



ANN EDWARDS CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

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"Learning and achieving together in a caring community."

*Do to others what you would want them to do to you - Matthew 7:12*

Friday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2021

### Newsletter No 8

- Headteacher's Welcome
- Staffing update
- Full reopening of schools
- Mid-year pupil reports
- Covid testing for primary school staff
- New school website
- Home learning update

Dear Parents and Carers

Although you will have received various updates via ParentMail and Class Dojo from me since the start of term, I wanted to write a more traditional newsletter today to combine various important pieces of information into one document.

We are now one month into lockdown and all that that entails: anxieties and concerns, huge changes to normal daily life, uncertainty and social isolation. We are, indeed, all in this together and we will still be in this together when lockdown eases and support each other in moving forward in the recovery for the country, our community, our school and each of our individual families. I would like to thank you for everything you are doing to support your children in this unprecedented time.

Please note that the term dates for 2021/22 were sent home last month and are also available on the school website. As this is a long newsletter, I will include Key Dates beyond these in the next edition.

#### Staffing update

Following my appointment to the permanent, full-time headteacher position in November, I am very pleased to confirm what some of you will have seen in my announcement on Class Dojo: Miss Lund has been successfully appointed to the position of permanent, full-time deputy headteacher. Well-deserved congratulations to her!

At the start of this most extraordinary of terms, we also welcomed Mrs Hannah Rennie, already known to many of you as both a parent, a governor and from her work with South Cerney Preschool Playgroup, to our teaching assistant team. We are very pleased to have her on board.

Finally, I would like to remind you that we have a wonderful family liaison officer, Mrs Jo Jones, who is also trained as an Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA). She is able to offer a listening ear, signpost a wide range of support and also engage in direct support. Please contact her via 01285 860335 or by emailing [jjones@annedwardsprimary.co.uk](mailto:jjones@annedwardsprimary.co.uk).

#### Full reopening of schools

I'm sure that many of you will have been following the news and are more than aware of the prime minister's statement regarding school closures but I wanted to reinforce the key messages here:

- The earliest schools might 'begin to re-open' for children, other than those of critical workers and those who are vulnerable, will be Monday 8th March, the start of the third school week after the half-term holiday;
- There will be a government plan/review set out on Monday 22nd February (the first day after the half-term holiday), with further updates;
- When the decision to return has been made, schools will get two weeks' notice of this. This means that we have at least three more school weeks of home-learning under the current arrangements. I know that this will be disappointing for many families and the children but perhaps it indicates the beginning of children returning to school.

I will write to you following any announcement and to detail how any changes will affect us.

#### Mid-year pupil reports

I would like to remind you that we will be sending home mid-year pupil reports before half-term based on each pupil's effort, attainment and next steps from their work in school up to December, plus a comment on their learning during lockdown, be that home learning or in Lockdown School. This year we will have to email these out to you individually which will be more time-consuming, meaning that you will be sending these out across next Thursday and Friday and that siblings' reports may arrive on different days.

#### Covid testing for primary school staff

We are now in our second week of the national programme for mass testing of all primary school staff, including regular contracted staff such as cleaners and ICT support. As a staff, we are undertaking twice-weekly lateral flow tests, three to four days apart. All results are reported to NHS Test and Trace and the school. This is a really important procedure to help identify people infected with coronavirus who are not displaying symptoms and take the necessary, timely measure to limit any outbreak, which I hope will offer reassurance.

#### New school website

Our new school website is now live and ready for your exploration. We are really pleased with it and feel it showcases our amazing school in a much more accessible, clean and crisp way. There is also a 'translate' button on the bottom right-hand side which I know some of you may find helpful. If you do have any feedback, please contact Mr Parker. Here is the link: [www.annedwardsprimary.co.uk](http://www.annedwardsprimary.co.uk)

#### Home learning update

Thank you once again to everybody who completed our parent/carer survey on home learning. This has been a really important process in giving everybody the opportunity to provide feedback and for us as a school to review what is working well and what we can improve in the coming weeks. In addition to the whole-school feedback summarised below, I thought it would be useful for you to see the feedback relating to your child/ren's specific phase of the school; please find this attached to this ParentMail.

#### **Whole School:**

##### **1. My child has a quiet area at home where they can focus on their school work:**

Yes = 77.3 % (99)

No = 1.6 % (2)

Sometimes = 21.1% (27)

##### **2. My child has access to a tablet or computer at home to do their school work:**

Yes – They have their own device = 75% (96)

Yes - they share a device with a sibling in primary school = 14.1% (18)

Yes - they share a device with a sibling in secondary school = 2.3% (3)

Yes - they share a device with a parent who is working from home = 8.6% (11)

No - my child has no access to a device = 0% (0)

**3. My child has access to an internet connection that is fast enough to stream videos:**

Yes - all the time = 88.3% (113)

Yes - sometimes 10.2% (13)

No - our internet is not fast enough to stream = 1.6% (2)

**4. My child is spending too much time on a screen for learning:**

Yes 43.8% (56)

No 56.3% (72)

**5. My child is completing all their school work in the allocated time:**

EYFS = 3 hours per day / KS1 = 3 hours per day / KS2 = 4 hours per day

Yes 84.4% 108

No 15.6% 20

**6. My child receives the right amount of school work to complete:**

Yes = 53.1% (68)

No = 14.1% (18)

Sometimes = 32.8% (42)

**7. My child receives too much work:**

Yes = 16.4% (21)

No = 59.4% (76)

Some days = 24.2% (31)

**8. My child doesn't receive enough work:**

Agree = 15.6% (20)

Disagree = 68% (87)

Sometimes = 16.4% (21)

**9. My child is able to work independently when required:**

Yes = 31.3% (40)

No = 26.6% (34)

Dependant on work set = 42.2% (54)

**10. My child is coping well with the amount of work set:**

Yes = 50.8% (65)

No = 6.3% (8)

Some days = 43% (55)

**11. My child is struggling with the amount of work set:**

Yes = 9.4% (12)

No = 50.8% (65)

Some days = 39.8% (51)

**12. My child is coping well working/learning at home:**

Yes = 41.4% (53)

No = 17.2% (22)

Some days = 41.4% (53)

**13. My child is feeling stressed/anxious at home:**

Yes = 9.4% (12)

No = 50.8% (65)

Sometimes = 39.8% (51)

**14. My child knows where to get wellbeing support from (eg online mental health resources):**

Yes = 53.9% (69)

No = 46.1% (59)

**15. My child knows how to stay safe online:**

Yes = 87.5% (112)

No = 12.5% (16)

**16. I'm feeling stressed/anxious about helping my child to learn at home:**

Yes = 28.9% (37)

No = 30.5% (39)

Sometimes = 40.6% (52)

**17. I'm feeling confident about helping my child to learn at home:**

Yes = 46.9% (60)

No = 15.6% (20)

Sometimes = 37.5% (48)

**18. I know where to get support to help my child learn at home:**

Yes = 88.3% (113)

No = 11.7% (15)

**19. I know where to access wellbeing support:**

Yes = 86.7% (111)

No = 13.3% (17)

Firstly, 29% of you said you were feeling stressed or anxious about helping your child at home and 13% of you said you were unsure of where to access wellbeing support for yourselves. We will work hard to address issues raised by your feedback and also provide further support with this in the coming weeks. Hopefully you will have seen some helpful information that we have posted onto the Class Dojo school story in the last two days.

Last week, I also surveyed teachers on their views regarding home learning, which, added to your feedback, has been really helpful. The analysis of all of this information has been shared with teachers, the staff welfare group and governors. Clearly, I need to navigate a wide range of views: some people feel there is too much work, some too little; some people relish the opportunity to work when it best fits their family context, others would like live lessons at set times. The weighting of where the majority or significant minority sit on these issues does vary depending on the age of the child, as you would perhaps expect, which means that some of the ways we are moving forward vary according to the phase of the school.

So, what will change?

**1. Twice weekly live 'check-ins' for Key Stage 2 using Microsoft Teams**

Although some schools choose to use Zoom, this is not secure and we have been advised by both Gloucestershire County Council, our IT consultant and teaching unions not to use this platform. I am sure you will feel reassured that, as educational professionals, we adhere to advice and guidelines to protect your children and our staff to the best of our ability. However, there are alternatives. So, we have been very busy this week putting the infrastructure in place to facilitate this: namely, setting up school email accounts for each child in KS2, putting procedures and staff training in place and producing 'How to...' guides for teachers, parents and children. We are now in a position to trial this and we will do this by holding two ten minute sessions each week, starting next Tuesday. The timings of these will be staggered to cater for siblings in different classes. The Tuesday session will be a chance for the class community to come together and the Thursday will be used as an opportunity to share aspects of learning that have trickier that week and to add additional teaching on specific concepts or skills to help the learning for the rest of that week or unit.

Prior to Tuesday, we will send out individual emails to KS2 parents and carers with the login details. Obviously, some families and children will feel more confident with logging on and accessing the Teams session than

others – the last thing we want to do is add to any current anxieties. As children can catch-up via FaceTime etc these school-run sessions (which, unfortunately, allow only limited interaction due to safeguarding guidelines) are not compulsory so, if you feel that the current provision is right for you and your child, please do not worry.

Tuesdays and Thursdays:	Chestnut 9:30	Elm 9:40	Holly 9:50
	Oak 10:00	Sycamore 10:10	Yew 10:20

This is limited, at least initially, to Key Stage 2 owing to the multi-step process of first accessing the new email accounts, opening Teams then managing the session. This will remain under review.

Further information is attached for Key Stage 2 families.

## **2. Work and activities will be ‘traffic-lighted’**

Following your feedback, from Monday work will be ‘traffic-lighted’ to show what is absolutely essential in any given day or week, what is desirable to maintain the pace and depth of learning that will best benefit your child and what is optional. We hope that you find this helpful in managing your time and expectations.

## **3. Presenting some activities for the week rather than the day**

Our phase teams are currently exploring how best to put this into practice, so please bear with us. Some of you have asked to be made aware of the week’s expectations in advance so that you can plan when activities will be undertaken, match particular lessons to a particular adult’s availability, skills set or interests and, in the case of more practical subjects, find and organise any resources. Although we feel we need to continue to set and present maths and English each day, due to the nature of how learning builds in these subjects from day to day, we are going to share some subjects in advance, for example art and science, giving longer to complete these.

## **4. Reduction in screen time**

Following on from the feedback taken regarding home learning, we would like to introduce a dedicated weekly no-screen afternoon. During this time, teachers will signpost children to creative, outdoor and physical activities to help promote their wellbeing and time away from a screen to learn. If you as parents or carers wish to spend this time engaging in your own activities to help drive a particular interest, then please take the opportunity to do some. There will also be no requirement to send in evidence of this learning but if you wish to do so then please do as we always enjoy seeing all the lovely things you do at home to support your child/children. Similarly, on the first Monday back after half term, February 22nd, we are planning to run a whole school topic day, based around a theme/book, that each class will be able to access at their own level. This will encourage whole school collaboration as well as enabling siblings to support one another, too, with their learning.

## **5. Wider use of phone calls**

We are also exploring the practicality of phoning any children we have not yet spoken to before the end of lockdown, utilising both teachers and teaching assistants. You may not be aware that, at any one time, half of the teachers are running Lockdown School whilst also trying to keep up-to-date with managing home learning, as well as other school commitments such as working on mid-year reports and developing our curriculum, meaning that we have little flexibility in the system. However, this is something we would like to do as well as something that you have fed back to us, so we are working on it.

## **6. Further sign-posting of mental health/welfare resources/routes for children and parents/carers**

## **7. Additional laptop provision for children sharing with a working parent or secondary-age sibling, pending arrival of additional devices**

## **8. Contact for children identified as feeling stressed or anxious at home**

## 9. Increasing clarity around expectations for teacher responsiveness

I would like to clarify when you can expect teachers to be able to respond to queries or mark work submitted on either Class Dojo or Purple Mash. Although I know that some families prefer to submit work in the evening around their own commitments, please be aware that teachers will only respond during the working day. My teaching team is highly conscientious and want to be as available and responsive as possible. However, to prioritise their wellbeing and to allow them to be able to do that longer-term and be well and fully able to undertake their duties when school does reopen fully, I do need you to understand there will be a cut-off when things are responded to on any particular day.

Finally, I would just like to clarify that the children of critical workers and those identified as vulnerable are engaging with the same work as their class-mates at home, via Class Dojo and/or Purple Mash.

I appreciate that this is a long newsletter containing lots of information, and that there are also attachments. Thank you for taking the time to read it. Thanks again, also, for all of your support with home learning and for those of you who have taken the time to reach out to staff with such lovely, appreciative messages. I hope you have a happy and restful weekend.

Yours Sincerely



Ian Moore  
Headteacher