



Ancaster
Church of England Primary School

Wednesday 27th January 2021

Remote Learning Update and Lateral Flow Testing

Dear Parents and Carers,

As the current lockdown continues, I wanted to take this opportunity to write to you firstly to say hello and also extend that I hope everyone is safe and well at this time. During this lockdown, our provision for home learning has improved significantly with the use of Microsoft Teams and engagement levels have been much higher than the previous lockdown. As I am in a privileged position to be able to see how everyone in school is doing with their remote learning, I am continuously proud of everything that is being completed at home and I am able to see first-hand how the hard work and efforts of the children are fully supported by the army of parents and carers at home and dedicated teaching and support staff who are working tirelessly to support the current situation. As a fellow parent tackling the demands of remote learning with my own son, I commend you all for everything you are doing and thank you enormously!

It is true that this time round, the DfE have rightly put more specific daily expectations in place for children to access learning remotely and whilst as a school we ensure that these expectations are met, however, it is important for you all to know that whilst we do expect there to be engagement with the tasks and learning, it is important that you control the pace and time to make this all work for you. We trust and respect you and know that you want the best for your child-if there are days where it doesn't all get completed and other things get in the way-please know that this is ok.

The 'live' elements each day are so brilliantly supportive and are working very well. I have loved dropping into these sessions, leading collective worships and celebrating with you all on a Friday. It definitely feels as though we are all much more connected during this lockdown and staff have been working hard to contact children and families as frequently as possible. We are always here to support you and your children and although the physical ability for us all to be together in school is not available at the moment, if you need absolutely anything we are here for you.

Lateral Flow Testing

You may have seen in the media that from this week, lateral flow testing has been extended to primary school staff to help find asymptomatic cases where Covid-19 is being spread without the infected person knowing that they are infected. It is estimated that 1 in 3 people with Covid-19 are asymptomatic, so breaking these chains of transmission is incredibly vital and another step closer to implementing systems which will allow us to know that the threat of the virus circulating within school is further reduced. Our staff have had their tests delivered to them and will begin testing this week. There are implications for this increased testing as more testing increases the opportunities for finding positive asymptomatic cases which could mean that on identification of a positive result, we may need to close bubbles at very short notice. At the moment, we obviously have smaller numbers of children in school due to the lockdown, but we do not underestimate the inconvenience that is caused by the closure of bubbles and us identifying children as a close

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contact, where necessary, as this will mean that those identified would not be able to come to school for 10 days and full remote learning would need to be instigated, even if your child is currently accessing 'in school' provision as the child of a critical/key worker. Parents should be aware that we will not be reporting the results of any tests directly to parents. Staff who choose to participate in the testing process will report their results to NHS Test and Trace and the school directly and should there be any need for us to close a bubble, we will inform the relevant contacts as soon as possible to make arrangements for the period of closure but as has become usual practice, we will only make you aware that your child has come into contact with a person who has tested positive (which could be an adult or child) and we will not name the specific person who has tested positive.

School staff being included in the testing process is a significant step forward as we navigate our way through the current lockdown procedures but also each day takes us a step closer to the day we can all return back to school and establish yet another 'new normal'. It has been announced today that the 'earliest' that schools could reopen is March 8th, which means that we will be needing to continue working in the way that we have been for the coming weeks. Once we have been given any further updates or more definitive plans, I will contact you to explain what any possible return to school may look like.

Finally, I want to finish by again reiterating how amazingly well our whole school community has come together during this time. You make me incredibly proud to lead our school during these times as never before have we ever been so connected, particularly when we are being forced to be so fragmented. Keep smiling and sharing-we are here for you always, no matter how small a problem or issue may be, if we can help in any way we will do all we can to help.

Should you need to discuss anything further with me, please do not hesitate to contact me and I shall look forward to speaking with you soon.

Yours Sincerely,

Mr Sam Eden
Headteacher