

Covid-19 School Closure and Update for Parents / Carers

Dear Parents/Carers

I wanted to write to you all to keep you informed with what was happening in school and to check in on you all. The end of the Autumn Term and Santa's Grotto on the last day of the year seem something of a distant memory and I can't wait for those days to return. We have absolutely no idea when this will happen but hopefully it will be at some point in the not too distant future.

Remote Learning Feedback and Support

Firstly can I thank you all for the incredibly positive comments we have received overall in relation to remote learning. I think we have come an awful long way since the last lockdown in March and having pre-recorded lessons, the communication on SeeSaw and the overall positive engagement from you all is just incredible. Teachers are working from home on a full time basis to plan, record and deliver your lessons as well as spending time responding and marking the work completed. We are really delighted with how well this is working, obviously it's not quite the same as just being here but it is an excellent way to keep the children connected to their learning. Please, please email and contact your child's classteacher as we are really keen to keep this going for as long as we need to. Mrs Gill and I will be calling those families who haven't yet engaged with home learning but we want to give you all as much support as possible. Alongside this I know that both teachers and support staff are delivering specific sessions for some of our children which is brilliant. The staff here are working as hard as possible, I promise you, to make the learning as accessible as possible.

Can we help at all?

Please remember if you have any issues with remote learning, can I ask that you email your child's classteacher (all parents / carers were sent this information) if your emails are not being responded to then please email me too. We have a number of laptops in school that can be loaned for parents and carers to support their child's learning. If you wish to loan one then please email Mr Oldman to request one and we can try and allocate one to you. I am passionate about supporting families as much as possible during this time so please make contact with Mr Oldman on his email address which is included: robin.oldman@deepointprimary.cheshire.sch.uk; or equally just contact the school office.

What is happening in school?

So currently in school we have approximately 90 – 100 pupils in each day. We have re-opened our Nursery as the guidance asked us to and next week we are re-opening Pandora for our children who have complex special educational needs. The other children in school are children of critical workers or other children that are vulnerable for a range of reasons. The key message however is as much as possible to stay at home. We have been very specific about why children are in school. Most importantly we need small numbers in school to reduce the risk of infection.

The classes are being supported by our teaching assistants and other teachers who don't have a class in school. They are doing a brilliant job of supporting the children accessing the remote teaching that their class teachers have prepared. It is working very well but we are missing you all so much!

Covid-19 Testing in Primary Schools

We are looking at starting to test teachers and teaching assistants next week in school. This is going to be done every 3 to 4 days but I am waiting for the final guidance from the department for education. I attended a webinar on Monday with the details of this and informed all the staff. As the majority of teaching staff are working from home, it will only be the staff currently in school that will be tested. This is because 1 in 3 cases of Covid-19 are asymptomatic so by testing regularly we are potentially able to break this cycle. It does however increase the risk of disrupting school life and closing bubbles if we have a positive case. We will, of course, act swiftly to inform parents and carers as quickly as possible.

Food Parcels / Supermarket Vouchers / Additional Support

We are continuing to support all our families who are on free school meals, with food packs this week but we are also waiting for the government voucher scheme which is due to happen at any point. This means all our families who are in receipt of free school meals will be able to claim a £15 supermarket voucher weekly. Fingers crossed this programme is going to roll out shortly. As well as this Mr Ortega is doing regular food parcel drop offs for families. I would also ask ALL families, not just those in receipt of free school meals that if you are experiencing any hardship and need our support, please, please call me or email me as soon as possible. During the pandemic I want to reach out to all families and support you. I know that for some working families they have been furloughed, some parents have been made redundant and others just experiencing challenges at this time, so the offer of support is for everyone, please just ask!!! Either email me: head@deepointprimary.cheshire.sch.uk; or contact school, there is always someone in the office 01244 372631.

What else is happening?

Well I am currently planning the school staffing structure for next year. This is always a huge task but starting to identify which teachers will be going where. I am looking at developing a new special educational needs provision so have an exciting meeting next week to talk this through. On top of this I am reviewing the school budget before the end of the financial year. Really boring stuff sadly!!!

A couple of exciting things going on, are that we are looking to install a small climbing space in the playground for our younger children, we're having some new seating for the library and the upstairs corridor and yesterday I met with Russell Kirk and Ed Abrams who are 2 local artists and historians who are looking at building 2 safe spaces in the corridors for the children to access and use during school time.

I have to be honest do you know what I'm really hoping for? That we can have a sports day or a family picnic day or something for us all in the Summer!! We have tried to cancel and rearrange as many residential as possible so that they all occur in the Summer Term and I'm just remaining optimistic that these will all happen as the vaccine rollout continues and the lockdown that has been implemented starts to see a rapid reduction in infection rates.

Future Plans

There is no sign currently that school will re-open sadly. Only this week have we seen a record number of Covid related deaths recorded so it appears we will be in lockdown for quite a bit longer but as soon as I hear anything I will of course let you all know. I think you all know me well enough that I will re-open

school as quickly as is humanly possible. I miss your children as much as you want them back in school and you will be the first to know what is happening.

The only bit of optimism I can share with you at this point is the volunteering that I am currently doing on a Saturday morning in Ellesmere Port at a vaccination centre. I spent the day guiding and supporting 80 year olds upwards for their vaccine. All I can say is that the smiles on their faces and the optimism that they had that soon they would be safe and could see their family and friends is something that has continued to fuel my own optimism that we will get through this and the months ahead will bring us back together, better, more appreciative of each other and even stronger.

As always throughout this pandemic, your support is greatly appreciated and valued.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Williams', followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Dave Williams (Headteacher)