

Dear parents and carers,

Firstly, I hope you are all ok. It's been a very long and dark month and I know that home schooling on top of everything else has been challenging. It is not what any of us had planned, and even the most 'glass half full' people are finding this time difficult. The news from the government yesterday that 8th March will be the earliest that schools will return at least gives us a little certainty. We now know that Remote Learning will continue for a further 2 weeks before half term and 2 weeks afterwards. We don't know whether all children will return together on 8 March or whether it will be phased like last time. I think we should prepare ourselves that 8 March may not be the full return date for all the children but it will be a while before we know this. I have found listening to the news, reading papers and going on social media to be particularly unhelpful. Everyone from 'government sources' to people on Twitter are keen to share their opinions and stir up disagreements and this really doesn't help anyone. There will now be a lot of speculation as to when and how children will fully return to school, but I recommend listening only to official government sources as and when they make official announcements. The ongoing debate about schools is exhausting and I think we could all do with spending our precious energy on other things.

We are now at the end of the second week of using Google Classroom. To say the learning curve for all of us was pretty steep is an understatement, but we should all be very proud of what we have achieved! The teachers are still learning and refining how the system works, and improving every day using our Growth Mindset to tackle challenges. We are aiming to ensure the children can work independently, but this will depend on the age of the child.

Now that we know we have at least 4 more weeks of using Google Classroom, we will continue to evolve how we use it. The teachers need to see more of the work that the children are doing at home – especially English and maths, because each lesson follows on from each other. When they see how children have done, teachers are able to give feedback, spot areas of difficulty and change their next lessons to respond to how the children have got on. If teachers don't see the work, it is hard to tailor the teaching and feedback. Your child's class teacher will start to increase the number of pieces of work we ask to be handed in, and give deadlines for this.

I know this is an increase in what we have asked for previously, so it comes with a couple of caveats:

- i) You know how Remote Learning works in your household and we absolutely trust your judgement on what you/your child can do on any given day
- ii) If you have to prioritise which lessons your child does, ideally this would be English and maths because missing one lesson will mean the following ones will be more difficult
- iii) Having said that, if you just need to get your child engaged, the other lessons might be better to start with – talk to your child's teacher for advice
- iv) Keep each lesson to the times given by the teachers (and no longer than an hour). If they don't finish when they are in school we have to move on to the next thing.
- v) If your child does scrappy work, or doesn't finish, hand it in anyway. We will follow this up with them, in the same way that we would do if they were in school. We know what they would normally be capable of doing and will respond accordingly.
- vi) Any incomplete or scruffy work is not a judgement on you, or your supervision. The children are accountable to their teachers in school and we would like them to still be accountable to us for the work they do. If we ask a child to improve a piece of work, or re-do it, it is because we know **they** can do better. This is what we do in school and the children are used to it! (And remember, we sometimes struggle to get children to focus or work their hardest too!)

- vii) If it is all too much – let your child’s teacher know as soon as possible. There are many things we can do to support you and your child get through this difficult time.
- viii) Try to get your child onto the Google Meets if at all possible. We love to see them and the children love seeing their friends too.

Thank you also for your kind and encouraging comments about the lessons the teachers are providing. We have been nervous about broadcasting into your homes and being watched by adults as well as children, but you have made this much less worrying. I am sending out a survey today to get your views on the Remote Learning we are providing, and how we can make it better. Please complete the survey as soon as you can so we can tailor what we are doing to meet the needs of children and parents as best we can. We don’t promise perfection, but we promise to try our best.

If you watched the Celebration Assembly this morning, you will have seen me stress the importance of one page in ‘The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse’.

“Sometimes just getting up and carrying on is brave and magnificent.” Don’t underestimate how brave and magnificent you are right now.

Have a good weekend.

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