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12.6.2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Well done to all the children who have been continuing with the home learning, I have been hearing of some excellent examples of project work, maths, history and writing that has been going on. I'm also very impressed with those that have been extending their learning to paddle boarding, skateboarding and baking! If you have any lovely photos that you would be happy for us to display on our Facebook page, please do send them in to admin@stjo.uk.

The yr. 6 children in school and at home have been enjoying looking at some ideas for their Leavers' Presentation. Mr Empson, Mrs Jukes and Mrs Monks have been very busy co-ordinating it all and I can't wait to see the end result!

Hopefully you will have seen on our Facebook page that we have been awarded a Positivity badge for our work with children and families during the Coronavirus. Please feel free to like any of the posts, it is lovely to see they have reached people. We have also been awarded the Music Mark, which is given to schools who demonstrate their commitment to delivering high quality music to their children. Our thanks goes to Mrs Nelmes and Miss Hawker who have been key leads in this.

I am sure that you are aware that this week the Secretary of State for Education clarified the government's position regarding the full opening of primary schools for a month before the end of term. He has admitted that most schools do not have the capacity, in terms of both physical space and teachers, to welcome back all students.

Whilst this announcement was not unexpected it is still very hard to accept that there are some children we will not see again until September. The staff all feel concerned for the children who remain at home; we know that many have been keeping up with some of their learning at home, but this can never replace the social and academic experience of physically being at school.

At present, because of our staffing numbers, the restrictions in place, the groups who have already returned to school, along with the expanding number of children requiring our key worker provision, this means unfortunately, we currently do not have the capacity to take any more year groups at this time.

I am also aware that there is growing uncertainty and speculation in the media about the summer holidays and September. We still do not know any more than you and we wait to receive more guidance, which hopefully will come out soon from the Government.

With the end of term just six weeks away we urgently need government to provide as much clarity as possible about their plans for September and beyond – including anticipated

constraints that schools may face. We need to plan ahead, possibly for several scenarios, so time is of the essence.

From the very outset of this crisis, we have done our best to do the right thing for our children and their families. We are still committed to achieving a full return to education for all our children in a safe way, as soon as possible.

Whilst planning for various different possibilities I am working with our Academy to investigate ways of blending home and school learning with online platforms in case we are to need it in September.

To keep you up to date with the picture across all Devon schools, Devon has released the following data:

91% of Devon mainstream schools are partially open, with 9% remaining closed.

23% of Devon primary school children are attending school at some point across the week compared to 11% nationally.

36% of children offered a place in yr 6 in Devon primary school have taken up the offer.

We have also been told we can share this Devon data with you which may be helpful rather than reading speculation on social media. This data has come straight from the Local Authority and I have copied and pasted it directly from their email:

Infection Rates – Devon data

As of 03/06/2020 there have been 1,094 confirmed cases of COVID. Please note that continued policy changes around testing will result in fluctuations. Therefore we expect to see increases in confirmed cases in the coming days and weeks.

As of 01/06/2020 there have been 162 registered COVID deaths

Deaths across Devon have plateaued and we have not seen any recent deaths due to COVID in almost two weeks. Any deaths registered over the last couple of weeks have related to earlier dates and are less than a count of 5.

As of 03/06/2020, there were 13 COVID patients in hospitals across Devon. Due to the sensitivity of the data, we cannot confirm how many are in ICU but we can confirm that it is a count of less than 5.

Devon ranks 145 out of 150 upper tier LAs across the country for confirmed cases per 100,000 resident population (Rank 1 = highest rate of cases)

I hope this provides you with more information and some clarity in these uncertain times. As always I will keep you informed of any changes as we hear them.

For those of you we are not seeing regularly, teachers will continue to phone but please contact us if there is anything else we can do to support you at this time.

Thank you for your continued support

Best wishes

Nicky Taylor-Bashford