



Ancaster
Church of England Primary School

Thursday 7th January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Firstly, can I take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy New Year, as I am not sure if I have said this to everyone despite there having been several communications since we found ourselves in 2021 and again in another lockdown. I want to also say the biggest thank you to each and every member of our school family who has taken the time to wish us well and recognise the enormity of the challenges that we have faced this week in ripping up all of our plans for this term and replacing them to coordinate a remote learning facility and in school key worker provision within 24 hours. Your incredibly kind comments and words of thanks have really kept us all going as well as your appreciation as to why it was important that we closed the school on Tuesday in order to coordinate our response and ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of all involved.

Since reopening on Wednesday, we have repurposed the school to ensure that we cater safely for the larger numbers of critical workers that need to use us. During the first lockdown, we had around 8-10 pupils in school each day whereas this time, we have over 60 children in school each day which means all of our plans and risk assessments have had to be completely rewritten to accommodate the changing environment we now find ourselves in. We have also wanted to take the time to ensure that our online offer for remote learning is the best it can be, and whilst staff have been busy ensuring that sufficient amounts of work has been posted each day for the children to access, we know that this can be refined further to ensure further support can be given to the children who have suddenly found themselves having to stay at home during this lockdown.

Some parents have requested live teaching session from their child's Class Teacher whereas other parents have specifically asked that the live sessions do not take place due to their own time constraints in working patterns and device availability within a day. It is clear that the perfect scenario of every child being in school and accessing the support and expertise of their class based staff is simply not possible right now so I am writing to you with information on how we feel we can utilise the time of the staff in the best possible way to encourage the best remote learning offer we can alongside opportunities for support and encouragement from school staff.

As you know, last summer we adopted the services of Microsoft Teams and this means that we now have a platform in which lessons can be placed online, children can access resources (which usually come with helpful video tutorials and associated activities), have the opportunity to post evidence of the learning back to the teacher and the staff in class are then available to be able to provide feedback on each lesson to the children. This works really well but does require engagement and participation from children so that the process of accessing work and submitting becomes more streamlined.

Each day, the Class Teacher will ensure that the following lessons are set as individual assignments on your child's Microsoft Teams channel.

- 1 daily Maths Lesson
- 1 daily English writing lesson
- 1 daily Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar Lesson (or phonics in Reception/KS1)
- 1 daily Reading based lesson
- 1 daily non-core lesson (this would be a lesson that the children would usually access in the afternoon)

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In addition to this, the Class Teacher and the class Teaching Assistant will also post a pre-recorded challenge each for the children to complete. These challenges can be completed at any time in the day but will be online from 9am for the children to begin working on right away.

One of the major changes to this lockdown is that the Department for Education have been more prescriptive about what remote learning should look like. We welcome this as it is important that children receive the best educational offer possible during this time. We now need to ensure that children access this provision and we will be, from this point, looking for children to access the online provision unless there is a very good reason for them not to be doing so. We will be taking registers and logging which children are logging into the platform and submitting work. We have been told by the DfE that we also need to be having conversations with parents where there are instances of children not accessing the learning provided by the school.

At Ancaster, we have taken the decision not to deliver 'live' lessons led by the Class Teacher. With such a large number of children in school, we are unable to have the staff working in two places at once. We do believe that with practice and familiarity, the high-quality resources that the staff are placing online will guide the children through the tasks and ensure that they are challenged and supported. For safeguarding reasons, we are also unable to have some children in class to be recorded or filmed in any way and this prevents children at home being able to join in the lessons that are taking place in school. Within school, the children are undertaking the home learning that is being placed on Microsoft Teams so you can be assured that all children, both in school, and at home, are all receiving the same information, activities and resources.

Despite us not delivering 'live' lessons, we feel it is important to deliver 'live' aspects to the day which we feel will give the children who are at home key elements to each day which will make them feel as though they are connected and part of the school, which we know is vitally important. From Monday 11th January, for children at home, the following elements of the school day will be made available in a live/pre-recorded capacity;

- **8.45am-8.55am** Your child's Class Teacher will host a 'digital registration' where they will meet the class and the children will be able to see each other. The teacher will also outline what learning is online and what the expectations are for the day. Please note that if you have multiple children in different classes-there is no obligation to attend every day if a lack of devices prevent this.
- **From 9am**-As mentioned above, the Class Teacher and Teaching Assistants will make their pre-recorded video challenges available for the children to access.
- **1pm-1.15pm** Collective Worship-These will be delivered by a range of school staff and will give the children the opportunity to have a focused adult led session on a given theme/idea. On Friday, we will hold our Celebration Worship where we will celebrate the achievements of children working both in school and at home. At home achievements will be based on work that has been placed online.
- **3.15pm-3.30pm** End of Day session with Class Teacher including a story. We would like all home learning children, if they can, to join for a daily de-brief on the day and the teacher will also read them a story.

When the live sessions are not in play, the children should be accessing their home learning via the assignments section of Microsoft Teams. There is no need to have the app for this service as it is web based, so it can be accessed on a variety of different devices including smartphones, tablets, laptops, desktops, playstation, Xbox and many more that support internet usage. Should you need to access your child's

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username and logon details we will happily provide these for you but these have already been sent via Parenthub direct message to those that use the app. Please check there first before contacting us for this information.

When your child has undertaken work relating to an assignment, for instance they complete the independent work from the Maths assignment, if you could take a photo or save a word document with the answers recorded and send it back via your child's individual assignment, then the class staff will then provide feedback to these pieces of work which only you and your child can see. Please refrain from posting the work in the chat function as this is available for all to view and makes it difficult for the teacher to provide feedback.

There is an expectation that between 3-5 hours of remote learning is in place each day during this lockdown for primary aged children to complete and we believe that with the elements outlined above, we exceed all of our obligations in ensuring our children provide a meaningful and focused education in the best way possible despite the current restrictions being placed upon us as well as ensuring that the staff are available to provide the in school critical worker provision that we are also providing.

We have also been preparing the CGP books that the children in Years 1-6 have been using for homework and these will be available to be collected from the main office from tomorrow for Year 4 and 6. Please, if you can, find time to come and collect these materials as well as a novel study for Years 3-6 which will be referenced by the teacher in their home learning. Parents of children in other year groups may have to wait until next week to receive these resources as we need time to ensure that they have been properly collated. If you have siblings in other year groups then please wait until you have been told that both year groups are ready for collection to ensure that you only have to visit once.

I do recognise that there is an awful lot of information in this communication and I am so sorry that we are not in the position to be able to have all of the children back in school as we were promised on Sunday morning by the government. Despite this, we all recognise how important this lockdown is to reduce the scarily high numbers of cases and deaths that are being recorded and I want you all to know that I fully appreciate how difficult home schooling is, particularly when you are trying to do your own job too and the children are not as compliant as they are in school. The frustrations are real and I wholeheartedly want you to know that we will do everything we can to support you every step of the way as we navigate our way through this lockdown. Please engage with the home learning as best as you possibly can-we will do everything we can to keep your child as busy as possible throughout the day and we are also here if you need to talk-you can email me anytime on sam.eden@ancaster.lincs.sch.uk or phone the school during the school day and I will happily discuss anything with you to try and bring a problem or issue to a resolution. Likewise, send me some of the great things that are happening too-the lightbulb moments and the times of creativity and cheer-trust me, these brighten my days too! Thank you for taking the time to read this communication. Don't forget to email the class staff (teachers and TAs) too if you need to discuss anything with them and they will happily email you back as soon as they have a chance. I will be in touch again very soon and look forward to hearing from you over the coming days and weeks.

Yours Sincerely,

Mr Sam Eden
Headteacher

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