



29th January 2021

School Update

Dear Parents,

The biggest news for this week has been the statement earlier in the week, which I am sure many of you are aware of, that schools will continue to stay shut for the majority of children right up until the 8th March at the earliest. The government will make an announcement around the 22nd February (which is the first day back after the half term break) to give further details.

We do not know at this stage whether this will mean that only schools in certain regions will open, or whether it will only be certain year groups, but at least it will give schools a fortnight to prepare. This week, our staff working in school began taking Lateral Flow Tests in the next government initiative in trying to isolate any cases of Covid found within schools

I am sure that some of you will be 'flagging' as we get towards half term. Teachers are planning some 'wellbeing' activities for the final week before half term - the week beginning Monday 8th February - to coincide with Hertfordshire 'Feeling Good Week' which itself begins on Wednesday 10th February.

Our governors met this week – for the second time this month - to discuss how things were going. The wellbeing of children, staff and families was very much at the heart of our discussions.

Firstly, governors are fully aware that you are not trained teachers and that you are juggling your own work, you might also be working with more than one child and you may have many other pressures during this difficult period. Keyworkers will be facing risks associated with having to work outside of the home during this pandemic and some will be involved in the treatment of Covid patients themselves.

Therefore, governors and our staff would like to reassure you that you can only do your best and that you need to prioritise both your family's safety and their wellbeing at this difficult time. It is important that remote learning motivates and enthuses your children about learning and you can only try your very best to support them during this pandemic.

Yes, we want your children to do their very best and tackle as much work as they can, but each child's circumstances will be different and you will know what works best for your child – and when they have reached their limit! So please feel reassured that you can make

adjustments to the work, build in breaks and most importantly ensure that your children have a positive experience with remote learning. The government's requirement is for up to 3 hours daily work for Reception and Key Stage 1 and 4 hours for Key Stage 2 – but these are guidelines and some children may manage less, and teachers will often have extra activities for children who wish to do more.

Our governors are also mindful of the extra work our staff team are doing at the moment. Our teaching team are putting in long hours to create videos, online work, respond to work on Seesaw, sometimes work in school with the children of keyworkers and also answer queries from parents from their year group emails. Governors are keen to stress that teachers and support staff should not be working well beyond their usual hours – which are never 9 – 5 anyway.

Governors appreciate that teachers have put in a lot of additional work to further improve our remote learning this term but that they – and you – should now be in a more settled, sensible working pattern by now and working to normal hours. Attached with this letter is the strategy devised by governors for this Lockdown.

We know that financial pressures are huge for many at this time. I just wanted to say that as a school we do have contacts at our local foodbank and can signpost families to this support and other help if you or anyone else you know need it. Do tell us. On that note I would also like to flag up the excellent work that one of our parents, Raihaanah Ahmed, has been doing to support local families in need. Ms Palmer, our deputy head, recently alerted me to Raihaanah's work and that of the Sopwell Community Trust. You can find out more about their work at:

<https://www.hertfordshiremercury.co.uk/news/hertfordshire-news/st-albans-bame-charity-providing-4883009>

Many thanks Raihannah on your supreme efforts to support those in our local area who are in need.

And that is a nice, positive note to end on - difficult times can also bring out the very best in people – a good message for our children! I hope that you all have at least some rest over the weekend. I'm afraid that I will be practising how to spell the word 'Olympics' after the typo in my assembly today – the prize goes to you Miss Lee for spotting it! I must try harder! Have a good weekend.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Farrugia
Headteacher

