

Friday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you and your families are well and you have had a good week. The longest January in history has finally finished and we have made it to February: let's hope the positive progress we are seeing regarding virus statistics and the vaccination programme continues as we move further towards the spring!

As you know, half term is almost upon us and schools will be closed as usual from 15<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> February 2021. Our teachers will continue to provide remote education until next Friday (12<sup>th</sup>) and then will take a very well-deserved break for a few days after an incredibly hectic first half term. I have been amazed (but not surprised) by how well the staff and children have adapted their teaching and learning this term following virtually no notice from the government. Staff have managed incredibly well to look after the children attending school as well as making provision for a high quality, progressive curriculum online. The response from the children has also been fantastic and I know, from the feedback I have received so far, that the children and staff have thoroughly enjoyed working together, developing a new set of skills along the way. Massive thanks to everyone who has worked so hard to make this such a great success!

Last week I wrote to you to raise some concern about the increasing numbers of pupils who were returning to school with a reminder of the government's expectations that children should only attend if it is absolutely necessary, even if you are a key worker. We have continued to monitor our attendance figures closely and we have a pattern of attendance around 30% which is above the national average for primary schools (currently 20%). I would like to thank you all for continuing to support the school by keeping this number as low as possible and local infection rates on a strong downward trajectory. I know with each week that passes that this is becoming increasingly difficult for some children and families so if you are experiencing difficulty, and feel you are approaching a point where you need your children to return to school, then please make contact before sending them in so we can discuss how we might be able to support you.

We received another update from the DfE this week which advises the following:

*"In the week commencing 22 February, the Government will publish a plan for taking the country out of lockdown. We have committed to providing schools, parents and young people with a minimum of two weeks' notice for this return to on-site provision. Additional pupils and students will therefore return to on-site education on 8 March 2021 at the earliest."*

On this basis, we are re-sending an electronic form to our critical worker families, so we can see how many school places will be needed for the first two weeks after half term only, from 22.02.21 to 05.03.21, which is the Friday that precedes 8<sup>th</sup> March. Please remember that only the children of critical workers and those who might be vulnerable are eligible for a place until the government provide further guidance about how the wider re-opening of schools will be managed.

I am very pleased to be able to report that we have had no positive cases or class bubble closures this term. We have also completed two weeks of staff testing and so far, we have had no positive results which is great news. From a school perspective, the testing and systems of control we have in place are working as they should to keep us all as safe as possible; fingers crossed that this continues in the days and weeks ahead.

This week has been Children's mental health week and the local authority has sent us a very useful poster that includes information and contact details for a number of different services such as the Family Information Service and Family Support line.



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If you feel you need to access these services or know someone else who might benefit from their support then please visit our Keeping Well page on our website where you will find this information and more:

[https://www.woodloes.com/web/keeping\\_well/465438](https://www.woodloes.com/web/keeping_well/465438)

Finally, we would like to thank Sainsbury's for a very generous donation they have made to school this week via their Community Support Fund. We have received resources, stationery and vouchers that will prove to be very useful in the weeks ahead.

Have a lovely weekend and stay well.

Yours sincerely,

Andy Mitchell (Head Teacher)

