

The SWAN Principles



As we move towards school re-opening, we wanted to outline our guiding principles for how to move forward through this transition as smoothly as possible. As a school, we will be adopting the following imagery and acronym:

Be the SWAN

Safe

Welcoming

All together

Nurturing



creative
EDUCATION

*With huge thanks and credit to Dr Pooky
Knightsmith from Creative Education.*



Safe

We want you and your child to feel safe, calm and re-assured, and to know that it will be okay to come back to school. So we are already working on creating an environment that is and feels physically and emotionally safe for all of us. We want to build up predictability and consistency around hygiene and other safety rules which school staff will role-model noticeably, and praise your child for following accordingly. We will support any child through any misunderstandings and refer to the benefits of what we are doing.

Welcoming

When the children return, we want them to feel excited and happy coming into school and we want them to know that we are genuinely delighted to have them back and to be able to see them again. We have sincerely missed them. They will need to know that they belong, and feel a part of things and we will do everything we can to enable this.

All Togetherness

So, how can we create these warm, welcoming feelings of care and nurture when we can't touch and need to keep a safe distance? We need to create a truly inclusive environment in which the children feel surrounded by support, and know that they can rely on all the adults around them and that we are all reinforcing the same messages and sense of togetherness.

Nurturing

Recent research conducted at Reading University highlights the importance of allowing the children time and space to play and to re-connect socially with their peers. A key point is to play the long game here, and not rush ahead with trying to make up for lost time or to add intense academic pressure and stress to the children, some of whom are already in a high alert state.

Initially, we will focus primarily on settling your children in, on meeting their social and emotional needs first and foremost, and on their readiness to learn skills. The general expert consensus is that we should be laying the foundations for them in terms of nurture first and foremost, not solely teaching them in the plain, traditional sense.

This Covid generation of children are going to be unique, and we want to enable them to flourish which will not be an overnight job. We have the potential to do a lot of good here, and to repair the significant rupture that this virus has caused and to prepare our children to be strong adults in the future as well as happy and resilient children in their present.

Anticipating their concerns

It's important to recognise that each child is unique, and that they may have had very different experiences of Home Learning and staying at home, even within the same family. Many children will naturally have mixed feelings and attitudes about coming back to school. A tip is to be alert and attuned to how your child is feeling as they might have a particular worry about returning to school that can be addressed. With younger children (3-7), playing together may be your best way of identifying what their concerns are. They often play and draw what they are thinking about, sometimes repeatedly. With older children talking can be easier through a shared activity like walking the dog or baking a cake.

Thank you for everything that you are doing to support your child at home. It is appreciated.

Take care and I look forward to welcoming you all back in September.