



South Gosforth First School

'Roots to grow and wings to fly'

Dear Parents & Carers

I am sure that you will have all seen the new restrictions which have been imposed upon our region by the government which are in effect from today. The new rules ban people from meeting with others from outside of their own households or support bubbles in private homes and / or gardens (unless for very specific purposes). Residents are also advised not to socialise with other people outside of their own households or bubbles in all public venues. The restrictions will cover anyone who lives in Newcastle, Gateshead, Northumberland, North Tyneside, South Tyneside, Sunderland, and County Durham.

The government have brought in these new restrictions due to the COVID-19 infection rate rising significantly over the last few weeks in these areas, therefore scientists have recommended that stricter measures must be in place in our region in order to bring the transmission rate down quickly.

Face Masks

In light of these new restrictions and the rapidly increasing infection rate in our area, **I would like to request that our parents and carers wear a face mask at drop off and collection times each day, starting from next week please (Monday 21st September)**. Whilst this is not something which myself or Mrs Whitehouse can strictly enforce or police each day when we are outside, I would really appreciate it if our families could comply with this request, unless any of our parents and carers have a specific medical reason which inhibits them from doing so. I am aware that the risks of transmission are significantly lower outside, however, if wearing a face mask reduces this risk even further, then I believe that this is a small inconvenience to keep our community as safe as we can.

Staff Member Self Isolation

It is important to mention to everyone in our school family that unfortunately, Mrs Fields is currently having to self-isolate at home due to being contacted via 'Track and Trace' as she has been in contact with someone who has recently tested positive for COVID-19. Please rest assured that Mrs Fields is not in any way symptomatic and it will hopefully stay that way, but we are following government advice and being safe by ensuring Mrs Fields remains at home for at least the next week or so. Mrs Fields will still be working from home so will be contactable by email if anyone needs to get in touch with her for something urgent. We have managed to book a supply teacher called Mrs Emily Anderson to cover Mrs Fields' Year 1 class in her absence until the end of next week, and obviously Mrs Parker, Mrs Swinburne and Miss Anwar will still be familiar faces in Year 1 during that time.

Home Learning

Our families with children in Year 1 to Year 4 should now have received their login sheets for 'Seesaw' for their brand new classes. Please do login to the 'Seesaw' system for your child by using the QR code as soon as possible please, so that if your child does need to stay off school due to self-isolation, or even another local or national lockdown, then this will mean that we have our online platform ready to provide the home learning which we need to. Please note that our Year 1 children will continue to use 'Tapestry' until the middle of October, but will be transferring over to 'Seesaw' after this, so please do register your children as soon as possible using the instructions on the sheet provided. For our Reception families, we will have 'Tapestry' set up for your children by next week.

This correspondence is available in audio, Braille or large print if required. Please contact us to arrange this.

I would like our families to please note that home learning may take a number of guises, depending upon the situation. If there are one or two children off school in a class, the teachers will obviously be teaching the remainder of the class in school that day. However, both teachers in each year group from Year 1 to Year 4 will be given a time slot at the end of the school day to record themselves delivering some short, simple and clear videos of basic teaching points and instructions, as well as collating the appropriate resources which the children have used that day in school - these will then be uploaded on to 'Seesaw', along with the timetable of activities which the children have completed in school that week. This will ensure that there is a parity between what the children at home and school are accessing. The teachers will also ensure to give some specific, focused feedback when the children working from home have uploaded their responses on to the 'Seesaw' platform. Similarly, in Reception, staff will email timetables to each family with children who are at home for COVID related reasons, then Mrs Burnett and Mrs Wate will record themselves delivering a short, simple session of phonics, maths or whatever they deem to be appropriate for that day and these will be shared on the 'Tapestry' platform. Families can then share their pupils' responses on the 'Tapestry' app, which Mrs Burnett and Mrs Wate will respond to. This is how we intend to manage home learning if just a few children are having to self-isolate in each class / bubble group and is what we feel is manageable for staff who will be teaching the rest of the class for that full school day.

If we were to go in to a local or national lockdown where all or the vast majority of children were at home, then our staff would endeavour to post a range of short videos each day, accompanied by appropriate resources and timetables and these would all be uploaded on to 'Seesaw' or 'Tapestry'. In this situation, our staff may not have the same teaching commitment each day in school, so therefore should have increased capacity to deliver more home learning videos and resources on our online platforms.

Please note that if a member of teaching staff became poorly, we would allocate their home learning responsibility to their year group teaching partner. If both members of teaching staff became poorly, we would introduce alternative arrangements where senior leaders would share teaching videos and resources. As well as this, it is important to make clear that this home learning arrangement would only be for pupils who were at home for a reason related to COVID-19, and not for general illnesses like sickness bugs etc.

Homework Activity Timetables

Please look out next week for the 'Homework Activity Timetables' which we will be emailing out to our Reception and Year 1 families and uploading on to 'Seesaw' for our children in Y2 to Y4. These will have specific instructions on them for what the children need to do, but the focus will be on the children completing a range of short, focussed, easy to manage activities throughout the week which consolidate the learning which the children have been doing in school. The children will then be asked to share their responses to these activities on 'Seesaw' or 'Tapestry'. The first activity timetables will be going out on Friday 25th September and the children will have until the following Friday to complete the activities. Parents and carers will also have a space to write any notes on the sheet to give feedback to the teachers and sign to verify that the children have completed the activities.

Family Consultation Days

I am aware that I did mention having some 'Reciprocal Family Consultation Sessions' early in this term at the end of last academic year. After receiving advice from the local authority and all of the teaching unions, unfortunately, we are unable to have any of our families in the school building at the moment, therefore we will be conducting these consultation sessions via telephone appointment. Families will still sign up for a time slot as they would normally and will also notify us of the best phone number for teaching staff to call on. During the telephone meeting, the teachers will discuss how the pupils have been since their return to school, any particular areas of strength and areas of focus, as well as speaking to parents and

carers about how the children got on with their learning during lockdown which would help to inform our provision in school. These sessions must be kept to strictly 10 minutes each in order to fit all of our families in, so please do not think that staff are being rude if they need to initiate an end to the call fairly promptly. Please do make sure that you answer the call the first time as well please, as staff simply will not have the time to keep calling back if parents and carers miss the call. It is highly likely that these calls will be from an unknown number as well, so do not be alarmed if you do not see school's number when it is your phone consultation time. The dates for these 'Reciprocal Family Consultation' phone appointments are: **Monday 12th October (2.00pm - 6.00pm) and Wednesday 14th October (2.00pm - 6.00pm)**

And Finally...

I would like to finish this letter by saying how fantastically the children have settled back in to school life since we came back at the beginning of last week. We have been astounded by the level of resilience and the conscientious attitude that all of our pupils have shown and we are so very proud of each and every one of our little people. After a period of settling the children in last week, we have been busy working on all kinds of activities to assess the children this week (continuing in to next week) and we do feel that we are now ready to begin the long process of academic recovery. We know that we all have a lot of work to do together, but we know that our children are all ready and in a good place to take on the challenges ahead.

Until next week everyone, please stay safe.

Warmest wishes

Mr Adams

Head Teacher