

# The Swanmead Pen

Parents' Newsletter – Spring Term 2.1

DATE: Friday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2021

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Dear Parents and Carers

We come to the end of the half term and I was reminded by a Year 7 pupil this week that there had been no newsletter sent during the course of the last six weeks. Although I hope you feel that our communications have been regular, I think this young person was right to bring it to my attention and I thought, before we finish today, I should do as I was told!

As I sat down to write this, I looked through a couple of old Swanmead Pens from this time last year. As I looked at the pictures, it was an array of children playing sport, going on the Year 6 trip to Cardiff, Year 8 having had an evening out Ten-Pin Bowling and, in general, children being very close to each other in their classrooms and playgrounds. It feels such a long time ago now that we were able to run a 'normal' school and allow our young people to act like 'normal' school children. I have always enjoyed saying that Swanmead is a 'school that never sleeps' and I love the vibrancy and action-packed nature of the school days – this, I guess, makes me feel all the more frustrated that the pandemic continues to hold us back doing what we do best and being the school we normally are. As we tiptoe towards the Spring months, I really hope that a corner has been turned and that soon we will be able to allow Swanmead to be Swanmead again.

With all that said, I couldn't be prouder and more delighted with how the school community has adapted to the new virtual working school day. On a daily basis we have around 95%/96% of our children accessing their lessons each day. This is tremendous and has allowed our pupils to continue learning and enjoying a structure to their school day. I've said it several times but, as parents and carers, your contribution and support of this has been massive – we couldn't have done this without you. I must also publically thank all my teachers and support staff. They have worked so hard in difficult circumstances and, as time has progressed over the last five weeks, we've started to find our routine with this and even begun to quite enjoy the virtual lesson style!

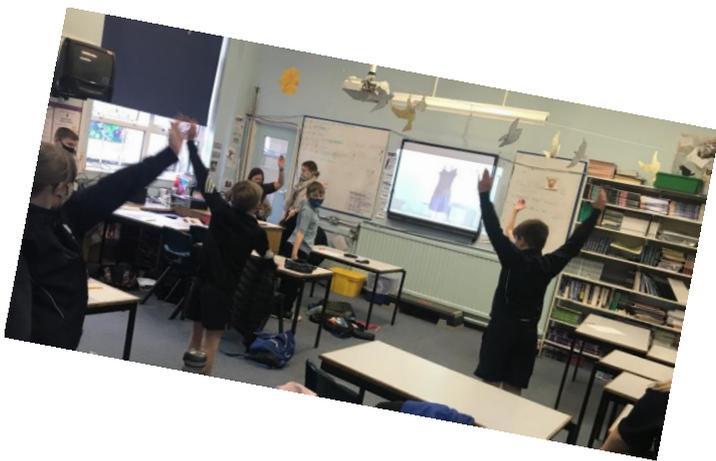
I very much hope that you and your children enjoy some positive time together over the half term break. Some time for all of us to recharge our batteries and have time away from the computer screen sounds a tempting offer.

We return to school with our virtual timetable on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February.

**Mark Walker**  
Headteacher

## Virtual Learning

Whether it has been at home in their bedrooms, on the dining room table, a laptop on their knee on the sofa or in school being supported by our staff, our children have done remarkably well accessing their weekly timetables and developing a new way of learning. Their smiles each day online, their enthusiasm to ask and answer questions as well as the quality of the work they have uploaded, have inspired us at school to strive for better and, at these times of difficulty and change, keep us going.



## **Swanmead TV Live!**

How wonderful to see the children every Wednesday and Thursday afternoon for Swanmead TV Live! A chance to get together each week to catch up with the children and to have a bit of fun. Most children are on board with us but, if not, then we encourage your child to join the Swanmead TV LIVE classroom and come and join us. Information on this is below;

**YEARS 5 and 6 – Wednesdays at 2-30 p.m.**  
**CLASS CODE – dh5o7uc**

**YEARS 7 and 8 – Thursdays at 2.30 p.m.**  
**CLASS CODE – k2qwwja**



## **Mrs Oaten playing her part**



As many of us relax and recharge over the weekend, we are all very proud of our lovely Mrs Oaten. In her role as a First Responder, she has journeyed to Bristol to support the paramedics in their role treating the unwell and injured during this challenging time for the NHS. Our children wrote poems and letters of gratitude to these paramedics which Mrs Oaten delivered to them last weekend. Pictured are two of our heroes with their special correspondence from the children of Swanmead.

## **COVID-19 Testing underway for our staff and children**

Our thanks to Mrs Spurway, Mr McMeakin, Mrs Mee and Mrs Gray for all the work they have done setting up the Swanmead COVID-19 Testing Centre. This facility is open each Wednesday and Thursday where our staff and onsite children in Years 7 and 8 are able to have a weekly Lateral Flow Test. As you would expect there are strict rules and regulations for this facility and it has been reassuring for our staff and pupils to have the chance to have this test each week. This facility will continue to be used and accessed when our children return to school in the future.



## **Parents Evenings**

Please make a note of the up and coming Parents Evening dates coming up after the half term break. Year 6 Parents already have their platform to begin booking appointments.

**Year 6 Parents' Evening - Tuesday and Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> March – 4.00 p.m. – 6.00 p.m.**

**Year 7 Parents' Evening - Tuesday and Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> March – 4.00 p.m. – 6.00 p.m.**

**Year 8 Parents' Evening - Tuesday and Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> March – 4.00 p.m. – 6.00 p.m.**

**Year 5 Parents' Evening - Tuesday and Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> April – 4.00 p.m. – 6.00 p.m.**