

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the February edition of the newsletter. We are now into our fourth week of lockdown and we have been informed by the Prime Minister that this likely to continue until March 8th at the earliest. Thank you for all of the hard work you are doing at home, juggling your work responsibilities with your children's home learning. Please do not worry, we understand it must be very difficult at times to get through all the work set. We legally have to set you three hours for infants and four hours for juniors but we know this can be hard, especially if you have more than one sibling accessing the same device/ needing your attention. Please do not panic, we would much rather you focussed on quality over quantity. *For safeguarding purposes we do need your child to at least log onto Google Meets for registration to ensure we have checked they are safe. As an absolute minimum please ensure this is being done as we are obliged to inform the LA Attendance Team if children cause us worry.* If this is proving technically difficult for you contact us via telephone instead and we will talk you through. The overwhelming majority of the children seem to be able to access the registration times (at least once per day) and we are really pleased that a lot are managing to successfully upload work to us now as well – thank you for your support and perseverance over this matter. We've noticed a few of the older pupils are using the registrations as an opportunity to trouble shoot and ask for help with uploading etc which seems to be working really well so just ask them to give us a wave if they want help!



Remote Learning:

The staff have done a fabulous job at quickly skilling themselves up and delivering the curriculum via our google classroom systems. This has been a steep learning curve for us all (staff, pupils and parents) and we are continually trying to refine our processes and tailor what we do.

I have decided that it is now my turn to become a bit more savvy at the remote learning! I have trialled registration with Years Four and Five (it was lovely to see our home learners and their vast menagerie of household pets) and the technology worked well. I am going to try to do remote celebration assemblies next so please keep your fingers crossed for me! Each teacher will choose a home learner and a school learner who has produced a lovely piece of work or shown a resilient attitude and we will celebrate each child by awarding them a certificate which will be emailed home and kept at school ready for their return.

To start with I am going to use the Year Five class as my remote learning guinea pigs and have planned a celebration assembly for them next Friday at 3pm. They can give me feedback on what works and what does not work and then, when I have ironed out the difficulties that will undoubtedly occur, I will invite the rest of school every Friday. I am told that Google Meets can only accommodate 100 pupils per session so I will alternate between junior assemblies and infant assemblies to start with. Each child will therefore be invited to a fortnightly assembly – dates and details to follow.



Children's Mental Health Week 2021:

Next week is Children's Mental Health Week and we thought that we could do something together, regardless of whether children are at home or at school. We have organised a timetable for the week with some activities you might like to try....

Monitor Free Monday	Children will obviously still have to log on for the register and read the instructions for the day but teachers are going to try to choose alternative activities for the children to complete, rather than them staring at a screen all day.
Time Out Tuesday	Why not choose an activity of your choice for half an hour today? Then perhaps you could have a kitchen disco at home after your dinner and get rid of some of that energy by dancing to happy tunes? Please tweet your kitchen disco photos to @thingwallprima1 we'd love to see you all having fun!
Well-Being Wednesday	Today perhaps you could go for a walk in the fresh air with your family. How many Wirral Waves can you spot in people's windows?
Thirsty Thursday	Take time out to make a lovely hot chocolate and sit down for a telephone chat with a family member or friend that you haven't been able to see as frequently during this lockdown.
Favourite Family Film Friday	Sit down together with some lovely munchies, choose a favourite movie to watch as a family and RELAX!



PE With SFA Iain Colligan:

We have recognised that the children are really enjoying seeing familiar faces on the screens for registration so Iain Colligan, whom some of you may know from our extra-curricular SFA sports provision and lunchtimes, has started to make fitness videos for us to upload and make use of. The videos look really good fun and Iain has worked very hard to make sure they are:

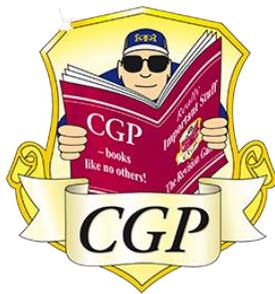
- easy to follow whatever your age of child
- use minimum or no sports equipment and really
- energetic and give a good cardio-vascular workout.

We will upload these videos next week for your child/children to follow whenever they fancy a workout. Iain will also set regular sporty challenges so you can compete against yourself and try to beat your personal best. Thank you Iain.



COVID Catch Up Funding:

You will perhaps be aware that the government released funding in September for us to catch up on pupil learning and fill the social and educational gaps that were created during the first lockdown. We are currently redrafting our catch up funding plan because our original plan has had to be changed due to the third lockdown. The CGP books have been purchased because they will offer the children a break from the screen as well as providing a structured approach to filling the educational gaps for all pupils, regardless of whether they are at home or school. Hopefully you have been able to collect your child's set of books from school this week, if you have not been able to, please ensure they are collected as soon as possible as the teachers will begin to use them for specific topics starting next week. We also plan to invest in the on-line Learning By Questions programme for English and Maths across the whole school. We have trialled this programme in upper Key Stage Two since the start of term and we have been pleased with the progress made by Years Five and Six. Next half term will see us rolling out the Learning by Questions approach across the whole school – details to follow in our March newsletter.



Lateral Flow Test Information:

From next week (starting Thursday February 4th) all Thingwall Primary staff have been asked by the Department for Education (DfE), to take a lateral flow test (LFT) twice weekly, in order to monitor cases of Covid-19 in schools, to support us to stay open and to help keep our communities safe.

This may have implications for Thingwall families in the coming weeks.

Up to one in three people who have the virus have it without symptoms (they are asymptomatic) so could be spreading the disease unknowingly. The tests will be carried out twice weekly so that any member of staff who may be carrying the virus can be identified and asked to isolate in order to control the spread.

Staff at our school will be asked to test each Thursday evening and Sunday afternoon. Should a member of staff have a positive LFT result, they will need to self-isolate and their class bubble would need to also self-isolate immediately. Once the positive LFT result has been received, the member of staff would need to follow that up with a PCR test to confirm the test status. If that PCR test is negative, the bubble would return to school the following day. However if that PCR test is also positive, then the bubble would need to continue with the 10 day isolation period as is normal procedure now.

This obviously has implications for all of our KWV families who are currently bringing their children to school. If your child has a place in Thingwall, we may need to ask you to keep your child at home at short notice. We therefore ask that you have short-notice childcare options in place. We will endeavour to get a message of closure to you by 6.30pm on a Thursday or by 4.30pm on a Sunday, possibly earlier. To alert you immediately we would send you a short text message and we would follow this with the official letters via email. If you do not hear from us on the above days, you should presume the tests are negative for your class bubble and report to school as usual.

We will confirm whether the closure is for 10 days as soon as we receive the result of the second PCR test, by text and email.

We do understand that this may well be disruptive for you and may be difficult to manage, but hope that this development will help us identify positive cases more quickly and break the chains of transmission.

As always if you have any questions please don't hesitate to get in contact with us via the school office. Many thanks to all of our NHS Key Worker parents who have been able to answer our questions and offer us sage advice this week – you have really helped a difficult process become a lot easier!



Wirral Wave:

Some of you may have seen our Wirral Wave article in the Birkenhead News this week. Thanks to all of you who have supported us, we are proud to report that at the last count nearly 30 Wirral primary schools had joined in! If you would like to take part here are the instructions...
If you would like to take part...

1. Draw around your hand onto paper.
2. Decorate your hand... the brighter the better! You could even add positive messages of support and key worker thanks to lift our hearts during lockdown.
3. Display your Wirral Wave in a window where it can be seen by people. You could stick it in a window at home, school or your place of work.
4. Take a photograph of your Wirral Wave and tweet, including the #Wirralwave
You can tag our school's twitter address too so we can see your hard work. The twitter address is @thingwallprima1
5. Tell your friends and family in other schools to join in with the fun.
6. Watch the idea grow... How many Wirral Waves can you spot on your daily walks?



St Michael's Latest Youth Assembly:



John Putman, who is based at St Michael's Church in Pensby has been making us a monthly assembly video which he has been uploading to You Tube for us to watch. He would be thrilled if our home learners would also like to access these to watch. The link can be accessed via the following hyperlink and this month the theme is 'Peace'. Thank you John.

<https://youtu.be/WjJhQxmeexM>

Year Four Ukulele News:

Year Four have been doing really well with their weekly ukulele lessons with Edsential's Jane Laird and they were even at the stage of simple Christmassy tunes at the end of last term. We thought it would be such a shame for the home learners to miss out and not have a chance to practice and progress so Jane has managed to seek permission for us to allow the school instruments to go home so that the whole class can join in for the full session every Monday morning starting after half term! Mrs Holroyd and Mrs Hamel will be in touch to tell you when you will need to pop to school to collect your instruments. Thank you Jane and Edsential, what a super idea. We are thrilled that we can all continue to learn and have fun together!



Celebration Corner (or HUGGS – HUGE UNBELIEVABLY GREAT GOALS):

This section of the newsletter is for anyone who has celebrated a huge achievement outside of school. If you would like your child to appear in this section of the newsletter, please jot the details down on a Post-It note or email into the school office.

Daniel (Year Six) – Well done Daniel for being really focussed with your remote learning and trying very hard to problem solve and upload your own work onto the google platform.

Aaron (Year Six) – Well done to Aaron for his brilliant redesign of The Salvation Army using his Mine Craft skills.

Year Three School Learners – Congratulations to our school learners from Year Three. They have been brilliant at helping Mrs Mitchell take the register every day and they have been so welcoming to the home learners.



With Best Wishes

Mrs D L Evans