



Woodmancote School  
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# Newsletter

[www.woodmancoteschool.co.uk](http://www.woodmancoteschool.co.uk)

## Newsletter 16. 26<sup>th</sup> February 2021

### March 8<sup>th</sup> Full School Reopening

We are looking forward to welcoming everyone back to school on the 8<sup>th</sup> March. Early next week we will be sending out an updated reopening document, but many of the control measures we had in place in the Autumn Term will be the same.

Look out for the document next week, but in the meantime please take the time to read the article below by James Williams. It makes interesting reading!

### Why there's no such thing as lost learning

Children don't have to learn core content now - we musn't let them think they are 'losers', writes James Williams

*James Williams is a senior lecturer in education at the School of Education and Social Work, University of Sussex. The following piece may be of interest to parents.*

The move to delivering online teaching is problematic. Children may be living in homes with poor wi-fi, in data poverty or with no access to a suitable device.

While these are problems that hit the headlines and gain a lot of media traction, there is an underlying narrative that's a lot more harmful than not being able to view a lesson at home. It is the narrative that our children are losing out and falling behind, and that they need to catch up.

As the situation has developed across the first lockdown and this one, I've been listening to media interviews and have noticed a worrying narrative. A popular line of questioning to parents and children is about "lost learning".

The narrative focuses on the idea that children only have one chance: that what is not done now is lost, and this is extremely damaging for their future education or employment prospects.

The danger here is that we risk creating a generation of children who will forever be known as the "lost" generation. But their learning has not been lost - because you cannot lose something you never had.

### *Coronavirus: The impact of school closures*

I could claim I "lost" a lot of learning in history, geography and music because I didn't study these at O level. Yet, over the years, I have gained more knowledge about these subjects than I could ever have lost, missing out on two years of study.

And this is the crux of the problem. If we keep on convincing children that they only have this one opportunity, right now, to gain this learning or it's all over, we will be responsible for convincing children they are being disadvantaged for life, regardless of whether or not they are.

The fact is that we - as a community of politicians, teachers and education experts - decide what any child must know, understand or be able to do at each age, not some natural law of learning. Why should a child know the structure of a cell membrane by the age of 16? I couldn't know that information at 16 because it had not yet been fully discovered and described. But I learned it at a later stage.

We could just as easily change what we require children to know, understand and be able to do as leave it alone. Change will, of course, have knock-on consequences, but they are consequences I think we can accept and adjust for.

There's a very good phrase that many teachers bear in mind when planning



lessons: "Start where the child is at." Rather than running around like headless chickens, bemoaning what's been lost this past year, let's plan to find out what learning has taken place. This is what our assessment over the coming months should concentrate on.

### *Focus on the gains, not the losses*

Rather than devising multiple variations on what we've always done - testing children - perhaps we need a new approach that looks to review holistically their learning, place it in context and use that to adapt the next stages of learning.

We can use information from test results, assessments of work done and even - dare I say it - reflections of the teachers who know the children best like an end-of-year report. It can detail what was covered and how much time was missed or spent online.

The curriculum we are supposedly testing and assessing children on was designed for a time when there was no pandemic, no blended or online teaching and learning. Currently, all I see is people going crazy over what's being lost, and trying to shoehorn the non-pandemic curriculum into a totally different landscape.

Let's try thinking more holistically. We have a rare opportunity here to reshape our educational landscape and make it better. Why are we not planning to teach far less, but teaching it so that children gain a greater depth of understanding, rather than a breadth of superficial knowledge?

For those who would argue that we can't teach less because it would disadvantage young people entering the workforce, I'd ask how much of the core knowledge you learned in all your O levels, GCSEs, A levels or even degree is used day to day.

Employers continually bemoan the fact that graduates don't have the "right" knowledge for their industries. That's true. Why are physics graduates so often employed as commodity traders? It's not because they can explain forces or how gravity works or why fluids behave the way they do. It's their skills in mathematics and logic.

Children are learning at home, with or without a device. By "learning", I don't mean remote lessons in English, maths or science. Children have more free time to explore arts and crafts, music and any number of life skills, from baking to improving their IT abilities. We need to talk about all these things they have gained, and not just focus on what's been "lost".

We're making a huge error thinking that the only time children can learn the core content of the current curriculum is now. Let's change that, so we don't unwittingly convince a whole cohort of children that they are just losers.

### **House Photograph Competition Reminder**



It's House competition time again and we would like you to send in a winning photograph with the theme of 'Hello Spring'. House points will be awarded to all

entries with additional points given to the winners. Entries need to be in by Friday 19<sup>th</sup> March and can be sent digitally to class teachers via Dojo or email. There are already some very early signs of Spring so you may want to make the most of them! Thank you for those we have received already.

## Junior Bake Off

My name is Charis and I'm a Casting Researcher at Love Productions; the company behind The Great British Bake Off, The Great British Sewing Bee and The Great Pottery Throw Down.

We are delighted to say, that we have recently opened applications for the 7<sup>th</sup> series of **Junior Bake Off**; a Channel 4 programme that celebrates the culinary talent and ambition of the younger generation in Britain.

With this in mind, we are contacting schools in hope that they can help us spread the word regarding this exciting opportunity.

We are looking for young budding bakers between **9 -15 years old**.

Filming would take place from July 2021, but our **applications close on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2021**.

Interested bakers can apply online at - [WWW.APPLYFORJUNIORBAKEOFF.CO.UK](http://WWW.APPLYFORJUNIORBAKEOFF.CO.UK)

## STEM week 8<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> March

STEM week is taking place on the 8<sup>th</sup> March and for a week we will focus on Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM). We still need volunteers to bring the subjects alive in class with demonstrations and wizardry. So if there is anyone who would like to record something for a year group or has any bright ideas that we could share please get in contact. Thank you in advance as our STEM community blows me away every year with your generosity and enthusiasm.

Mrs Holding and the STEM team

Please contact:

[lholding@woodmancote.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:lholding@woodmancote.gloucs.sch.uk)

## Times Tables Rock Stars Competition

Don't forget to log in and play, practicing those times tables, trying to get as many correct answers as possible. We will be playing in school, but don't forget to also log on at home. It's open from 1pm - 5pm on weekdays until Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March.

Mrs McCormack

## Cleeve Residential Laptops Donation



We would like to say a huge thank you to Cleeve Residential Sales & Lettings who kindly purchased 8 new laptops for the school. These will be borrowed by children for remote learning when needed, as well as being used by children in school.

## World Book Day

World Book Day is next week but we have postponed our dress-up until all children are back in school. Date to be confirmed.



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### **Outdoor Learning Area**

A massive thank you also to Mr Burton for his work in our outdoor learning area. The children have loved working with the stakes and mallets he made and the new bug hotels look amazing.



### **Foodbank Vouchers**

As the lockdown continues we are very aware that the financial burdens on families increase!

PLEASE do get in touch if you'd like to request some foodbank vouchers to help meet the needs of your family in these difficult times.

The local Cotswold foodbank are incredibly friendly and supportive when you go to pick up your items **OR** alternatively if you are unable to collect (no transport/self-isolating), transport can be arranged via the school.

To request simply email or telephone **Leanne McNamee** (NEST Lead) who will deal with your matter confidentially.

PLEASE DO NOT GO WITHOUT IF YOU ARE IN NEED!

Email: [lmcnamee@woodmancote.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:lmcnamee@woodmancote.gloucs.sch.uk)

Telephone: 01242 674312

### **CALM**

CALM is the Campaign Against Living Miserably. A charity providing a mental health helpline and webchat.

Phone: 000 58 58 58 (daily, 5pm to midnight)

Website: [www.thecalmzone.net](http://www.thecalmzone.net)

### **Mind**

Promotes the views and needs of people with mental health problems.

Phone: 0300 123 3393 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm)

Website: [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

### **Samaritans**

Confidential support for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair.

Phone: 116 123 (free 24-hour helpline)

Website: [www.samaritans.org.uk](http://www.samaritans.org.uk)

### **Parent Support and Advice line**

Support if you are worried about your child's mental health, emotional well-being or behaviour.

Phone: 08006525675 Mon-Wed 5pm-9pm

Tues and Sat 9.30am-1pm

Website: [www.ticplus.org/parent-carers](http://www.ticplus.org/parent-carers)



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### Contact Details

[admin@woodmancote.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:admin@woodmancote.gloucs.sch.uk)

[head@woodmancote.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:head@woodmancote.gloucs.sch.uk)

[thepta@woodmancote.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:thepta@woodmancote.gloucs.sch.uk)

[woodpeckers@woodmancote.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:woodpeckers@woodmancote.gloucs.sch.uk)

[chair@woodmancote.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:chair@woodmancote.gloucs.sch.uk)

**School Website:**

[www.woodmancoteschool.co.uk](http://www.woodmancoteschool.co.uk)

**Pre-school Website:**

<http://littlechestnutspreschoolwoodmancote.co.uk/>



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