



LANCHESTER E.P. (Cont.) PRIMARY SCHOOL



Weekly Bulletin 3: Friday 29th January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

I think it is probably fair to say that everyone has found this week to be the greatest challenge so far. Week 4 of home schooling seems to have taken its toll on parents, children and school staff alike. I think we all have to remember that January is always a tough month anyway after the Christmas festivities. Add into the mix another national lockdown, no immediate end to it all and children who are desperate for some normality, it makes for an exceptionally challenging time.

Nobody has any answers. Nobody can really truly help. Nobody could ever have imagined how tough, lonely and frustrating it would be. But everyone is in this together. Everyone is finding it hard. Everyone is ready to be back to normal – whatever the new normal will look like. Everyone is desperately trying to remain as upbeat and positive for others, whilst many are struggling inwardly themselves.

We recognise this and want to support you as much as we possibly can. If this means that you do not complete every piece of school work, that is fine. If it means that you need an afternoon away from the computer screen, that is fine. Just tell us. We are here to provide remote learning but we are also here to provide that emotional support as well. We miss seeing you on a daily basis when we are able to reassure you about things so just drop us an email instead – we are all human ourselves and recognise the daily struggles that many of you are experiencing.

Please do not stress about the work your child is or isn't doing or if they are finding it tricky. You are first and foremost their parents – not their teachers. All children will be re-visiting work on their return and we will have time, resources, interventions and additional staffing to ensure that no child is penalised for work they did or did not complete during this time.

Instead, use this time to enjoy being with your child. Do those things that you never quite found the time for – whether it is a board game or a jigsaw or some baking. I hope, in time, we will all look back on this time and remember those special things we did together as a family – I don't think we will remember the wonderful Maths or English work they produced! I really do mean it when I say we are all in this together and we will get through this together.

Testing in Schools

I was quite apprehensive about beginning the lateral flow tests in school this week. All staff are now testing themselves twice weekly to help protect the whole school community. With almost one third of adults said to be asymptomatic, I was rather worried we would have a staffing headache this week! However, I am delighted to say that it threw up no surprises at all and it has all gone very smoothly. Let's hope I am not tempting fate by saying this!!!

Announcement about Return To School Date

It was quite ironic that I wrote in my email on Wednesday morning that you would find out this information at the same time as me – and that's exactly what happened just a few hours later on Wednesday afternoon! Boris Johnson stated that the earliest date children would return to school is Monday 8th March. That is all that was said and there was no more detail – probably because it is not known yet. What I am anticipating I suppose is some kind of phased return to school but I think primary schools will certainly return before secondary schools. I do hope that we can have all children in before Easter and that the summer term is more or less 'normal'. Let's just hope that is what can happen!

Children's Mental Health Week

Next week we are collapsing the curriculum every afternoon and recognising Children's Mental Health Week. Now, more than ever, we need to recognise the turbulent times our children are living in and give them some support, time and help them become more resilient than ever.

We have a wonderful series of special activities planned for the week:

Monday – Paul Whittaker OBE – is a deaf musician and an inspirational speaker. Some parents of our older children may remember that he has visited our school a few years ago and was truly wonderful and memorable. He is leading 3 Zoom sessions on Monday afternoon with the whole school – please refer to the times below.

Tuesday – The Beat Goes On Body Percussion are leading 3 Zoom sessions. Again, this should be a memorable session for every single child to be involved in – times of the Zoom sessions are below.

Tuesday is also French Pancake Day and our wonderful French teacher, Mrs Hamill, will be putting information on eSchools and Evidence Me about this tradition.

Wednesday – Mrs Hamill will again be leading a whole school session about a French Scavenger Hunt – I think they will all find this to be great fun!

Thursday – we have yoga sessions taking place – these will be at the normal Zoom lesson times.

Friday – we are having a special ‘express yourself’ non-uniform day when children are encouraged to wear whatever they feel shows their personality or interests. It makes a change from pyjamas and jeans and hopefully will allow the children to really express their own personalities!

Story Time – we are having a whole school story time at the end of every day. We hope this will be an oasis of calm for you as parents, as well as your children.

In addition to these wonderful activities, there will be a choice of mindfulness activities on your child’s eSchools class page or Evidence Me. I think this week is very timely bearing in mind the fact that so many children just need a little break!

MONDAY	Normal Times for Maths & English Zoom Lessons for Years 1 – 6. Normal Time for Reception Daily Zoom Call at 12 pm apart from Monday.	Paul Whittaker – Deaf Musician				Assembly & Story Time
		12pm	12.45pm	1.15pm	1.45pm	2.45pm
		Early Years	Years 5 & 6	Years 3 & 4	Years 1 & 2	Whole School
The Beat Goes On Body Percussion					Story Time	
TUESDAY		1pm	1.45pm	2.30pm		2.45pm
		Years 3 - 6	Years 1 & 2	Early Years		Whole School
		Mrs Hamill – French Scavenger Hunt				
WEDNESDAY		1pm	1.45pm			2.45pm
		Years 3 - 6	Years 1 & 2			Whole School
		Yoga Sessions				
THURSDAY	Tiny Tweeties					
	1.30pm	12.45pm	1.15pm	1.45pm	2.45pm	
	Nursery & Reception	Years 5 & 6	Years 3 & 4	Years 1 & 2	Whole School	
FRIDAY	Express Yourself Zoom	Mindfulness Zoom	Mindfulness Zoom	Mindfulness Zoom	Assembly & Story Time	
	12.15pm	12.45pm	1.15pm	1.45pm	2.15pm	
	Nursery	Years 5 & 6	Years 3 & 4	Years 1 & 2	Whole School	

Well-Being Week Craft Activities

Your child will be receiving a craft activity for them to make and keep. This will either be in their work packs if you collect them, at school if they are attending next week, or these can be posted out. Key Stage 2 children will receive a 'Rainbow Wooden Keyring Kit', Key Stage 1 children will be given a 'Rainbow Heart Mosaic Magnet Kit' and our Foundation Stage children will receive a 'Rainbow Flower Windmill Kit'.

We thought making these would be a lovely mindfulness activity and would also be a reminder to the children that we are thinking about them and missing them, and look forward to the time when we can be back at school all together. Remember, it may feel tough at the moment, but it's important to look out for rainbows when there is a storm.

Key Worker and Vulnerable Children Places in School

It is absolutely essential that ALL parents and carers who are sent the online form on a Wednesday, complete it by the deadline of 8pm on a Thursday evening so that we know our numbers for the following week. We are now full in some year groups and if your child is not on our list on a Friday morning, then quite simply, they cannot attend the following week. Therefore, it is absolutely essential that if you have not been sent the form by a Wednesday afternoon that you contact the school office. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have completed the form.

We MUST abide by our Risk Assessment and due to health and safety rules that are in place during the lockdown, we have strict numbers of children allowed in each different classroom. In a nutshell, if you have not completed the online form, then your child cannot attend and may be turned away if they are not on our register. We want to help you but we also need you to help us! Thank you.

Parents' Evening

Traditionally, we have held our spring term parents' evenings during the last week of this half term. However, we do not feel it is appropriate to have them just at the moment. What we think will be far more valuable, is a conversation prior to or just after your child returns to school in March. Then, I do feel as though the roles may be reversed and you will be telling us how your child is doing/ has done! But we do think that will have far more impact than holding them at the current point in time. I hope you agree!

Early Years News

We have a very special treat for everybody next week. Tiny Tweeties will be doing a live Zoom session of singing, music and dancing for all of EYFS at home and in school on Thursday at 1:30pm. The session will last about an hour and will include lots of the songs that your child knows well from Nursery and Reception. We do hope that your child will be able to join us for this session. We will send out the Zoom link for you via Evidence Me just before the meeting and will post a reminder of the event on Evidence Me at the beginning of the week.

On Friday, we will be having a dressing up day (see above for details) and so we are going to hold another Zoom session at 12:15pm on Friday for the Nursery children to chat to each other and show off their choice of dressing up clothes. Again, the link will be emailed out via Evidence Me by 9:30 on the day. The Zoom will last around 30 minutes maximum. If the children enjoy this, then we will look at doing more live sessions for Nursery to keep in touch with their friends. Receptions Zooms will continue daily at 12pm as normal.

Positive Thinking

A child's mental health is just as important as their physical health and deserves the same quality of support.

The parent-child connection is the most powerful mental health intervention known to mankind.

As usual, if there is anything at all that you would like to talk about, or that is concerning you, please do not hesitate to contact me at school. We are here to help and will get back to you as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Davis

Mrs Jane Davis
Head Teacher