

Somerby Standard

Message from Steve Nash, the headteacher

Dear parents and carers,
Wow. It is amazing to see so many children back in school, and to hear them chatting at break and lunchtime, and learning in lesson time. I have really missed the maroon tops bobbing around the place, and the smiles every morning as the children bound into the playground fresh and ready for a new day!

School is not the same as before the lockdown, but I am proud of how the staff have worked to make it as similar as they can so the children still feel like it's their school that they know (and hopefully love!). The children have, as usual, been brilliant at taking everything in their stride; even though we have introduced measures to make school as safe as we can, they are just getting on with things. There have been lots of very sensible questions and lots of very good listening to new routines and expectations.


If you want to see the risk assessment that has been written for the reopening of school, please see the website in the first part of the 'Key information' section.

Later on in this newsletter is an explanation of our new 'Welcome to school' curriculum, which is designed to support our children back into 'normal' school after so long away. Please read it and let me know your thoughts, which are always appreciated.


It's times like this, when I see what schools mean to our children and their families, that make me love my job – I feel very privileged to be able to work with the team here to get school up and running again!

It's lovely to see you all again, Steve.

Parental appointments

Please make an appointment in the office if you would like to speak to a member of staff about your child. I know this is a change, but we need to do this to follow government guidance. This is really appreciated, especially as some staff are in the clinically vulnerable or extremely clinically vulnerable group.  Staff will usually get back to you with a phone call.

Attendance

These are obviously still very strange times with the coronavirus pandemic affecting us all so much still. Please be vigilant to your child being ill, and do not bring them to school if they are showing signs of having coronavirus. Please also continue to remember the staggered drop off and pick up times. 

Friends Of Somerby School (FOSS)

If you'd like to join FOSS and help raise money for the children in school please see the office, who can give you all the details. It really won't take up too much of your time if you join!

Initial dates for your diary

End of autumn term 1:
Friday 16th October 2020

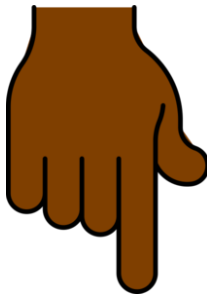
Start of autumn term 2:
Monday 26th October 2020

End of autumn term 2:
Friday 18th December 2020



Learning in school

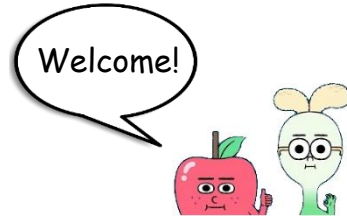
The children have wasted no time getting cracking with their new topics, and it's lovely to see some of the exciting learning that has been going on already around the school.



Please turn over to see an explanation of our 'Welcome back to school' curriculum.



Our 'Welcome back to school' curriculum



We have been thinking about what our children need now that school is fully open again. We have made a 'Welcome back to school' (recovery) curriculum which acknowledges that children will need to go over key parts of their learning and will probably have had some adverse experiences when the country was in lockdown. Such experiences could include any (and indeed all) of the following since we were last open to all children in March 2020:

1. Anxiety
2. Trauma
3. Bereavement
4. Lack of physical exercise

They have been at home for long periods of time without seeing friends and family, and without being able to do many things which they enjoy. These experiences can impact on a child's mental health and well-being, meaning they will probably have come back to school with mixed emotions.

Also, whether we wanted them to or not, children may have been exposed to adults who are more anxious than usual and not acting in their normal way.

To help support and nurture our children back to school, our 'Welcome back to school' curriculum will focus on three areas:

1. Supporting children's mental and physical health and well-being
2. Supporting children to build positive relationships with others
3. Supporting children to enjoy their learning and achieve well

Over the page is more information about what they children will learn to support those three areas, and some of the ways in which we will teach them.



1. Supporting children's mental and physical health and well-being

<p>What will children learn?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ About emotions (such as a wide variety of emotions, ways to recognise if they are feeling them, why they could be feeling them, different ways of explaining and coping with these emotions). ○ Personal hygiene so they can look after themselves and stay safe (such as handwashing, social distancing and understanding new school routines). ○ Activities and skills to look after and develop their physical health.
<p>How will they learn this?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Discussing emotions and sharing experiences of those emotions. ○ There will be clear routines for keeping safe. ○ We will give time for children to have new routines and expectations explained to them, and time for them to understand how school is both the same and different (such as staying in their class 'bubbles'). ○ They will be supported with videos, photos, demonstrations, posters etc. to learn how to be hygienic and other things such as 'Catch it, bin it, kill it'. ○ We will include more well-being and mental health sessions, and PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) sessions into each week. ○ We will use ideas and activities from ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support) such as encouraging children to reflect on their day from a well-being perspective, learning about specific emotions and their effects on people.

2. Supporting children to build positive relationships with others

<p>What will children learn?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ About building relationships with friends and school staff (such as greeting others, turn taking, sharing, playing with other children, responding to friends and adults and knowing who to go to for help and support).
<p>How will they learn this?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reminders and games/ activities to encourage them to build relationships like the ones mentioned above (including independent learning and learning with others). ○ Adults will spend time with the children, modelling (showing) them ways to interact with others. ○ There will be specific sessions on who to go to, to help us stay safe and support us at school, at home and in the local community. ○ Through opportunities to talk and listen to others (both children and adults).

3. Supporting children to enjoy their learning and achieve well

<p>What will children learn?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Key skills and knowledge for English and maths. ○ A broad range of other subjects. ○ How to celebrate successes in their learning, which could help them experience feelings they usually have in school – this will be matched to what the children can do. ○ How to improve their long term memory, so they can improve their ability to learn new concepts and overcome challenges.
<p>How will they learn this?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We will make lessons just as exciting, interesting, and fun as they were before, so that children can enjoy being in school again. ○ They will have a wide range of experiences, some that they may not have had for a while (such as playing with a number of different people or opportunities to develop their learning and understanding).



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ We will plan more opportunities for English and maths learning through each day. We will temporarily reduce the English and maths curriculums to key 'non-negotiable' objectives. These are really important skills and knowledge which children need to know to move on with their learning.○ We will start the topic learning from where they would be anyway in a normal year, though being mindful that there will more than likely be gaps in understanding.○ Learning will be structured in a familiar way (such as English, maths, phonics, and topic lessons) so children are more confident in learning.
--	---

We know that children may need more help as the whole country continues on this journey of recovery, and hope that this 'Welcome back to school' curriculum will support their learning and well-being as we do so.

For the whole team at school, our priorities are to support our children with these three areas, and the health and safety of our community.

If you have any questions about this, please ask.

Take care, and thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Nash'.

Steve Nash
Executive headteacher