



## St Joseph's Covid Update 4 15/1/21

### Home Learning

We have been pleased to hand out a large number of chromebooks for loan this week. It means that every effort is being made by those families to engage with remote learning. The overwhelming majority of children are handing in their full quota of learning each day. We are fully aware that the expectations placed on the children in this lockdown are greater than the previous one and so congratulations are due to the children, and the adults supporting them, who have risen to that challenge.

The fact that the vast majority of children are engaging with new learning means that the few who are not engaging will find things even more difficult in school when we all return. If your child is reluctant to learn please get in contact with his or her teacher for support. Lack of engagement in this lockdown will be more costly to your child's education than it would have been in lockdown one.

### School Based Learning

The number of children of critical workers seeking a place in school has risen over the two weeks. The majority of parents are only asking for support when there is no other option. Only a few children (due to need) are in school every day of the week, which we appreciate. Despite this we are still at capacity in many classes on different days of next week. We cannot go over our safe limit of numbers in each classroom so if demand continues to increase we are going to have to decide which children of critical workers can come into school and which ones cannot. Our Multi Academy Trust has drawn up a ranking list which we will use if too many children want a place in any particular class. A letter explaining why we are taking this action, and a form for critical worker families to inform us of their circumstances, are also attached to the email with this update. The Department For Education changed their tone regarding critical worker children at the end of last week stating that critical worker ..**“parents and carers should keep their children at home if they can,”** If one parent is at home you are very likely to fall into the ‘if they can’ group. Children are safest at home during this period.

### Free School Meals

The situation regarding free school meals has changed as the week has gone on. Most families collected their weekly food parcels on Monday. The parcels were far more substantial than the offering that was highlighted in all kinds of media this week. Schools are being encouraged to

continue to use their catering provider to supply weekly food packages and we will do so for the immediate future. Our catering provider is the same one that serves most of the schools in Plymouth. They have provided recipe ideas for making tasty and nutritious meals with the ingredients provided. These ideas can be seen on our website through this link. [School meals](#) I have attached one example to the email. Families can collect their parcels for next week between 12.30pm and 1.00pm on Monday. Please do come at these times as staff are busy with other tasks at other times in the day.

### **Positive Cases**

There have been positive cases of Coronavirus in children and adults associated with the school in the last week. The children, who fortunately were not in school on the one day when we were fully open, did not have any symptoms but the adults did. Initially one set of adults thought it was just a common cold but getting themselves tested proved otherwise. A headache was the first symptom in another adult, soon followed by a high temperature. If anybody in your household shows any symptoms please arrange for a test as soon as you can. You may have heard The Education Secretary said yesterday that “We’re extending staff testing as of next week to primary schools.” As of 5.30 pm on Friday evening I have not had any details on how that process is planned to be carried out. If regular testing of primary age children is to be introduced I believe that it will be carried out at home by parents/ carers not by school staff in school.

For the next couple of days put the chromebooks away and have an enjoyable and safe weekend.

Best wishes

BJ Gill