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Cheshire

Joint Chair of Governors: Mrs A Buchanan/Mrs L Davis

Headteacher: Miss L A McGann, BEd (Hons)

8<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parents,

Well! The first letter of the New Year would usually begin with wishing you all a very Happy New Year and thanking you for all the very kind gifts that we received on the last day (following the 72 hour quarantine in the pavilion!). It goes without saying that those are the first things I feel obliged to mention in my first newsletter of 2021.

To more pressing matters...I suppose it should come as no surprise that the Prime Minister left it until 8pm on the first day of a new term to advise the general public that Primary Schools were being closed because the whole nation was going into another Lockdown. Mrs Fuller and I discussed our plans at the end of the PM's address to the nation and then Mrs Dawber started putting the first step into action. My thanks go to them both for the support they and all the other staff and governors have provided this week (I needed it!).

Before I go any further, you need to know that Mr Leeming is recovering from Covid this week and so we have had no caretaker on Monday. Thank you so much to those parents who turned up on Sunday last to grit the paths ready for our fresh new start on Monday. Little did we know...

### **Remote/Blended Learning**

When we returned in September, I sent you information in a newsletter outlining plans should we need to send a class home to isolate. You were sent emails containing instructions about the two apps on SeeSaw - the Family App and the Class App (below is an extract from my newsletter dated 25<sup>th</sup> September).

The Class App is there for the teachers to upload work for the children to complete and submit and for the teachers to provide feedback. As a staff we have agreed that blended learning at Twiss Green will look like this:

The White Rose Scheme will be used for teaching maths in all year groups. Direct feedback will be given 2-3 times per week.

- Bug Club will be used in YR – Y4 to provide core reading.
- Y5 and Y6 will use a combination of Bug Club and Reading Plus.
- Teachers will monitor the children's work and provide feedback.
- Spelling will be taught as it usually is but spellings will be assigned to KS2 classes on a weekly basis (in order to catch up on the time lost in the spring and summer terms).



- Writing activities will be planned so that the children receive teacher input on a daily basis, leading to a finished piece of work once a fortnight - direct feedback will be given 2-3 times per week.
- Science themes will be taught using resources from BBC, Twinkl etc
- Themed work tasks will be provided on a weekly basis. Purple Mash may be used for this.

The DfE recommendation is that children should be spending the same amount of time working at home, as they would in school. We will be suggesting that our children spend time outdoors each day doing some form of physical activity. Teachers will also be providing stimulating and creative work for them to do to ensure that learning is varied and interesting.

Please be assured, the children who are attending school do exactly the same activities during the school day as they would if they were at home. Each bubble is doing one PE session per day (this could be Joe Wickes, Les Mills or Yoga – these are all available online).

To date, we have had very positive feedback from parents, especially about the videos that the teachers have posted. You need to know that the teachers are delighted at the videos your children have sent us – they are a real fillip for us all. Teachers will be in touch about cut off times relating to when work should be submitted. Teachers have their daily videos to record at the end of the day or in the morning and I know that some of them don't really know when to stop. One of our parents actually messaged a teacher and told her to stop working!

There will be an additional offer available and that will be in the form of wellbeing meetings. This is partly in response to requests from our parents (especially the younger ones). The teachers will set up five wellbeing meetings each week using Google Meet. Parents will receive an invitation to attend the meeting via email and this will provide an opportunity for five or six children from each class to interact with some of their peers and their class teacher on a weekly basis. We look forward to receiving feedback from you regarding this.

### **Key Workers/Critical Workers**

You will be aware that there has been a great deal in the press about the huge numbers of parents applying for school places – I think this is due in part to many employees not being furloughed this time, despite receiving it in March. The 'Key Workers' list in the government guidance is very different to the directions issued by the government in March when everyone (including school staff) was told to stay at home. There are schools in Warrington who have had 50% of their children turning up each day, and this is not a sustainable model. We can't expect the teachers to teach a class all day and then deal with the online learning. This week we had 22 children in school on Tuesday, 38 on Wednesday and 48 on Thursday. During the first lockdown in March/April/May we had an average of 8% of children in school each day. In total 34% of children are registered for Key Worker places; thankfully, a significant proportion of these are attending for only one or two days, ie the day on which both parents have to be in work. If you are working from home, then we really feel that your children should not be in school. We understand that some of you will be making some very difficult decisions to ensure the safety of all. We strongly feel that by doing this, we can help to drive down transmission of the virus together, as a community effort.

Headteachers are hoping that further government guidance will be issued over the weekend (8pm on Sunday perhaps?) and of course, the BBC are going to be delivering educational programmes via CBeebies next week. Follow up activities for these programmes will be available soon.



## School dinners

Please bear in mind that hot dinners are available each day for all our Key Worker children and of course these are free for children in YR, Y1 and Y2 as part of the Universal Free School Meal Scheme.

These are tough times and the staff at Twiss Green are working so hard to make it work – we appreciate all the positive messages you have sent us and the support you are providing for your children. Take care

Kind regards,

LA McGann

