

Thu 25/02/2021 12:21

Dear Colleagues,

### **Roadmap or Temporary Road Closure?**

Tuesday's long awaited roadmap for England had very welcome elements, not least that education would be the priority. The steps and indicative dates give us something to work towards and we are ploughing through the implications for all of our products and holiday offers. Unfortunately this roadmap is rather like the road atlas where your destination is on a missing page or hidden in the crease. The DfE guidance that advises against school visits is unaccountably still in place with no news of a review date. This position is increasingly at odds with the government's aim and other guidance which has a clear timetable for relatively early reopening of outdoor activities, holiday camps and tuition. The roadmap itself now advocates that the national guidance should be 'hands, face, space and letting fresh air in' and the benefits of being outdoors were again highlighted by the Deputy Chief Medical Officer in yesterday's briefing. Whilst FSC and many others in the sector work to get this anomaly sorted out, we are unable to provide absolute clarity to some of our customers who have bookings with us as to whether their planned trip can definitely go ahead. The team are contacting all of them this week with a holding email, explaining our position but you can see that we need clarity from DfE fast.

### **Stay at Home Policy**

Staff should continue to work from home where they can. Even when the 'stay at home' rule ends on 29th March many restrictions will remain in place. For those who are not required to be at a location directly working with or supporting customers, working from home will remain in place until 21st June at the earliest and any return for staff who can continue to work from home/more flexibly after that will be reviewed in the coming months. Dates will be informed by the government's intended review of social distancing measures and face coverings.

### **Outdoor Education raised in the house**

Top marks to Castle Head's MP Tim Farron for having to wait until almost the last few minutes of the Roadmap announcement to get in his [question about reopening of outdoor learning](#). It was a well-pitched question and the PM understandably looked flummoxed at the illogical position that the DfE had put him and us in, namely that indoor learning can restart from the 8<sup>th</sup> March but outdoor learning can't. The PM's Latin response showed that he thought it was obvious that outdoor learning should reopen and that he was going to find out why not. We don't yet know the outcome of those conversations. In the meantime we are pressing our own MPs again and representatives from the sector continue to meet with DfE.

### **Digital Kit**

No-one could have foreseen just how long we would be working from home and the Digital team have done wonders in helping us all move almost overnight to home working and then keep the systems running. In fact I've been asked to mention Owain again who not only fixes laptops but manages to bring a sense of calm to very stressed staff experiencing an IT crisis. Almost a year on, we know that some equipment feels like it's held together with baler twine, duct tape or in Andy Cawthray's case, chicken wire. With demand outstripping

supply due to the pandemic and Brexit, lead times for equipment are longer than usual so it's not always easy sourcing equipment at the moment. With that in mind please let Digital know as soon as possible if you start to experience problems with your kit, they will do their best to find a solution for you as fast as possible within the constraints of the supply chain. The best way to contact them is via [digital@field-studies-council.org](mailto:digital@field-studies-council.org)

### **Nature Friendly Schools teacher announces “Mud is OK”**

Through the challenges of this past year school staff across England have been continuing their work with the Nature Friendly Schools project. Over this year the Nature Friendly Schools project team have delivered live CPD webinars to over 120 school staff from nearly 50 different schools across England. FSC staff received some fantastic feedback about the positive impacts the NFS project is having upon pupils, teachers and schools, including that “Children, in all areas of the school absolutely love getting outside and it is highly likely that on most days, muddy children will be in the school”. Spare a thought for the housekeeping staff at this school! Find out more about the impact of Nature Friendly Schools CPD webinars [here](#).

### **Staff Health and Wellbeing Session**

If you were not able to attend the all staff health and wellbeing session on Monday, it will be repeated next Wednesday, 3 March, at 13.00 and lasts about 40 minutes. Or if you'd like to see the recording of the previous session, [here is the direct link](#)

### **Follow up Radio Shropshire Interview about #primarynaturelive**

After Simon Ward's successful radio interview and discussion on whirlygig beetles, he was invited back for a follow up on how the sessions have gone down with learners, parents and teachers. One of the many advantages of local radio is that interviews tend to be less hurried so there was a good chunk of time to talk about the project, its impact and FSC more widely. There was even time to offer advice on looking after frogs in the cold weather. You can hear the interview [here](#) from 2:41.

Stay safe and keep well

Mark