

# Pilgrim Primary Academy

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Dear Parents and Carers,

You may be aware that over the last two weeks we have seen a rise in cases of Covid amongst our pupils and our staff. This rise in cases was predicted in the South West (due to the Omicron variant) and many other local schools have seen a similar or higher rise in absences due to Covid. I am pleased to say that we are now seeing numbers decrease again with pupils and staff returning from isolation.

I would like to reassure you that throughout this time we have maintained all of our control measures such as additional daily cleaning, the wearing of masks in communal spaces (adults), increased ventilation, frequent hand washing for pupils and maintaining social distancing where practicable.

In recognition that both nationally and in Plymouth rates amongst Primary age pupils are high, we have also sought additional guidance from our Trust Health and Safety advisors and Plymouth Public Health Service to review our Risk Assessments and implement any additional recommended enhanced measures. Public Health colleagues have stressed to us the importance of regular lateral flow device testing in order to detect the virus where symptoms may not be present. Whilst LFD testing does not take place in schools for Primary aged children, I know many families are regularly using LFD tests (if their children can tolerate it) and I am sure that this cautious approach will help reduce the transmission of the virus in our community especially when cases are generally high. Thanks to all families who have acted upon our 'Warn and Inform' letters, being alert for symptoms and, when guided to, using LFD tests with their children.

## Children's Mental Health Week

Next week is Children's Mental Health Week with the general theme being 'Growing Together'. In school we will be having a particular focus on wellbeing each day, thinking about positive affirmations and noticing things to be thankful for.

I thought I would take this opportunity to let you know about our Wellbeing strategy here at Pilgrim and all the approaches we take to support pupils' positive mental wellbeing and emotional personal development:

## Wellbeing At Pilgrim

Here at Pilgrim primary we are passionate about developing **every** skill required for life in the outside world, not just academic knowledge; which is why we put so much time and effort into raising children's awareness of themselves, their emotions, their dreams and their aspirations.

Here are just some of the things we are doing in 2022 to build character and positive mental wellbeing in our children:

## The Jigsaw PSHE curriculum:

This is the PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education) programme we use to provide structured lessons for children to learn about and reflect upon their personal development. Every year group in the school covers the same unit in focus at the same time and each Jigsaw session includes a time to share, a time to learn and a time to be mindful. Feedback from the children is that they love the sessions and it gives them a safe space to get to know each other and themselves.



## Teachhappy

Back in 2020 we began a staff-led drive to raise awareness of Wellbeing in the school as a whole. This involved staff professional development and training which was guided by the work of an educational wellbeing expert and acclaimed author, Adrian Bethune (see his website: <https://www.teachhappy.co.uk/>). Using our **Teachhappy** training, we have developed the team identities of our classes; we have team flags, team promises and a shared set of team values which we hold each other accountable to.



## Seeds of Happiness

From the Teachhappy training all of our staff are now involved in a specific development course called **Seeds of Happiness**, which will enable staff to deliver lessons designed to build the skills of happiness and contentment. Some of the skills being shared are positive psychology techniques, such as how to spot and celebrate the good and focus on the positive, how to be kind to ourselves and to others and how to believe in our goals and ambitions. The lessons also teach children the benefit of being mindful and to understand that being kind is actually good for you!

We know first-hand at Pilgrim that happy children make happy learners, and happy learners make progress towards their dreams. If you are interested further, feel free to look up this inspiring video that explains the science of happiness and the approach that underpins everything we want to achieve for our children.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hCqmfCkM0g>



## Parent voice for Wellbeing

We are always looking to hear from parents and members of the community about how we can work together for the benefit of children's wellbeing and positive mental health. If you are interested in getting involved in ways to encourage and develop our children's character and opportunity, please contact the office via email and refer your email to the 'Wellbeing Pod'.

## Recent Sporting Achievements!

In January, some of our children have represented our school at a number of Plymouth school sporting events. Our Year 5/6 Netball squad enjoyed a morning competing at the Bee Netball event hosted at Marjons Uni. They came 4<sup>th</sup> overall in their round and came back happy and proud of their performance.

We also sent a boys and a girls team to a Year 3/4 Football Tournament at Stoke Damerel Secondary School to compete against schools from across the city. Our girls slightly outshone our boys in their placing but both teams played really well, demonstrating resilience and team spirit!

Well done to all children who took part in these events and thanks for representing us so brilliantly with your positive attitudes.

## Safe Parking Reminder

This week, I have had a complaint from a resident in Hasting Terrace, who was concerned at the unsafe and careless driving by a few of our parents at pick up and drop off times. The resident witnessed cars that had parked mounted on the pavement, driving away at speed along the pavement without care and attention to pedestrians. We ask that you **DO NOT** mount the pavement when parking on the roads around school so that children, parents and other residents can use the pavements to walk safely to and from their homes and school. If you need to drive to school, please be mindful of our residents at pick up and drop off times. I will not hesitate to report unsafe driving to the police and highways department should it be seen. Thank you.

### ArtsMark Award

On a final note, I would like to say how proud I was to receive our ArtsMark Silver Award certificate in the post this week. The award will take pride of place in our school entrance as it represents the commitment that we have to maintaining a strong Arts offer in our curriculum and how we value the contribution that Art makes to an enriched and balanced experience for our children. Thanks to Miss Redmond for leading our application for this award status.



**Artsmark  
Silver Award**  
Awarded by Arts  
Council England

**Please have a good weekend and we hope to see you all back on Monday,**

**Have a good week**



**Mrs L Meek  
Headteacher**