

Friday 8th January 2021

Dear all,

Well this wasn't quite the first week back we were expecting, New Year's Day seems an eternity ago! We are again in a position of being told that schools are shut. However, this is not an accurate picture – we are far from shut! As staff we are still all attending school on a daily basis with all of our classrooms open and being used. We currently have many children attending school as they are identified by the Government as being critical workers or vulnerable children.

Whilst we are open to children who meet the criteria for a school place and will accommodate every request for a place that we are able to, please can I remind everyone that the purpose of the Government's decision to close schools was to minimise the risk of transmission so I urge parents to only send children in where it is essential to do so. If you are at home, please keep your children at home with you.

However, despite many of the news headlines we remain very positive and learning has continued for all, whether that be in school or remotely! I am very proud of the way staff, who with less than 24hrs notice adapted to yet another way of working.

This time round lockdown is very different to last March. There are a lot more critical workers and government guidance is very different. This time round the expectation is that remote learning will be completed and as much as possible follow what the children in school are learning.

I appreciate this has created anxiety for many parents. We are directed by the Government to provide a set number of hours of home learning. However, we also understand that it is very difficult for parents to set aside time when they are working or have multiple children in a household. Please be reassured that we fully understand the challenge. I want to reassure you all that we do understand this and are happy to support in any way that we can. Our biggest difficulty, as a school, is making sure that the work and our approach is suitable for all of our families. I recognise that some of you would prefer to have more work set, whilst others find the Online Learning quite overwhelming and some would rather set their own learning. Many of the programmes we are using we started the children on last term so they should be familiar with them but please contact us if you/your child are struggling with accessing the home learning. Teachers and I have spoken to many parents this week reassuring them and going through different ways to support. Whilst the learning set needs to be completed where possible it should never negatively impact on people's mental well-being.

The remote learning so far is going really well. As I said in the previous letters all staff are in teaching the children in school so can't be online all day answering questions as they are still doing their usual day job in school, albeit with less children. Work submitted will be marked but again this will not be instant. The teachers are working harder than ever to deliver high quality learning to children in school and at home. Please be kind to them. We, as you are, are doing our very best.

Alongside the work set remotely, the daily online meetings start for children on Monday 11th. It is really important all children attend this each day. For safeguarding it is vital that any meeting links are not shared. If you can't find the meeting link please contact the office or go through google classroom, do not ask others to text or email it to you. It is also really important that on the device your child is using that it has their name or if the family use it, it could be under the surname. Please do not have it called 'Mum's ipad' etc otherwise teachers won't know who is trying to join.

We have loaned out a lot of Chrome books this week to support remote learning. Hopefully, everyone has contacted us now who doesn't have access. We are waiting for the government to let us order some from them as so far we have not received any. The latest guidance says we can order from 15th but we will see.

Families who receive income based free school meals have all been contacted to say the arrangements for meals from Monday. If these families haven't replied to the email yet please do so asap.

As per government guidance all schools are being told to reopen nursery settings. So our nursery will reopen on Monday next week. Mrs Keeping will be in touch with our nursery families to make sure you are aware and for you to let us know when/if your child will be attending. We look forward to seeing some of our youngest children back next week.

As I said before, unfortunately, we have had to close Breakfast and After School Club for the time being. If you had any sessions booked please log on and untick them. The same goes for any lunches you may have booked in advance. It saves us having to go in and untick every individual one otherwise ParentPay will take the money.

Thank you so much for all your support this week. We have received some wonderful messages of support which really helps keep everyone going.

Stay safe
Best wishes
Mrs Taylor-Bashford