



1st February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we start February, after what seems like the longest January in history, I wanted to write to you to offer support and reassurance. I know that that when we heard the Prime Minister announce that schools will not be open until Monday 8th March at the earliest, this was not welcome news for many people in our school community. The situation we are in is not one that any of us want and trying to juggle work commitments with supporting learning at home, or trying to support several children is not easy.

This has been reiterated in staff phone calls to parents over the last few weeks. Many of you are worried about remote learning and your child's progress. I just felt that I needed to write to you all and share some things that I hope will ease your minds.

1. We understand - it is so hard at home to keep your children going, especially when you and they feel fed up with the situation. We all understand that as lockdown goes on it gets harder and harder for everyone.
2. Just do the best you can. Over time anything you can do to help your child will help us. We are so grateful to you for sticking with it. **You are all doing an amazing job!** On those days when it is hard - that's okay. Teachers have hard days too!
3. Please try not to worry when you hear the 'falling behind' narrative that will get louder in the media over the next few weeks. Every child in every school up and down the land has been affected by the pandemic, and when things return to 'normal' we will all work so hard to fix it. Like all schools will.
4. We have 9 school days left until half term - let's try and take it a day at a time. We will all have up days and down days. When your child has a down day don't be afraid to let school know - we are here to help.
5. For us it matters more that your child remains happy and feels supported. Sometimes the key to doing well in school is how happy and content a child is. Actually - this matters more than perhaps we realise.
6. Young people are amazing. They are resilient; they can and will adapt. We know this from our return to school in September.
7. Most of all (and this is very important) THIS WILL PASS...and when it does we will get back on with the business of educating your children. But right now? We do the best we can. We are in this together - but sometimes together doesn't mean being in the same place.

Headteacher: Mrs R Ayres

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## Other information:

### Half term

School will close for half term on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> February and will reopen (to children of key workers/vulnerable children only) as planned on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February. No remote learning work will be set during this period. Until then, things will stay as they have been with school open only for the children of critical workers and vulnerable children.

### Remote Learning

Feedback regarding our remote learning offer has been overwhelmingly positive so far. All of our staff are having to adapt very quickly to a totally different way of working and are learning new skills at lightning speed! We certainly don't underestimate the challenges that home learning poses for parents and families, especially those who are balancing work and other responsibilities.

As a school, we have taken the decision to not deliver 'live teaching' for a number of reasons. Not all families have the technology available to allow all their children and adults to be working on their own device throughout the day. As a school and with the support of our local community we have already provided many devices to families, but do not currently have the capacity to provide sufficient numbers of devices to all children in every family.

Managing all the needs of a class of around 30 children over the internet is very difficult, especially at primary age. By using some pre-recorded lessons it means that children can access the learning at a time that suits them and the rest of their household and children can complete the work at their own pace. Teachers are also looking at and monitoring the work that is being submitted throughout the day so are therefore able to pick up on and address any misconceptions, comment on work posted and move learning on.

All children learn in different ways so what works for one family would not work for another. Our chosen method of a mix of materials offers families the flexibility to manage their child's learning around any other commitments such as work meetings or appointments and helps them to timetable their day to be able to support each child if and when necessary. We know that some children do their learning in the morning and others in the afternoon and that's absolutely fine. Unfortunately, live lessons just wouldn't enable that to happen and we really are trying to offer a package that can suit as many of our families' needs as possible.

Some teachers are now including pre-recorded lessons and introductions via voice-overs and these are being uploaded as the staff are learning the necessary skills and knowledge to record and upload them.

The government has set out clear expectations of the amount of work that we should be setting for children during this period, and I know that there is a lot in the media about children 'missing out' and 'falling behind'. However I want to stress, as I did during the last period of school closure, please do not try to complete work that is worrying your children (or you!). If you can only complete English and Maths that's fine. Please try to be kind to yourselves when fitting remote learning around your already busy lives...all any of us can do is our best.

## Zoom call

To give the children opportunity to reconnect with each other and their teachers, staff will be setting up a Zoom call for all children from Years 1-6 this week. Look out for the link on Seesaw. Please read the guidelines below to keep our school community safe.

## Guidelines for all video calls and sessions

When signing in for a Zoom meeting / event, your child will need to do so with their first name and initial of surname. This will allow us to identify who it is before admitting them to the meeting. Parental consent is assumed as you can choose whether to let your child join the Zoom event.

The times of all video calls and events will be sent to you on email via Seesaw. Links should not be shared via email to anybody else to prevent unauthorised access.

Microphones should be muted before you join the call and not unmuted unless asked to do so.

If children or parents want to share comments during a meeting, they must raise their hand so the teacher knows they would like to contribute.

- The parent or carer must make sure their child and other members of the household are aware the video call is happening and one adult must be in the same room when the video call is taking place. The adult can be off camera.
- Staff, children and other members of the household must wear suitable clothing.
- Devices used should be in appropriate areas, for example, not in bedrooms; and where possible be against a neutral background.
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
- Parents and children must not record/screenshot events.
- If the teacher has any concerns about children (or other members of the household) using unsuitable language, dress, location, the conversation will be ended and concerns will be recorded and passed to the head teacher or deputy head.

## Lateral Flow Device - Covid testing for school staff

Some of you may have read in the press about the roll out of Lateral Flow Device (LFD) testing for primary school staff. The idea of testing the school workforce is to try and manage COVID-19 infection rates. Approximately 1 in 3 people are asymptomatic when they contract COVID-19 and it is believed that the use of regular testing amongst staff will help to identify those who may be positive and are infectious yet asymptomatic.

From last week, staff started testing at home, twice a week and will notify school of their results. If the LFD test is negative, staff can come in to school as normal. **If staff test positive with the LFD test then they will need to isolate immediately and book a full test. We will need to immediately identify close contacts and potentially close that bubble to children and staff.** Staff will then be sent for a full COVID-19 test and if it is negative children or staff in isolation can return to school.

## Safeguarding Concerns during School Closure

We are working hard as a school to do everything we reasonably can to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our children, whilst they are not in school.

We would therefore recommend that you:

- Monitor closely your child's activity on social media
- Let us know if there have been any issues that we need to be aware of as soon as possible so we can respond promptly and appropriately
- Contact Social Services if you feel they should be aware of an issue. You can call the Social Services Central Duty Team on 0116 305 0005 or make an online referral via the following link:

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/community-safety/reportabuse-or-neglect-of-a-child>

- Contact the police straight away if you believe a child is in immediate danger.

## Covid-19

If your child is currently learning in school remember that if there is a positive case of Covid in the bubble, the group will need to isolate for 10 days, and they will all receive remote learning.

Remember:

**If your child is displaying ANY of the three main Covid symptoms:**

- **a high temperature** – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- **a new, continuous cough** – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- **a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste** – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

You **MUST** request a COVID test immediately

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Finally, whether you are a critical worker, or supporting your child's learning from home, we want to make sure that you feel supported and that your child continues to flourish, knowing that they are loved, cared for and supported in their learning by us every day.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can support you in any way – above all be kind to yourself!

Regards,



Mrs R Ayres  
Head Teacher