

# Preston Grange Primary School

Newsletter – January 7th 2021



## Dear families

What a long month this week has been!

Thank you to everyone as we approach the end of the first week in lockdown; I feel that everyone has coped really well with the overnight changes that we have all had to adapt to, and we are so grateful for our families support this week. As we all become more familiar with remote learning and time goes by, I hope that things will only get better and easier for us all.

Special thanks to Mrs Clarke in the office, who has been an absolute trooper after this difficult week of readjustment for everyone at home and school! She has been absolutely swamped with emails and calls and has stayed calm throughout! Thank you very much for bearing with us as we have settled into this new routine for us all.

## Key worker provision

Firstly, thank you to the few families who after reading the newsletter on the 5th, reflected and decided to make alternative arrangements for their children or keep them at home and access our remote learning.

Originally, I stated that if a child was in the key worker provision, then they would have to stay 5 days a week to avoid children coming in and out of the bubble. Unfortunately, due to the absolute OVERWHELMING number of parents who requested access to the key worker provision, we were not able to safely cover this number of children in school with the staffing we have.

Therefore we requested that families who were at home used our remote learning offer or only accessed the provision on a part-time basis such as around working hours, shifts or part-time work. THANK YOU to families who are taking part-time places in school and working around shift patterns, we are really grateful. Each family that does this, helps to reduce the risk of transmission and lower the numbers of children in school.

Unfortunately though, currently we still have around 65 children accessing our key worker provision, which is too high. This creates a high level of risk to everyone; children, staff, families and the wider community. Once again I ask that families do not use the key worker provision unless there is no other option – **this is not about childcare, but about safety.**

For your information, I will be discussing the high numbers of children still coming into school with the Governors tomorrow. I will also be taking advice & guidance from the Local Authority in the morning and speaking to the teaching unions. I will update families in due course.

### **A nurse's viewpoint**

Please find below a paragraph from one of our Mums, Isobel Constable, who is a nurse currently working on the front line:

"I would just like to say thank you to Mrs Taylor and the teachers supporting our kids at school and with Google classroom during this stressful pandemic period. It's important to note that this virus is awful, and the strain is affecting younger people. Our hospitals are getting fuller of patients with Covid. We are all at risk especially key workers. Believe ME I would much rather be at home with my children amongst the chaos of trying to teach them than be at work!!! Unfortunately as a key worker I have NO choice, I am working hard with reduced staff in the community helping protect and care for the elderly and frail who are anxious and many isolated. Whilst putting myself and family at risk, I have to have regular testing which is unpleasant. Please we really have to be sensible, keep your kids safe, stick to your bubbles during this challenging time, teach what you can try not to stress and treasure this time with your family take care and stay safe 🐼 Isobel"

Thank you to Isobel; this is an extremely pertinent message from someone involved with rolling out the COVID vaccine.

### **Google Classroom**

Please may we thank all of our families for the amazing job that you are doing in getting the children established and logged into Google Classroom. Almost every single one of our children are on and using it already, which is fantastic! Thank you for the messages thanking the staff for the remote learning on Google Classroom; we hope that everyone finds that it keeps the children engaged and motivated. Here are some answers to questions/comments that I have received:

- **I can't upload my child's work**

If you are having trouble or are unsure of how to upload the children's work or need help, please let us know and someone will be in touch to support you. There are instructions in the parent guide but if you would prefer to be talked through this, please ring us on 3009190, or email [office@pgps.co.uk](mailto:office@pgps.co.uk). We may need to establish what type of device you are using, and then guide you through how to do it over the phone. If necessary, we can also provide a video as a guide.

- **I haven't yet accessed the remote learning for my child**

If you have not yet accessed the remote learning, someone will call you and check if you are having login issues or issues with the password. If you are having issues with your own device, please contact us and we may be able to help. Please let us know if you have any other issues so that we can offer support, thank you.

- **Time to complete the remote learning**

We are aware that some children are at home accessing remote learning and parents cannot guarantee what time of day this will be completed. This does not matter, as this is why we planned our remote learning offer the way that we have. It was planned to fit around busy work schedules and family life in lockdown. It may be accessed whenever it best suits each family. Please do not feel concerned or worried and please make this work around your own family's commitments and complete the work in a time that suits you. We are aware that some children are with grandparents until you come home from work for example, meaning that the children will not be uploading their work until later that day. That too is completely fine. If children receive castle points for their work, these will not be allocated because it is completed before a certain time, but will be because the child deserves castle points for the standard or quality of their work.

### Exercise books

We have provided exercise books for all of our children so that there are no expectations for printing or providing paper from home. If your child is accessing our key worker provision on a part-time basis, you will also need a set of books at home for when they will be accessing the remote learning.

### Handwriting books for Year 2 and 3 children

In addition to the exercise books that we have already provided, **if your child is in Year 2 and 3**, we would be grateful if you could collect a handwriting book from school. This is because the children really need the special lines in these exercise books when they are learning joined handwriting. For all other year groups, please use the exercise books for English (lined book) for their handwriting tasks.

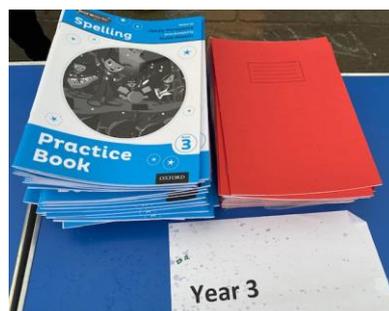
### Spelling

As the teachers upload work to Google Classroom, there will be spelling tasks and activities for the children (this work will be done in the orange exercise books or their English book)

We found that during the last lockdown, children returned to school with large gaps in their spelling knowledge, and so in order to avoid this during the second lockdown, we are providing a Read Write Inc Spelling book for each child from Year 2 to Year 6 for additional spelling practice. Please come to school to collect one (these will be underneath the Early Years canopy in year group piles. Some already have the children's names on, some are new) We are suggesting that in addition to the spelling work on Google Classroom, that your child works their way through *one unit* per week in the Read Write Inc Spelling book.

### When & where to collect books from

If you have not yet collected your child's books, please collect these from school **between the hours of 9.30am and 3pm** and by tomorrow, thank you. The books will be set out on a table underneath the Early Years canopy. Please note that if you turn up over playtime or lunchtime, please wait at the gate and a member of staff will hand the books to you.



### Rewards

As the children complete their work on Google Classroom, teachers will be allocating Castle Points. These will be tallied each week and on Fridays (starting next week) there will be a winning Castle announced.

### Teaching staff

Teachers are working full time & working extremely hard planning, filming, uploading work for Google Classroom during the day as well as commenting on children's work and providing feedback. I cannot tell you how amazing they have all been to have adjusted to this way of working. With such short notice, we had to react to moving to online learning, and there has been additional training implications for staff as well as families. One of our support rooms has become a recording studio!

Please bear with us if there are slight technical difficulties; we have had some videos refusing to upload, videos being recorded but upside down....all initial teething troubles! We will all become much more familiar with this way of working soon, and it is going well from both sides so far, so thank you again. Many thanks for your support.

### **Support staff**

A small number of our fantastic support staff are delivering the remote learning to the key worker children. They are completing and following the exact same work that children at home are receiving. I have been asked if the children in school are 'getting a better deal' than the children at home. The answer is no. I would like to reassure you that they are following the same remote learning on Google Classroom as families at home. Thank you to all of our fantastic support staff for working with the key worker children in school.

### **Free school meals**

I would like to clarify what I meant in the previous newsletter regarding 'free school meals'. Families who are currently eligible for *benefits-based* free school meals, will receive a weekly food hamper which will be delivered to school. Children of eligible families who are in the key worker provision, will receive a packed lunch from tomorrow.

### **THANK YOU AGAIN EVERYONE**

Tracey Taylor  
Headteacher

January 7th 2021