



Thursday January 7th

Dear Parents and Carers

This has been a very traumatic week for everyone. The sudden change in central government policy has meant that our team has spent the past week trying to work out a system which will keep our whole school community as safe as possible whilst providing school places for those of you whose work is critical to beating the virus and keeping key services operating during the lockdown.

The education secretary stated that;

“our schools have not suddenly become unsafe, but limiting the number of people who attend them is essential when the COVID rates are climbing as they are now. We must curb the escalating cases of COVID throughout the country.....limiting attendance is about reducing the number of contacts that all of us have with people in other households.”

As numbers of infections are rising in the north east and particularly in Northumberland we must act now.

#### **School places.**

Home is definitely the safest place to learn but I do understand this is simply not viable for all critical workers' children all week, every week.

We have assigned school based places to as many eligible pupils that can be safely accommodated. This has been a very difficult process because we also need to try and keep numbers of pupils in school to an absolute minimum in order to reduce viral load, the risks of transmission and maintain a Covid secure environment for children and staff.

As always, the vast majority of you have been fantastic and I am very grateful to parents and carers who have worked with us to identify their *absolute minimum requirements* in terms of a school place for their child or children. For example, some parents have identified shift patterns for the next few weeks and have only asked for places for the days that they are actually in work. This is very helpful and means that we potentially have days to offer to another critical worker without going above what we have set as a safe number of pupils in each bubble.

Please let us know by email or telephone as soon as you can if you are in this situation and can help us to help more children.

#### **Home learning;**

Both Tapestry and Google Classroom are now fully operational and staff are uploading teaching and giving feedback. They are putting a significant amount of extra work into this as we want all of our children to have quality learning experiences despite lockdown. Thank you to everyone who has engaged with the work and have offered advice to other parents. Children who attend school will be following the same curriculum as those who are working at home. Due to the new bubble structure work that is set going forward may be set and marked by a different teacher to your child's normal class teacher. Teachers have worked closely to ensure continuity and progression for each year group bubble. Please be sure that your child's work has been submitted so that we can see you have completed the work and give feedback.

We are accessing new resources to enrich the online learning and will let you know when these are available. We are hoping to hold a celebration assembly every Friday afternoon to keep in touch with everyone.

I absolutely understand that remote learning is sometimes difficult to manage Parents have raised the following issues;

- Availability of computers.

We have given out our allocation of government laptops provided for vulnerable children and are waiting to hear whether or not we will receive more. We have also given out computers provided by a local charity. We are so grateful for these and, again, there may potentially be more available. If this is an issue in your home please ring the office and ask to be put on the waiting list for a laptop. We have posted details of accessing Google Classroom through PlayStation and Xbox- we are not sure that this will work due to our School 360 firewalls and are not able to give technical support in this area.

- Falling behind because you are working on particular days and children are being looked after by childminder or grandparents.

Please access the work when you can and complete it in the correct order. We have put due dates on work so that it is easier for you to access but as long as it is completed in sequence (i.e. complete Mondays work before moving onto Tuesday's ) this will be fine.

- Recording work. Please remember that we sent a workbook home before Christmas. If you have difficulty with writing on Google documents please use the workbook. If you can take a photograph of the work and upload it that would be brilliant- please don't worry if you can't do this.
- Internet cost implications. We have heard of some internet providers offering discounts if you inform them your child is doing home learning.

### **School Organisation during lockdown**

From Monday January 11<sup>th</sup> until the end of the current lockdown school will start at 8.55 and end at 3.15. Children should use the entrance doors they used before Christmas. As far as is possible children will be taught in year group bubbles.

Numbers are strictly limited and MUST be booked in advance. We are unable to take children in on the day.

The same COVID security rules will apply. Any child with symptoms should not attend even if they have a place. We will continue to send any child with symptoms home and they will not be able to return until they have had a negative test. If anyone tests positive in a bubble we would have to send home all of the children who had attended that bubble for the previous 48 hours to isolate for ten days.

### **Free School Meals.**

Children entitled to free meals will be provided with vouchers as in previous lockdowns. If your child is in school they will be provided with a meal. If your child attends school for part of the week they will receive meals on the days that they are in school and sandwich lunches to be collected from school on the days that they are at home.

I hope this clarifies the situation moving forward and once again I am so sorry that we have had to close our school again.

Thank you for your patience and understanding this week and stay safe  
Pauline Johnstone

Head teacher.

