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Newsletter no. 7

18th January 2021

Dear Parents

Happy New Year everyone! What a very strange two weeks we have had. Fully open, then open to some, then closed, then open to some again and then open to some and Nursery! I am now on version 18 of some documents!

Remote Learning

We have all completed two weeks of remote learning and, largely, everything seems to have gone rather well. I must thank everyone - staff, pupils and parents - for your roles in ensuring this continues to everyone's best ability and benefit. A sincere thank you to everyone who has taken time to contact school with informal feedback regarding our remote learning. The many positive comments have given staff a real boost. As part of our continuous drive for improvement and to ensure we keep up the momentum of remote learning we would like to ask all parents who have a child learning remotely to click on this [SURVEY LINK](#). If you have multiple children, please complete a separate form for each child to ensure we get specific and actionable feedback for each class/year group.

Google Meets and live lessons

Related to this, could I ask you to support your child to try their very best to log onto their GoogleMeets/Lessons at the "exact" time and definitely not before or after the lesson starts. Similarly, again because of technical issues, can they log off at the end of each lesson before going to the next session.

As I am sure you will appreciate, offering a more structured remote learning programme is taking a considerable amount of planning as well as staff time to deliver. The initial feedback has been excellent, and this is something that we want to continue.

Critical Workers

Like many schools we are facing an increasing challenge due to more and more requests for on-site education for children of critical workers. As the definition of Critical Workers has been made significantly broader in this lockdown, this is causing some confusion and possible misinterpretation. To be clear, each and every one of my staff and I believe that the best place for all children is to be in school, being taught by their teachers. However, the country has been put into a national lockdown, where the whole purpose of "closing" schools is to dramatically reduce the numbers of young people in school and therefore reduce the number of contacts capable of transmitting the virus. We are continuing to see exceptionally high rates of onsite pupil attendance, at least 4 to 5 times those in the previous lockdown, and unfortunately this is becoming unsustainable. I appreciate that we have a very diverse range of parental occupations where Critical Worker status will be particularly high. So far every parent who has requested Critical Worker provision has been supported and offered a place. However, this may have to change in order to be able to continue the remote learning programme, which still supports the majority of our pupils. A letter was shared this morning explaining our process, which is available on the school website. We appreciate that supporting Home Learning is very challenging, as it is for all families. Please don't worry about not being able to support your child throughout the day and just get done what you can. Staff have already adapted some Home Learning to make elements as independent as possible, and will continue to do so.

Attendance

As a school we are duty bound to follow up any pupils who are not engaging in work and we have an internal process for this. With this in mind we know there will be instances where pupils working at home become poorly, as they would do in normal circumstances. Please can we ask parents to keep us informed of illness and report as you normally would so that staff do not contact families unnecessarily regarding incomplete work or non-engagement in remote learning.

End of year assessments

As you may have read, all end of year assessments for Primary pupils have been cancelled. We have not yet been informed how we are to share pupil's progress etc, but once we do find out, we will of course let you know.

Parents' Evenings

We are planning to continue with our parents' evening. All will be held remotely. Two weeks prior to the Parents Evening the booking facility should be available.

And finally ...

Thank you for your continued support in, as I said earlier, this far from ideal situation. After the u-turns, policy twists, guidance re-writes and uncertainties of last week, this week is feeling somewhat different, and more positive. Inevitably, of course, these affect people and families in very different ways. Some benefit and some do not, and I am genuinely sorry that we are unable to meet every specific, individual request, but we are trying to do the very best for our pupils, staff and local community. Thank you for your comments. Your overwhelming support for the school is very much appreciated and helps further drive what we are collectively trying to achieve.



Take care

Mr P Craig