

Wednesday 20 January 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

I am writing to share the outcomes of our session to reflect on remote learning implemented from Tuesday 5th January 2021.

Remote learning has been up and running for two full weeks and it has been really useful to take the time to reflect on how it has gone, what has worked well and things we need to further develop. Thank you to the parents who contributed to this process by emailing in your thoughts.

What did parents say?

- Thank you!
- Children like the 'live' sessions with their class.
- What do children do in school if they are accessing provision?
- Are the children coming back to school after half term? Will there be a U-turn?
- It is hard to balance everything at home, sometimes we have to save remote learning tasks until the weekend.
- We use ipads/tablets/laptop and sometimes what we see isn't what we expect.
- I am not an IT expert and feel out of my depth.

What did staff say?

- Attendance at live sessions is really good and it is lovely to see the class 'live'.
- It can be hard to help sort out IT issues that people are having at home.
- Some children forget to hit the 'hand in' button which means I can't read their work or offer feedback.
- Sometimes children are using the 'chat' function too much! It really needs to be just for remote learning questions to each other or the teacher.

Going forward...

During the week 1-5th February 2021, we will offer every family a Remote Learning Parent Consultation. This will be an opportunity to discuss progress and engagement so far and plan for the future.

For 'live sessions' it is really important that:

- Children are not in their bedroom
- An adult is within earshot of the child and their device
- Children enter 'live' sessions with their microphones muted
- When the teacher says goodbye everybody logs off.

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From your comments, questions and suggestions, and the discussion between staff and Governors:

Remote Learning

- When staff set a task it will have a 'hand in' date and a 'close date'. The 'close date' will never be the next day. Obviously, we would love for people to work towards meeting the 'hand in' date if at all possible. Some tasks might build on things completed previously, so children could be at a disadvantage if they haven't done the previous task set. Having said that, we really do understand that every family is having to find a learning pattern that fits in with their lives – you might be juggling working from home, caring for younger children and work, as well as managing remote learning. Staff will always be supportive and will try to give feedback on learning tasks submitted a bit after the 'close date'.
- Staff will ordinarily be available to offer feedback or support on learning tasks between 9am and 4pm. They will aim to respond to a question or query within 24 hours. Please remember that the 'General Chat' is open to everybody – with that in mind, if you want to talk to your child's teacher you can message them direct, call school or email the office: office@portesham.dorset.sch.uk
- Please try to submit work via TEAMS, we are happy to accept photos, scanned copies, electronic files or videos. Our Risk Assessment strongly advises against materials going backwards and forwards between school and home environments so staff should not be marking paper copies of tasks handed in after completion at home. Again, if you are having issues with TEAMS, please let your child's class teacher know.
- Families are using a wide range of devices to access remote learning and new IT challenges crop up virtually daily. We are not IT experts but will always help if we can. To reset a password, we have to contact our out-of-school IT support so this will always take a few days.
- The Reception and Class 1 phonics videos were causing some issues on TEAMS; people were struggling to access them. They are now stored on the school website under the 'Home Schooling' tab. You can use them at anytime and revisit them to revise sounds at you leisure.
- The staff team will nominate a 'catch up day' if there is a sense that families are becoming overwhelmed with tasks. During these days, if you your child is up to date with remote learning set, please explore materials on the Oak National Academy or BBC Bitesize websites. There will not be new 'live' sessions on a 'catch up day', but you can ask for a 'live' catch up with your teacher if you need some additional help with a task.
- All teaching staff are taking their PPA (Planning, Preparation and Assessment time) on a Friday morning. Whilst they may be available to respond to messages and give feedback on tasks, they will not be scheduling 'live' sessions for that time.
- Our Reception class are using Tapestry alongside TEAMS. If you have any questions, please message Miss Hedges.

School Website

Mrs Prior will be setting wider curriculum tasks on a Thursday (the Family Land Art task was the first of these). We will use the school website to set up gallery spaces so you can see your own work and that of other children. The Land Art Gallery is up and running already – check out the amazing exhibits already on display under the 'Home Schooling' tab on the website.

Whole School Celebration Assembly and Class Assembly

Our aim is for there to be a whole school Celebration Assembly once a week – from this week, we will be holding it on a Friday afternoon at 1.30, as we would if we were all in school together. Your class teacher will send out an invitation to your class assembly and will try to do this at the beginning of the week so you have the day and time as early as possible. Key Stage 1 and Reception will be building in additional 'Show and Tell' face to face live sessions to support maintaining social interaction with the class.

In-School Provision

If children are accessing the provision in school, they will be working on remote learning tasks set for that day. They will be able to attend 'live' sessions using the school laptops. This will include assemblies. Fridays are always spent working on the wider curriculum task set by Mrs Prior. This group of children are being supported by Teaching Assistants.

Coming Back To School

I am afraid we have no additional information as to when children will coming back to school, or how that will happen (all back, phased return etc.). In the past, we have not been notified of any operational changes before the main Government announcements. I suspect that we will all hear about plans at the same time. However, if we do receive notification of plans, we will share them with you.

Thank you to everyone for entering into the spirit of remote learning with such a positive outlook, hopefully we all be back together on site soon. Until then, please do get in touch if you need to, be kind to yourselves and stay safe.

Best wishes

Mrs Prior

Headteacher