

Dear Parents / Carers

Monday 25th January 2021

I know we have sent very few letters out over the course of the new lockdown, as we have tried to update you with everything as it happens as we know how busy you all are keeping yourself and your family safe. I know that the staff have spoken to many of you throughout this period and I'd like to reiterate how grateful we all are for your support. As parents ourselves, we fully appreciate how difficult, frustrating and lonely this period can be when trying to support children's learning at home especially when there are multiple children in the household and trying to work as well. I can only continue to reassure you all that you have a group of staff who dearly miss having all of the children in school.... it's what we trained to do, it's the job we love and it's in a community which is so very special to each and every one of us.

Your community is our community and believe me when I say we very much share your frustrations. Not one of us came into this job to not have children in front of us in the classroom and every single member of staff would quite gladly trade remote learning for being back as we should be.

As for school itself, I'd like to say the last couple of weeks have been quiet and uneventful. If only. The one thing we've all come to expect as the norm here at Renishaw Primary School, is that there's never a dull moment. But that's what we love so much about the place. If it's not a pandemic, there's snow and floods and those things that you can never quite plan for. So, with that in mind, and with our usual high level of honesty and transparency here's a round-up of things that are happened in the near future which will be very useful to be aware of.

Major Boiler Replacement in the Main School Building.

As I communicated to you a week ago, the boiler in the main school building has finally been condemned and as such we have no heating in there other than the heaters that have been provided for us thankfully by DCC. Thankfully, we have been made a priority for a full and immediate replacement. At this time of writing, I have been told that there is an added complication in that prior to this being taken out and replaced, work is going to have to be undertaken to make safe the asbestos that is in the room where the boiler is housed. Because of this, the school will be having a decontamination tent on the drive next to the main entrance from Saturday 6th February and if you happen to see people in white suits, I can allay any worries...they are not here for COVID19 or indeed for any other reason.

The work to strip and replace the boiler is due to take just over a week and we have gone to great lengths to get reassurances from those carrying out the work that the Year 5 children and the staff working in that block can continue to do so as the work will be in the cellar and is self-contained. If there are any changes to this, we do have a back-up plan to keep the Y5 bubble open. As ever the safety of the children and the staff are our only priority. To say it's fresh in there currently, is an understatement but the children in Y5 have been simply

amazing in their attitude and resilience as have all of the children right across school during these freezing temperatures.

If you have any further concerns or questions regarding this situation, please feel free to contact me or Miss Baker in school. I will update you with plans over the next few days as we make have to restrict some pedestrian flow around some areas of the school site.

Lateral Flow Tests (LFT)

Starting hopefully this weekend, the staff are now being asked by the Government to undertake LFTs twice a week in a bid to prevent asymptomatic transmission. This is a voluntary process, but all results will be used to help the national picture.

It is important to note a few things and how it potentially impacts on us all:

If a staff member tests positive on one of the tests, then I will need to immediately close the bubble that the staff member is associated with. Even though the LFTs are not as accurate as the PCR tests, I cannot take any more risks than are necessary. This also includes if that member of staff has had two consecutive void tests. In this case that member of staff has to have a PCR test as if they have tested positive. As a result of this, a typical week in all primary schools could be as follows. Again, it is only fair to make you all and especially the key worker and vulnerable families aware of the situation.

A potential weekly scenario might look like this:

- Monday: Possible Bubble Closed. Positive LFT result reported from Sunday night.
- Tuesday: Bubble closed. Staff member is awaiting result from PCR test. If PCR test result back – negative. All fine
- Wednesday: Bubble still closed. If PCR test result back – negative. All fine
- Thursday: Bubble Closed. Positive LFT result reported Thursday night. Staff member is awaiting result from PCR test. If PCR test result back negative. All fine
- Friday: Bubble still closed. If PCR test result comes back negative. All fine

This scenario is a distinct possibility, and you all need to be prepared for this to happen. With the national statistics saying 1 in 3 people in the population are asymptomatic,

Where a bubble is closed, the children and adults associated with the affected bubble will need to self-isolate and so cannot access school until further notice is given. In this case, all learning will be done remotely. Where home access to devices cannot be arranged at such short notice, I will aim to arrange for a laptop loan for the period away from school if this is needed.

If your child is in the bubble that needs to self-isolate, but was not in school during the identified period, you will still need to keep them at home. They do not need to self-isolate, but I cannot safely move staff around to accommodate 'part bubbles' as these are set and the classroom will need to be thoroughly cleaned.

Remote Learning

We are so gobsmacked at the adaptability of you all with the remote learning that is happening. The work has been superb and it is clear that lots of effort is being funnelled into trying to do the right thing.

It won't always work, and be prepared for those times. Be prepared to say 'No, that's it, I can't turn it on/off any more!' Walk away, have a drink, grab a book and read with your child, get a ball out on the back garden, grab some pencils and draw. This is one of the main reasons for not streaming live-lessons. The fear of missing out is too great and not worth the hassle if you get unlucky.

A huge thank you to those who have taken the time to give us some amazing feedback regarding the home learning programme we have put in place so far. This along with any suggestions you may have, will help us to continue to improve this as we go forward. You know we are not a school that likes to stand still. Our village deserves better than that. If you would like to contribute, please follow the link:

<https://forms.gle/sC9FYi51KTkGDyRu5> It should take you 5-10 minutes to complete.

We are aware that there are some children who have done very little up to now and are proving hard to contact. All our staff can do is point out that if your child doesn't do any of the school work, there will be huge gaps in their learning when we get back. Some of these gaps may be difficult to overcome and could have serious knock-on effects not only for this year, but for later years too. SO PLEASE READ AND DO THE BASICS AS A MINIMUM. It's a very fine line to draw, but we would not be doing our job if we didn't point it out.

Home Access

Please let school know if you are having trouble with the tech at home we have:

Laptops: Available for loan. Good laptops with the shortcuts already on. You just need your Office logins

Data Increase: With a few details from you, I can send details to the main providers and they can upgrade your data limit (provider dependent)

School Numbers

We are getting close near full classes in some bubbles. If we get too close, I shall need to be a little more 'guidance-focused' in my approach. This will include requiring critical workers to provide letter from employers so that we can ensure everyone who genuinely needs place can get one. The DFE makes clear in its guidance that children should still be kept at home where and whenever they can be to ensure your child is as safe as possible and we thank all of you for keeping children at home where you can. We have spent a lot of time to ensure that the work being provided online matches that being done in the classroom. However, in order to allow this to happen we are staffing classes to a minimum so that full time online support can be provided for those children getting stuck and needing to talk to someone.

We are in constant contact with senior advisors from Derbyshire County Council to guide support and inform all of the decisions we make. I can assure you that they are made in line with the guidance from the DFE, and on an individual basis without bias or prejudice.

I apologise in advance for this, but it is in an effort to maintain the balance we are currently managing between teachers delivering face-to-face and remote. Please do not be offended if I ask for this, I am only trying to keep everyone safe. At the moment, we are fine, and no-one needs to panic.

Food Bank and Freedom Programme

This was sent to me this morning which some parents may find useful.

“My name is Jacqui and I am the foodbank co-ordinator , working for New Hope Community Church (NHCC) Halfway.

I am concerned that we may be missing families and children in food crisis in these unprecedented times. Families who may now be struggling financially due to being furloughed, having reduced working hours, waiting on Universal Credit benefit, or needing help with children being off school due to the pandemic or school holidays. As a school you can refer them over to us and we can help out by providing a 3 meal a day for 7 days food parcel for families or a breakfast and lunch for children who are entitled to free school meals.

I have attached a referral form and a referrers flow chart for your information”

We are told that you must contact us directly for this help as we will be designated a “Designated Referrer” for assessment before passing the form on to the programme. All cases will be dealt with, with the highest levels of privacy and confidentiality.

I also have attached some information about a domestic violence group that I facilitate at Halfway called The Freedom Programme, should you know of anyone that might benefit from attending.

Half Term

We have been officially told by the DFE, that schools are not being asked to stay open for critical worker’s families and vulnerable children over the planned half term period. As such, Renishaw Primary School will be closed as planned for one week from Friday 12th February until Monday 22nd February. Families in receipt of free School Meals will be contact by DCC to explain how they can be supported over the half term through the county’s COVID WINTER GRANT SCHEME.

And to finish

Miss Morgan will be leaving us in the next couple of weeks to go on maternity leave. She will be temporarily covered by Miss Swift who of course you already know. I know you will join me and the staff in wishing Miss Morgan and her family all the very best with the imminent addition to her new arrival until we see her again at the end of the summer term.



Can I also wish all of the children who have had a birthday during January our best wishes. We normally get to sing a happy birthday to them during lunch time but this obviously hasn't been allowed to happen.

WARAW – We're All Renishaw Aren't We?

I know that his phrase properly took off when we locked down last March, but even as a dedicated football fan and proud Headteacher, I never really anticipated how often parents put it in emails, thank you cards and other correspondence. We are humbled by your support and encouragement. I never expected to have so many of you contacting school simply to ask how we are coping and checking in on us. We have never claimed to get everything right and we know that with your honesty to tell us how we can continue to improve the school and the community, I am certain that there are good times ahead for you, your families, the school and the community of Renishaw.....As long as we keep doing it the Renishaw Way!
A massive thanks to you all. You are doing a fabulous job ... You are not alone.

Stay safe and stay strong Renishaw. We will get there if we stick together.

WARAW

Kind regards.

Mr S Fuller