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Contingency Planning for Home Learning

Dear Parents and Carers,

I would like to provide you with some further information and clarification on what will happen in the event of children having to spend time at home in isolation and how we intend to support the continuation of learning.

In the event of a positive COVID-19 test in school, the decision to isolate a group of pupils or close a bubble is made through an investigation with Public Health who, using all the information at hand, balance the need to keep everyone safe with the need to keep as many children as safely possible in school. This will result in your child needing to stay at home and continue learning from home, as long as they are well enough to do so. Another reason your child may have to stay at home is because you are awaiting the result of a Coronavirus test. The most important thing is that you and your family are safe and well, and your and your child's wellbeing is everyone's first priority.

How will home learning work if my child needs to isolate at home?

If your child is absent from school because they are awaiting results from a Coronavirus test, the office team will email you a pre-prepared home learning pack with three days' worth of activities.

If a bubble needs to isolate away from school as directed by Public Health, teachers will post work to the class blog, just like during the school closure last year. We had extremely high levels of engagement with home learning and settled into a sustainable model for both children and teachers. If necessary, please get in touch with school to ask for a paper copy to be printed. This can either be collected from school or delivered to your home address by a member of school staff.



What will my child be learning while at home?

Children will complete a pack of home learning prepared in advance by teachers. The first 5 days have been pre-prepared and the content will be familiar to children. We know that children will complete the work with different levels of confidence and that is OK. Subsequent days of home learning will be uploaded to class blogs as necessary, and closely matched to the learning children would be doing at that time in the classroom.

How will my child learn while at home?

Of course, the classroom is the best place for children to learn, so without the input and support of their teacher, teaching assistant and peers, we all need to be realistic in balancing children's work with the realities of home learning. The home learning packs that teachers have prepared are designed to draw on the ways children are used to working in the classroom and be familiar to them. Teachers are also on hand through the day to respond to your emails if you need to get in touch with a question or if children get stuck. There will always be answer sheets and, when appropriate, examples to refer to. No additional resources beyond the home learning packs, paper and a pencil will be required. Some teachers also choose to upload videos to talk through strategies that will help, and we are exploring the suitability of interactive platforms to increase the level of face-to-face teaching while upholding the highest standards of safeguarding for children and staff.

How can I get in touch with my child's teacher?

Email is the best way and your child's teacher will provide their email with the home learning pack. It may also be possible to make a phone call to you and your child. In every case, your child's wellbeing is the highest priority. There will be many successes in your child's learning and we want to know about those too! We want to actively encourage you to get in touch: no question is too small and every success deserves to be celebrated. Photographs of work (such as a sheet of maths or a piece of writing) have already proven really quick but effective ways of letting your child's teacher know how home learning is going. Then, teachers can give specific feedback and praise their hard work.

What we learnt from home learning last year:

- Over 90% of families who replied to our survey last year on home learning said they felt the level of challenge in home learning felt about right.
- Most children spent between two and three hours a day on their home learning.
- Most families had been in touch with their child's teacher via email and the feedback had been helpful.

Is the school using a virtual classroom platform?

We are exploring this option. During the last period of lockdown, 2% of all state schools used a live lesson platform and 19% provided video clips to support learning. We want to make you aware of the challenges we are facing which is why this is not in place at present:

Safeguarding - this is paramount. We cannot risk not having all procedures in place to keep the children safe. I'm sure you understand the safeguarding risks involved, especially with children aged from 4-11.

Equality - not all of our children have internet access. Not all of our children have access to computers.

Time - we have had one staff training day. Safeguarding was the priority. It was essential that the logistics of the new school day were communicated effectively to welcome the children. We also needed to ensure that classrooms were ready to receive the children with all safety measures in place. Although staff were in during the summer break doing this, ensuring that classrooms were as safe as possible needed to be the priority.

IT - we need all staff to have stable internet connections and computers to run classroom platforms from home.

Training - to ask staff to teach in a completely different way without training would not be appropriate.

Sustainability- we would need all teaching staff to be able run this. There are various matters to consider: staff confidence in a new way of teaching, contingency if staff are ill, how staff will manage if they have their own (in many cases very young) children at home, and managing the running of school with some staff at home and some in school.

Impact - limited interactivity would be possible on classroom platforms. Teachers would not be able to see what the whole class are doing, children would not be able to easily interact with teachers on a video with up to 34 others, from aged 4. The usual teacher-pupil interaction cannot be replicated. Engaging and managing a class of children (from aged 4) virtually would be a challenge. For some, the time running this would be an ineffective use of time when they could be completing the home learning independently or if possible, with the support of adults at home.

Staff wellbeing - we have a duty of care towards our staff team. Not all individuals would feel comfortable teaching online for various reasons. Virtual teaching is not what our teachers trained to do.

These are challenges that we are actively exploring ways to overcome in order to **potentially** take more learning online in the future.

Ultimately, we want to give all of our children the best deal possible, whether they are in school, learning from home or a blend of the two. We would not want to do something and not do it effectively. Your patience during this challenging and unprecedented period is much appreciated.

Yours sincerely,



Ben Paxman
Headteacher

