

Monday 25th January 2021

Covid-19 Update

Dear Parents/ Carers,

I hope you are all keeping well. We are now three weeks into the Spring term and I wanted to provide you with an update as to how the school is progressing at this uncertain time. I also hope the contents of this letter provides some reassurance and encouragement, as I know many families will be finding this lockdown increasingly difficult.

First of all, I want to thank all our teachers and support staff who are working so hard to ensure that children are continuing to receive live lessons. The kind emails that have been sent from parents outlining their praise for our staff are so encouraging and I know go a very long way to keep the momentum going. I extend that thanks to the members of staff who are attending school every day to continue to work with the children who are on site. I also think that you as parents/ carers deserve a big thank you! We really appreciate your patience when online lessons do not quite operate as smoothly, and thank you for doing your absolute best when it comes to supporting your child's learning at home.

I know that some children are finding the online learning very taxing, and we all very much know that online learning will never be as good as real-life school. You will know how much your child is able to achieve in a day – so if it is becoming a struggle, take a break, try something else away from the computer, and return to the lessons later on when ready. If you require any printed materials, then please contact the school office and we will prepare this for you.

Some parents have contacted the office requesting for a place for their child to start attending school. Our numbers in school are reviewed on a week-by-week basis, which means we are not able to offer every child a place. Therefore, as we progress through the term, it is important that parents create a routine for their child that is sustainable and manageable. Members of staff are able to support with this, so please contact the school if you require any advice. I do not underestimate how difficult managing home learning is for parents, do not be too hard on yourselves. You are doing an amazing job!

The school has been working hard to secure laptops and additional data for families. Southwark Council and the London South Teaching School Alliance have joined forces to launch a borough-wide 'Laptops for Learning' crowdfund appeal. Money raised through the appeal will be used to buy laptops for Southwark schools, for the benefit of young people who need them in order to access online learning. Any

donations made to the campaign will be match-funded by the council. Please help us to get the word out so our school can benefit:

www.crowdfunder.co.uk/laptopsforlearning

The appeal is also accepting second-hand devices from businesses. If you know any business owners that may be able to help, please share the link.

I have still not received any further confirmation regarding when the school will be re-opening. As soon as I have any further information I will provide this to you with as much notice as possible. It is uncertain whether this will be directly after the half-term holiday or at a later date. Therefore, it is important to recognise that this lockdown may go on beyond February. In such instance, the school will continue to support in the best way we can remotely. In the meantime, all staff will be offered the chance to be tested twice weekly through lateral flow testing. This will heighten the safety measures in school to detect potential people with Covid-19, who are not displaying symptoms.

Eventually, all children will return to school. Teachers and support staff are very much committed to ensuring that children's progress is our central priority. Please be assured that teachers are already starting to think about children's return and what they can do to ensure children can catch up from missed time in class. The main thing to do is not panic, understand that this time is not ideal, and do what you can in order to follow the lessons online – either live or at a later time.

Everyone is working incredibly hard to make the best of this situation. Every member of our school community should celebrate what has been accomplished. We have never been in a situation like this before, and quite often it can be easy to forget to step back and be proud of what has been achieved. I have been amazed by the online work that I have seen within all the online classes. I want to say a well done for all the work that the children have managed to complete – no matter how big or small.

Remember to enjoy the time outside of class with your children. Given the limitations, it might mean we cannot do the things we would normally choose. Instead, perhaps try something different – a board game, knitting, junk modelling, producing a family sized piece of art, making a quiz for family members etc. Sometimes these activities help to develop our children beyond what any academic lesson can provide.

I hope that everyone keeps safe and well.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Askins
Headteacher