



February 1st 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Just wanted to drop you a line and update you on how things are going currently whilst considering a return to school for all.

Firstly, can I thank you for the engagement with Google Classroom and Tapestry and the feedback you have given to myself directly or to classteachers who have shared this with me. We are constantly reviewing, adapting and amending our practice regarding Remote and Blended Learning and each year group are finding things that work best for their classes and age groups. It is most definitely a work in progress. All along we have understood that learning at home looks different depending on your own individual circumstances and together we have found ways to overcome challenges and find solutions. I have been astounded by your flexibility, willingness to adapt and ability to learn this new way of learning. I absolutely recognise that whilst schools have found this challenging, for you at home, it must have been, and continues to be, incredibly difficult. I admire you all greatly. I went for a walk at the weekend with a friend who works in the NHS in a very demanding job. Last week on a day off she had taken on the role of home teacher with her Year 3 child. She said it was horrendous and she ended the day with a huge headache and could not imagine having to do that every day alongside fulfilling her own job role from home. She said it would be almost impossible. It made me think of all of you at home each and every day being parent, teacher and for some of you- employee. Sincerely, I don't know how you're doing it. You are amazing!

I had an interesting conversation with a few colleagues last week and wanted to share the gist of it as it may help just alter your mindset and reassure you. You may be feeling the pressure of "Homeschooling" right now- but we as a school, along with the Government, are not asking you to home school your children, the children are home learning and there is a subtle difference.

With homeschooling, parents/carers guide their child in their learning and are solely responsible for their education. With remote and blended home learning, the teacher is the primary instructor and is responsible for the setting of the work- they are guiding the learning. Obviously, depending on the age of the child, their level of independence can vary, but please do not think that you have to be beside your child and involved in the "learning" all of the time. Please don't think that every piece of work they turn in has to be perfect and correct- it wouldn't be if they were in the classroom, the teacher would pick up on misconceptions and address these and this can still be the case with home learning. You are

of course needed to be nearby and to support with any technical issues that arise, and if you are able to be involved in each part of learning throughout the day then that's great. Part of learning though, is the opportunity for independent learning and problem solving. In the classroom, a child wouldn't have an adult 1:1 throughout the day, if we are pitching Google Classroom in the right way, and I believe we are, then this should also be the case at home. Ease the pressure from yourself and encourage your child to work independently wherever possible- if work is not quite right, teachers will support and respond- it is not a reflection on you or your ability. I really hope that subtle difference helps you to shift your mindset and be kind to yourself.

Here in school numbers have risen as time has gone on. We are now offering provision to over 200 children across sites whilst trying to balance this against minimising numbers to reduce local community transmission. Teachers and TA's are working tirelessly to provide education for those in school and those at home, whilst keeping themselves and the children safe. We are all adapting to new routines, roles and responsibilities. I am incredibly proud and appreciative of each and every one of them, as I am every member of staff whatever role they undertake in school.

March 8th is the date that we have been told we can expect schools to return. I assure you we are given the news at exactly the same time as you. We hope that this will mean we can re-open to ALL children. You may recall when we re-opened on June 1st 2020, we were told to only open to Foundation, Year 1 and Year 6 children plus Critical Worker and Vulnerable children and I'm hoping that limited year groups won't be repeated- we want a full school. I anticipate similar restrictions to the September opening will be in place, but this is purely my own prediction. I will of course share as much information as I can regarding the re-opening just as soon as I know more.

Finally I want to emphasise the point that well-being continues to be a priority- the well-being of all- staff, parents and carers and of course our wonderful children. Let's support, guide and work collaboratively in order to get through these challenging days together with a mutual respect and understanding- it's the only way for us all to keep moving forwards.

Warm regards,

Bernadette Hunter