

27th January 2020



Dear Everyone

I hope you are continuing to cope and keep well during these challenging times. I'm writing to give you an update on our remote learning package. Thank you to those of you who have been in touch. The kind messages which you have continued to send make a huge difference to the teachers and support staff in our schools.

I can't begin to imagine how difficult it must be for some of you trying to juggle working from home, family commitments and attempting to engage children in home learning for hours each day. I'm sure some days the well of patience runs very dry and much as you love your children, you are dying to get them back to school.

Our staff are really missing being with the children, it's the reason we came into the profession. Despite their best efforts it's not possible to duplicate the classroom atmosphere online but it's been great to see the Assemblies etc. and the level of engagement in lessons.

As I reflect on the past week and the different school experiences it strikes me, we are all in this same storm, a storm which threatens our families and our livelihoods and yet it's as though we are in different boats. Some are equipped to deal with the difficulties better than others. Probably most of us feeling exposed, vulnerable and longing for a sight of shore! However we navigate ahead it's important to stay together.

A number of Parents have contacted us to discuss the amount of remote learning schools are expecting children to complete. A few are asking for more work but the majority are saying they can't cope and the expectations are too high, particularly where there are multiple children in the same household: same storm, different boats!

We realise we are in a no-win situation as family needs vary so much. This is simply the reality of the situation we are facing. As Headteachers we are used to fixing problems and we are finding it hard to accept that in the present situation, sometimes there are no right answers and we have to go with the "least wrong" one.

Please bear with us with on the marking of children's work. Feedback comes in a wide variety of forms and the children will receive some individual feedback each week but it will be limited. There are not enough hours in the day for teachers to prepare the remote learning, manage the huge traffic of emails and phone calls and support individual children who are struggling. This of course is on top of them often trying to teach their own children at home alongside the other same challenges you face. They really are being superhuman at the moment as are you all. We, like you, are counting down the days until they return. We do not know with any certainty when that will be so let's keep praying it's soon.

Thank you to so many of you who are finding ways to keep your children safe at home so we can minimise the number of children in school. Every time we have had to close a bubble we have had Parents unable attend their shift at a hospital. We must continue to do everything in our power to prevent this and the simplest way is to minimise the number of children attending school.

So, we continue to stay together and battle what has been crashing around us. Let's hope we see the sun and the safety of the shore soon.

God bless you and your families

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ani Magill', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Ani Magill

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