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## **5<sup>th</sup> January 2021 – Autumn Newsletter #1 – Home Learning and Provision for Key Worker Children and Vulnerable Pupils**

Dear Parents,

Happy new year to you all!

Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome some new members of staff. Welcome to Mrs Zoutenbier who is our Year 4 Hazel Class teacher and welcome to Miss Pilkiewitz who is our Year 6 Maple Class teacher. Welcome also to Miss Braybrook who is a new teaching assistant in Year 3 and welcome to Mrs Williams who is a new assistant in our Hearing Support Centre. Welcome also to Mrs Woolcott-Hawkins who is temporarily covering as a teaching assistant in Year 2.

What a start to the new term and 2021! We had been busy preparing for a normal return to school in the holiday and during our staff training yesterday. Then following the Prime Minister's very last minute decision to go to lockdown, we have been busy again today changing these plans and sadly, preparing again for remote learning and in-school provision for key worker children and vulnerable pupils.

We feel particularly sad that we are back in this situation. Teachers have been looking forward to seeing your children again and there has been a lot of excitement about the enquiry style of learning we were looking forward to develop in class. We are really disappointed that we are back in this situation but determined to make the best of it.

Thank you for your understanding today in keeping your children at home to give us this essential time. Thank you also for your patience as we have been inundated with phone calls and emails, and it has not been possible to respond to you all. I hope the following information will help answer your questions.

### Remote Learning

This will apply to the majority of you. After the last lockdown we evaluated the success of our home learning provision and learned a lot from your feedback and further research into best practice. Although it will never replace the effectiveness of classroom learning we hope we are able to offer your children a better offer this time round.

Our Assistant Head Teachers, Mrs Turner (heading up Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1) and Mr Marchant (heading up Key Stage 2) are leading on home learning. Within the next few days they will be publishing on our website, the detail about this that applies to your child. Today they have met (remotely) with the teachers and TAs in their key stage to ensure everybody is on the same page

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with our plan. If you need any clarification along the way that your class teacher cannot answer, please feel free to contact them.

However, your first point of contact is the class teacher who will have either been in touch today or are holding a zoom meeting first thing tomorrow.

One of the big changes we have made this time round is to ensure you have more contact with the class teacher. Each week will start and end with a parent briefing. The start of the week will set out the plans for the week and allow you to ask any questions while Friday will be an assembly to celebrate the week. Some teachers may email you a video of the start-of-the-week assembly so that you can watch it in your own time and review it later for information. In this case, you can email in any questions. Along the way, teachers will be providing feedback as best as possible in the circumstances and keeping in touch with phone calls when needed. They welcome an email if you have any queries.

During the last down, we found that children's writing suffered more than their Maths and Reading. So, this time to help mitigate the risk of that happening again, you will notice a bigger emphasis on this. For example, there will be exercise books made available for all children from Y2 to Y6 for them to record their learning and big writes which will need to be returned to school just before half term for marking. Teachers will also be making contact about online support for you in how you can best help your children in their writing at home.

If the internet or not having an electronic device at home is a problem for you, please do let your class teacher know. We have placed an order with the DfE and hope to have a few Chrome Books in school shortly that we can then pass on to you.

Teachers and teaching assistants are working on a two week rota with half of each team in school one week and half leading the remote learning from home in the following week. Work in class will be aligned with the home learning.

#### Provision for Key Worker Children and Vulnerable Pupils

Last night we opened up the booking system for this group. We have allocated 15 pupil places per year group. You can only book your child in if you are registered with school. If you believe you fall into this group and are not yet registered, please contact the school office. You can book through the School Gateway and please remember *it is essential* that you only book for the days that it is impossible for you to care for your child at home so that other parents in need do not miss out on a place.

For those children who are booked in, we are offering Breakfast Club from 8.00am and After School Club which can be booked as normal for this week. However, we will assess the need for this provision and may have to make changes for the following weeks. If we do, I will write with more information.

Drop off and collection times will remain the same as currently to avoid any unnecessary confusion. Children do not need to wear uniform. They will need a morning snack and packed lunch as there will not be any cooked lunches available. If your child is entitled to free school meals and you are

unable to provide a packed lunch, we can provide a sandwich for your child. Further details on meal provision for children entitled to free school meals will follow once we receive the guidance. Until then if you are struggling and need a food pack please contact the school office.

### Support for Families

Today Mrs Pike and our pastoral team met to look at ways to best support you at home during this tricky time. We want to try our best to help bring everybody out of this new lockdown in as sane a way as possible so look out for a phone call from this team. You might not all hear from them but they will be prioritising families to contact to see how best we can help you.

The isolation of lockdown can make parenting even more challenging than it already is. On our Well-being in Action page there is a wonderful quick read guide called '[A 5 Minute Guide to being a Calmer Parent](#)'. Well worth a read with top tips.

### The Latest COVID-19 News

With this new variant of the virus having 1 in 3 people infected but showing no symptoms, at school staff are adopting two key mantras which are good recommendations for home too:

Hands – face –space

Act like you've got it

I will be in touch again at the end of the week with an update of our first week and any new information you may need.

Stay safe and well everybody,



Tim Hughes (Headteacher)