



Dear Parents / Carers,

On my way to work this morning it occurred to me that this time last week it was New Year's Day! This was unofficially the last day on my holiday before spending time over the weekend getting ready for the start of term. So much has changed over the week for us in school and I know that you have all needed to react and adapt at home too. I would like to wish you all 'Happy 2021,' we know the start of the year is going to be exceptionally challenging in so many ways. The exit date for the majority of restrictions is currently unclear however there is light at the end of the tunnel.

On Tuesday, less than 12 hours after the lockdown was announced, we opened two new schools. The school was open to face to face teaching for our critical workers and our remote learning provision through Microsoft Teams started. The first day of remote learning presented many challenges and I know that many of your children struggled to access the video clips. By lunchtime, we had developed a solution (despite not fully understanding all of the problems!!) which has resulted in fewer issues for the rest of the week.

Last night, I went outside with my children and made some noise as the Clap for Carers returned. I can see Torbay hospital from my house so usually during this time my thoughts are dominated by the NHS. However last night, I reflected on the incredible achievements of my team this week to create, adapt and be resilient in the face of challenges. Additionally, and most importantly, how once again they have crossed the white line to come into school during another national lockdown. During the coming months, I hope that you all are able to stay safe and support each other in your family bubbles.

During the last lockdown, you all did an exceptional job supporting your children with their remote learning. To a certain extent, I can empathise as I have 2 children at home too. However, the needs of my 11 and 14 year old are significantly different to supporting younger children! For the next 5 weeks, we will provide remote learning for your children so that, with your support, they are able to make good progress. In the foundation stage and KS1, this will approximately 3-4 hours a day and 4-5 hours for our children in KS2. I cannot stress the importance of the home learning enough. I know that you will do the best you can but I need to remind you to be realistic too. If you are working from home, you cannot be the best teacher and be at your best for your work too – you need to find a middle ground and reflect positively when you find it. We are here to support when you need us. Please contact the teachers directly through the Teams chat function.

The following frequently asked questions will summarise our current position with home learning:

**How do I access Teams?** - Follow the instructions in the attached PowerPoint. Teams will allow us to model learning, set activities, receive examples of learning, mark activities and communicate with you in one platform.

**What if the videos in Teams won't play** - This was an issue on Tuesday so we now put a link in Teams to our YouTube channel. If you have an issue in Teams, you can access the videos directly via YouTube using the links below. Your child can then go back in to Teams to access the follow up activity.

Foundation - <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHPt0jE8WiEB6EDyhtfblpw>

Key Stage 1 - <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0C7fJoMYH2zUYhCtdHZ-Lw/videos>

Year 3/4 - <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC2lb19Mk5Lz9Db7tMtF0qvA>

Year 5/6 - <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzjtaKMePk09QAoqOzqXigA>

**When is best to teach my child?** - Please find a routine that works best for your family and your home circumstances. We appreciate that you may be juggling work, supporting another child and other day-to-day tasks. From experience, in school we often find the children apply themselves better in the morning. This is when we'd usually teach our core subjects – English, maths and phonics. Again, this may be different for you at home. There is no right or wrong way.

**How long should each 'lesson' take?** - As a school, we have suggested a child in Foundation and Key Stage One should spend around 3-4 hours completing their remote learning tasks a day, this increases to 4-5 hours in Key Stage Two. We understand that sometimes your child may wish to explore something further, spending more time on their learning but also appreciate there may be days where this isn't feasible. Please go with whatever is appropriate for your home circumstances each day. We may spend 6 hours a day in school, but remember some of this time is put aside for break and lunchtimes. You are not expected to replicate the school day. If a session is a particular challenge, please don't spend endless amounts of time trying to complete the task. Coming back to it at another time is best. Likewise, any misconceptions may be addressed in the next teaching session. If you have any concerns, you can get in touch with us via Teams. One of us will be available to support you. From next week, we will share clearer timings for each session so

you know when to move your children on to the next activity. It is very normal in school for children not to finish activities (e.g. if it something they find challenging or they are working in a more detailed manner than other children), this will be the same at home too.

**How much should I support my child with their learning?** - Your child may need more support during video input and near the beginning of a session. This is where we usually introduce new learning and ideas. As they move through a lesson, they should become more independent. Please encourage your child to be as independent as possible during the main activity (the task we set at the end of any teaching input – e.g. maths worksheets or a writing task) where evidence is requested so we can see what they can do alone. Of course, if they are struggling, have a misconception (a misunderstanding) or need some help, be on hand to facilitate just as we would in school, but please try to refrain from ‘telling’ the answers. Please know that we are not expecting reams of perfected work, and we teach in school that mistakes are how we learn. We don’t want children to fear ‘failure’. It also means if there is a common misunderstanding, we can address this through the taught sessions in our videos and input, just as we would in class. If you are having any particular struggles at home, please contact your class teacher and we can try to make some suggestions to support you further.

**How will you know we’ve completed the learning task?** - For each assignment, we will outline whether or not evidence is wanted for the session. Please ensure this is uploaded when your child has completed the learning task. You can then ‘hand in’ the assignment. We would like to ask, that when we request no evidence you still ‘turn in’ the assignment so we know you have completed the activity. If a task is not ‘handed in’, we will assume you haven’t yet completed the subsequent activity. Please don’t panic if you don’t complete on the day it is published, the deadline for each week is Sunday. We understand you have other commitments and may not be able to deliver teaching and learning during normal school hours. Turning in work will enable us to see you are engaging with the learning and help us to identify anyone who may need additional support at home. It is not used as a tool to shame any parents or judge you – we are only here to help!

**If we ask a question in Teams, how quickly will we get a response?** - This depends! If your child’s class teacher is at home leading the remote learning, their response might be rapid. However, if they are in school teaching, they will respond as soon as they can. I have asked teachers not to respond to messages outside working hours, they will get back to you when they log on next time. I do appreciate however that you might need to send a message through Teams outside your working hours due to your own commitments.

**Who will be working with my child in Teams** - Generally, all children are taught by their main class teacher and a teaching assistant in school. During the spring lockdown, the year group teams are working even closer (although not physically) together as a Team. Most of your child’s contact through Teams will be with their class teacher, however some activities will be set / modelled / marked by other members of the team.

**When will new learning be uploaded?** - Each day’s learning will be uploaded onto Teams at 5pm on the previous day to give you time to view the activities and prepare any resources you may need. There is no expectation for you to begin the learning before the date on the assignment title.

**When is the deadline for handing in learning?** - The deadline for all assignments for the week will be the subsequent Sunday at 5pm – regardless of when tasks are set. If you hand in earlier than this, that is fine and appreciated. Assignments can still be handed in after this deadline, but we may not see them. Whilst the deadline isn’t until the end of the week, we would advise you to continue to complete learning each day as it is published to support you with workload and ensure you don’t become overwhelmed. We want to ensure you still enjoy your weekends (or your time off whenever that may be for you particular household). However, we appreciate this may not be possible, depending on your circumstances. Teachers will be marking work through Teams during the working week but not over the weekend. We will therefore recognise and value anything that is submitted over the weekend but won’t be giving feedback on these activities

**What if my child is attending school?** - Generally, the teachers in each year group will be working alternate weeks swapping our time between remote and face-to-face learning. If your child attends school, they will be taught all the online content face-to-face. Onsite learning will replicate normal school life as much as possible – just as it did before this lockdown and will mirror the remote learning offer for that day. There will be no expectation for you to complete remote learning when your child attends school that day. However, when your child is home, please continue to use Teams to deliver and support your child so they do not miss any of the teaching content. We currently have 7 bubbles open in school every day. Foundation are in their normal classrooms, Year 1 are in Hedgehogs, Year 2 are in the main building in the Squirrels classroom, Year 3 are in Pine Martens, Year 4 in Hares, Year 5 in Tawny Owls and Year 6 in Eagle Owls. Pressure on school places is currently very high, I need to remind critical workers only to book their children into school on the days that are required.

I hope that the information above clarifies a few uncertainties at this time. I will send further updates over the next few weeks as we establish yet another way of working. Thanks in anticipation of your support. I can’t wait until the day that we can have all of your children back in school again.

In the meantime, good luck and take care, Steve Bone **Headteacher**