

Friday 29th January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you and your families are well, that you have had a good week and you continue to stay well. There have been a few significant developments this week that I'd like to bring to your attention:

First, we have all seen the headlines over the last few days regarding the potential re-opening of schools and 8th March 2021 has been suggested as a date to work towards. The government has said schools in England won't re-open before this date and they may still delay the full re-opening of schools beyond the 8th March, as it will depend on a lot of other factors that will be considered nearer that time. We have had no more guidance than the general public at this stage, but we will monitor this closely and share any information accordingly. So, for the time being, we stay as we are.

February half term will go ahead as planned and the school will be closed to ALL pupils and staff from 15th - 19th February with eligible pupils only, returning to school on Monday 22nd February. We are currently providing vouchers for pupils eligible for FSM and WCC are in the process of ensuring that their voucher scheme provides support during February half term. If you are experiencing any issues with this then please make contact with the office and we will do what we can to help.

Staff have all had their first lateral flow tests this week and I am pleased to report that none of us have tested positive and any concerns about staff being asymptomatic have been dispelled. We are required to do a home test twice weekly for the foreseeable future so I am pleased that this new routine has started positively.

I have looked very closely at our remote education offer this week to consider a judgement about the quality of provision and engagement. I have received a lot of very positive feedback already and was keen to do a detailed mid-point review to see what is going well, where we might make further improvements and these are a few of my observations:

- Live lessons are being well used to provide daily explanations of new curriculum content, check progress and wellbeing and provide feedback
- The number of pupils attending 'live lessons' from home has increased week by week and children appear to be developing good routines to access the work planned
- The quality and variety of work on class pages in the virtual classroom is excellent. With the obvious exception of swimming and peripatetic music teaching, there is comprehensive provision across the curriculum and staff have been innovative and creative in the way they are delivering this learning content online
- Safeguarding and online safety messages are also very clear in the virtual classroom to ensure the additional time children are spending online is completed as safely as possible
- We have sent home 25 laptops so far to help children access the digital content from home. If anyone is still having difficulty accessing this curriculum content at home then please make contact with the school as we still have some machines available that we can make available if required

- Some parents have requested hard copy work packs to support their children's learning at home and these are made available for collection from the main entrance at school. If you do request a work pack then please remember to collect them promptly.

I have previously reported that our current attendance figures are between 25 – 30% and primary schools across our locality and nationally are reporting much higher attendance figures compared to the last lockdown. The eligibility for a school place is broader than it was previously but the government have still made it very clear that parents should only send their children to school where it is absolutely necessary. This also applies to critical workers children who should stay at home and work from home if at all possible. If you are a critical worker who works part-time, there may be occasions when you do not need to send your child to school. As the lockdown drags on, we are seeing our daily attendance figures starting to rise, increasing the risk to everyone in school, so I would invite you all to only use us if you need to and if you can educate your children at home then please do so with our support. I am grateful for the support you have shown for the school so far regarding this issue and completely understand how much of a challenge this has been for you all working together from home but I do need to raise this as a concern and ask you to continue to help us to keep everyone as safe as possible until there is another change to the government's strategy.

Finally, the forecast for this weekend is for more snow, which I hope will be gone by Monday morning! Whatever you do this weekend, please take some time to enjoy yourselves and take care. I'm not sure whether we are at the end of the beginning or the beginning of the end but with each week that passes we are hopefully getting closer to some level of normality.

Have a lovely weekend and stay well.

Yours sincerely,



Andy Mitchell (Head Teacher)