



SCHOOL UPDATES

DATE: 7TH JANUARY 2021

Dear Parents / Carers,

Once again, I am having to write with further updates. As a school that prides ourselves on our values, our Senior Leadership Team feel that it is important to keep you updated and be honest with you throughout these unprecedented times.

We are very grateful for the messages of positivity and gratitude from our families over the past week, and the thoughtfulness regarding your child's provision. The staff are working extremely hard to balance remote learning provision and in school provision whilst working within their restricted bubbles and minimising movement around school.

The school provision is education, it is not childcare as the previous lockdown. Consequently, there continues to be high expectations for children to be engaging in this at home.



ClassDojo

Remote Learning

The remote learning offer is bespoke for every child at present. The class teachers are liaising with every family who are on remote learning.

The expectation is that children engage in some face to face sessions with their class teacher / or a member of the team regularly throughout the week. Alongside this the teachers are providing a timetable for the child to work through which includes accessing Purple Mash activities, Mathletics and Lexia.

We are trying to reduce the amount of paper going home and therefore we can post the children's work on to their class dojo profile. They can then access this and send it back to their teacher for feedback.

The teachers are keen to keep regular contact not only with the child but also connect the child with the children that are attending provision.

DFE Laptops / Technology Provision



As you may be aware the Department of Education are aiming to provide some additional technology e.g. laptops to children who are eligible and do not have access to this provision. We have managed to submit a request for additional technology to ensure that no one is disadvantaged at home. Over the next week our staff may be making further contact with the remote learners to ensure that technology is not a barrier to accessing the remote learning provision in place.

COVID- 19 Update – Staffing

As an Alternative Provision school, we are aiming to remain as open as we possibly can throughout the current restrictions. This is very much dependent on staffing levels and risk assessments.

The provision is also very much dependent on the staffing available. Already this week I have several members of staff that have had to work from home and be isolated for 10 days. Again, we ask our parents to be kind. Some of our staff families now have been affected by the Coronavirus. This may mean that we will be informing you of bubble closures at the last minute. All these things are out of our control. However, we do have a duty of care to keep everyone as safe as possible. Every decision made is carefully thought out and hard to make at times!

Due to the number of staff having to isolate at present we have had to adjust and return to 2 pods.

Elm and Orchard Class staff team is flexible between the two classes.

Maple and Oak Class staff team is flexible between the two classes.

The children are having to adapt and work for the adults within the team.

Department for Education

There is going to be further information published this week around whether every child should be attending Alternative Provision or whether children that can be remotely educated at home should remain at home. I once again ask you to be supportive and liaise with us. Whilst we know school is the best place for all of our children's academic, social, emotional, mental health and well-being, it may prove difficult for the vast majority of the school to be in full time. We may have to work towards part time with a balance of in school and remote learning as the half term progresses. We want to ensure every child / family has the opportunity to access the provision that is required. However, if a family member is working part time and school is struggling with capacity we would expect that on the family member's day off they would engage in remote learning rather than onsite. This is in order to ensure fair access for all.

Pupil Behavioural Responses

Our school is also legally obliged to ensure every staff member is working in a safe environment and that the risk of contracting COVID is low and the risk of harm to them is low. If a child is presenting high risk behaviours which directly put a staff member at increased risk of harm then we have no alternative but to call parents and ask them to collect their child pending a further review of their risk assessment. Given that we are on reduced staffing and in a pandemic, this would be deemed an acceptable response and will be followed through.

This is of course, also in line with the new DFE code which was introduced in the Autumn term, regarding a child's behaviour choices in school. If a child carries out "*willful and repeated transgression of protective measures in place to protect public health*", in-school provision would have to be suspended as explained above.

We are sure you as adults would be highly upset if you were spat at, bit, hurt. Our staff team are amazing, but they are also human and they continue to be committed to working within school.

Our teacher's unions are urging Specialist Schools and Alternative Provision schools to review every child's risk assessments and ensure that the children can be safe in school and are outlining that it is inappropriate to expect staff to be put at direct risk.

A key factor regarding the possible unsafe pupil responses is also due to the increased level of academic challenge in school, unlike the previous Lockdown last Summer. During the first Lockdown, the expectation was that the pupils did of course access Maths and English, but this was primarily practice and consolidation tasks and activities. The pupils were also able to experience a lot of outdoor learning.

Since September, the DFE expectation is that schools ensure pupils are now accessing much more of the National Curriculum and engaged in tasks which will ensure appropriate progress academically. This remains the case for remote learning due to school/Bubble closures/ and of course, for during the current Lockdown.

COVID Symptoms

The protocols remain the same. Any child / adult developing the following symptoms of loss of taste / smell, high temperature and or continuous cough, (coughing more than usual up to 3 episodes per 24 hours), the family should isolate until the person with symptoms is tested and results are produced.

We have been made aware from within our community that some people are testing positive with different symptoms. Although these are not official we ask you to be extremely vigilant. **(Headache, achy, tiredness, muscle pains)**. Please do not put our staff at risk by sending in your child who is unwell without monitoring and checking.

School continue to have to be informed of test results as we have to report to Public Health and the Local Authority.

Food Parcels for FSM children

Over the next few days we will be contacting the families that are remaining at home and explaining that we have managed to secure food parcels and discuss the best way to ensure you receive these.

Please take care everyone and remember we are here to help and support as much as we can.

kindest Regards, Mrs Dodd and the team at Stepping Stones