child's learning. But if the choice seems bewildering and you don't know where to start...the school website is there for that exact reason. As well as our Extended Home Learning Menus (the heart of our provision), there's also our 'Wow of The Week!' page with interesting tools and websites to explore, themed websites for our six Areas of Learning and Experience on the 'Additional Resources' page, radio shows recorded by our Dell FM presenters where children can discover new styles of music while they are learning on the 'Dell FM Shows' page and guidance for parents on learning, online safety and reassuring your child about coronavirus. We've also included resources for Welsh language which the children will be familiar with and links to the Rock Star Maths website and Read Write Inc resources. Last week we added an optional weekend Taskmaster challenge which proved hugely popular and encouraged children to think creatively. Keep an eye on twitter and our website for next weekend's challenge.

Key Worker Childcare Hub School

By the day schools closed, as Chepstow headteachers, working with Monmouthshire County Council, we had finalised the arrangements for the opening of two hub schools to provide childcare for the children of key workers from the following Monday. By the Wednesday we consolidated into one school at Thornwell as demand was much less than anticipated. The Thornwell Hub has welcomed children every day since the shutdown, except during the Easter period when we again consolidated the Chepstow and Caldicot hub schools due to low demand. We've focused on deploying as few staff and possible to support between 12-16 children each day.

While until then the hubs provided childcare, since the start of this term (Monday 20th April) this purpose has been specifically to provide childcare and support children to undertake the home learning their schools have set them and which their classmates will be doing at home. This is a challenge of course with three staff supporting up to 16 children of different ages from different schools with different styles of learning while ensuring social distancing and strict hygiene regimes but this is what they do and these staff will not be teaching, just supporting. We've introduced a flexible timetable from next week which is a little like the structure of a school day, like we suggested to parents to adopt at home, and which incorporates a daily story time for Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 children. The hubs run from 8am-6pm Monday to Friday and demand for weekend provision (same times) is gauged each week by Monmouthshire County Council. If you are a key worker and need weekend provision you should contact acesstolearning@monmouthshire.gov.uk or call 01633 644508.

Also since 20th April we have widened the attendance criteria slightly to offer provision for a narrow range of vulnerable pupils with additional needs. But as I wrote previously, this is childcare of last resort for families where both parents are key workers.

Business as Usual?

As I write, there is no clear expectation of when schools will reopen. Whenever this does happen it is likely that it will be a staggered reopening but we are some way from knowing what

those arrangements will involve and further still from knowing when this might begin. However rapid change has characterised the past few months; I will of course communicate what I can with you, when I am able to.

As you'd imagine closing a school while ensuring a continued learning offer in over 300 different homes is quite a challenge. This is ongoing work and, like for many parents in your role I'm sure, the usual business of running the school continues and we have switched to routine online video meetings as a Leadership Team. As a headteacher I have similar weekly conferences with Chepstow and Monmouthshire colleagues. Next month we will be holding the first ever virtual meeting of the full governing body as well as various committee work and my colleagues are working hard on planning learning, evaluating their areas of leadership, professional learning and the usual summer term business such as arranging for our new reception pupils' arrival in the autumn and looking at transition arrangements for our Year 6 leavers. The message is the same as you get whenever you contact any organisation currently, we're working at home but essential contact is possible via thedellprimary@monmouthshire.gov.uk.

Is your child missing Chess Club?

...or looking for a new challenge during the school closure? There's now FREE membership for children to the world's best & most secure children's chess website. Watch an explainer video by [CLICKING HERE](#) & sign up by [CLICKING HERE](#)

Thank You

We've had a lot of messages and good wishes from parents and carers in the final week of school and since the school closed both in relation to the switch to remote learning and key worker provision and we really appreciate the support and kindness. Grateful thanks also go to Nathan's parents who own Silver Circle Distillery in Catbrook and who donated 5l of hand sanitiser that they now produce for our Chepstow key worker hub school this week. Thank you for helping us and our community and to stay safe.

Happy Memories of our School

Five weeks ago our school closed, quite suddenly. Our school culture is strong & clear and makes us what we are. Here's a reminder, "We are..."

CLICK HERE

Remember you can watch all our end of year videos since 2013. You can also download them for your child to look back on their days at primary school. They are all on our website [CLICK HERE](#)

There's loads more info on our website
www.dell.monmouthshire.sch.uk

STAY AT HOME
SAVE LIVES

STAY AT HOME
PROTECT THE NHS
save lives

monmouthshire
sir fynwy



Links to Our Website

CLICK a picture to go directly to the website page

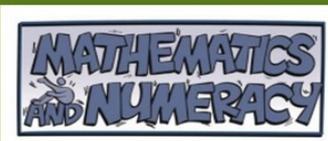
Extended Home Learning Menus

CLICK HERE

Starting Point for Home Learning



Helpful Websites



Helpful Websites



Helpful Websites



Helpful Websites



Helpful Websites



Health & Wellbeing Resources

Wellbeing & Mental Health Support



...of the week

Exciting Awe & Wonder Websites



Welsh Resources

Sentences for each Year Group



Read Write Inc. Resources

Phonics Explainers & Practise



Weekend Creativity Challenges!

Weekend Creative Challenges



Physical Activities & Exercise

Practical Ideas for Exercise



The Dell FM Shows

Explore Types of Music



Practise Number Skills



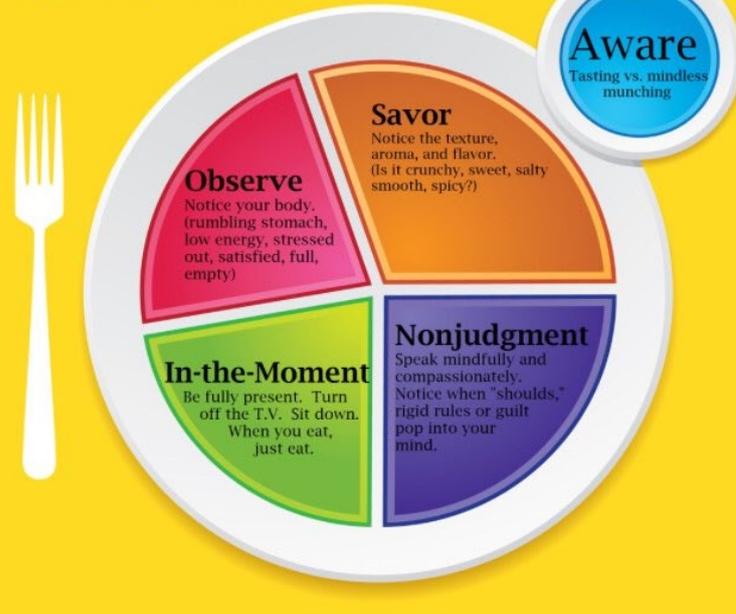
Learning Guidance for Parents

Guidance on Learning, Online Safety
and Coronavirus

Health and Wellbeing This Month

Mindful Eating

www.eatingmindfully.com



1 Be Inspired
Open your mind to a new experience, idea, challenge or relationship EVERY day.

2 Notice
Notice what is going on around you. Notice your senses, feelings and emotions.

3 Be Active
Do a physical exercise, move your body, make your brain work hard for a bit. Get outside, breathe fresh air.

4 Self Care
Take a few minutes each day to do something you love. Balance what you do for others and yourself.

5 Be Still
Take a few minutes to be still. Practise mindfulness. Give your mind a rest. Switch off.

5 Daily Habits for Good Personal Wellbeing
(from our Wellbeing & Mindfulness Team)

Soothing meditations	Sleep meditations	Sleep Stories
Calm Music	Calm Body	Calm Masterclass
Calm Kids	Mindfulness Resources	Practices to find ease

Protect yourself and others from getting sick

Wash your hands



- after coughing or sneezing
- when caring for the sick
- before, during and after you prepare food
- before eating
- after toilet use
- when hands are visibly dirty
- after handling animals or animal waste



by Elizabeth Jenner, Kate Wilson & Nia Roberts
Illustrated by Axel Scheffler

CLICK TO DOWNLOAD FREE

Coronavirus

A book for children

YOUNGMINDS

Support for children (AND Parents) at
www.youngminds.org.uk

Monmouthshire Family Support Services



Monmouthshire's fantastic support agency, which helps families with advice and signposting. Helplines are available Monday to Friday between 10am and 3pm .
Call - 01633 644152 / 07970166975
For Info [CLICK HERE](#)
To watch an info video [CLICK HERE](#)



This Month's PE, Sport and Dell Dragons Updates

(Everyone who represents the school in sport is a Dell Dragon)

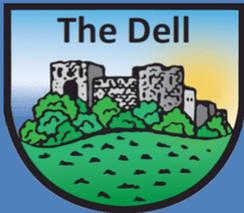


Trials for Cross Country were very popular



We welcomed Nadia & Jasmin from the Wales Women's Football Team. They spoke in assembly, led a ball skills training session and were interviewed on The Dell FM. Thanks to Alannah & Raya's dad Laurence for facilitating this visit.

[CLICK HERE](#) to watch the video [CLICK HERE](#) to listen to the interview



HOME OF

THE DELL DRAGONS



Some of our Outdoor Learning this month. . . [\(CLICK HERE for more\)](#)



Our Community Team planted a shrub kindly donated by Bethan & Jamie's mum



Year 3 practising written maths strategies in their outdoor area

Part of our Foundation Phase Eisteddfod on St. David's Day 2020



Another batch of foil crisp packets being sent off for recycling to @terracycleuk by our Eco Team. Collected by our local community

Welsh ladies...and a daffodil!



Reception classes learned about Africa, it's food and the Big 5!

Chepstow Male Voice Choir sing for St. David's Day. [CLICK HERE](#) to watch & listen

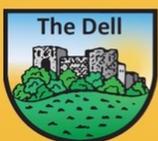


...and they worked very well together developing their team skills



When Your Child Gets a Place at The Dell!

We look forward to welcoming our 60 new pupils in September. We'll be in touch with all the information you'll need for your child soon.



Courage
Friendliness

Trust
Happiness

Love
Politeness

Independence
Respect

Be kind
Be your best

