

Headteacher: Mr D Childs

15th January 2021

Dear Parents,

As we approach the end of the week, I always try to take a little time to pause and reflect upon the many achievements of our school family since the start of term. I would like to thank you for all your incredible support since the start of the term. Speaking to both staff and parents, I know how exhausted many of us already are, but the sense of togetherness and community has been incredible and all continue to support each other, and our children, through the difficult times ahead. I have been completely in awe of our children's resilience and determination since the start of the year. The way they have adapted to a new experience of, not only education, but life in general, makes me a very proud Headteacher.

Covid-19 Update

It has certainly been challenging for all of us as we all try to adapt to another lockdown. Looking at the number of coronavirus deaths this week reminds us all of the importance of making sure that we are all following lockdown rules, which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home>

Since the start of the term, we have already had members of our school community that have tested positive for Covid-19, and the reality is that it will be very likely that we will need to close bubbles in schools over the next few weeks, based on the national and local landscape. This is why it is so important to make sure that parents keep their children at home where they can, even if they are eligible under the critical worker criteria.

Remote Learning Review

Every week, we carry out a remote learning review to help us review feedback provided to us by parents and identify ways to strengthen our remote learning approach.

Following our review this week, we have decided to trial the use of videos in foundation subjects. This means that, next week, each teacher will add a pre-recorded video to **one** of their foundation subjects. Over the past couple of weeks, we have received an extremely high level of positive feedback from the addition of videos to our remote learning offer. Due to the way it seems to be engaging the children and reducing pressure on parents, the teaching team were very keen to try and extend this to other subjects. At this stage, we felt as though a pre-recorded video would provide more flexibility for parents and would also be achievable for teachers to provide. If this is something that helps both you and your child, please email the class teachers to let them know, as your feedback will determine if the addition of videos for other subjects will continue in the future.

Schools around the country have been instructed that they must provide a minimum of 3 hours of remote learning a day in key stage one and a minimum of 4 hours a day in key stage two. Whilst I am confident that we are providing this, I do want to emphasise to you all that the most important factor in remote learning is to make it work for you. For families with more than one child at home, this can result in many hours of remote learning and, when combined with work commitments, can be really challenging and in some cases impossible to sustain. If you need to take a pause or only focus on certain subjects, we will completely understand. Please contact us if ever you need to. We are happy to offer any support and ideas to overcome any difficulties or barriers that may be presenting themselves.

We are now providing more planning time for teachers to make sure that our current remote learning offer continues to strengthen, but is something that we can sustain over time. This will mean teachers will either be teaching in the afternoon or working on remote learning plans and resources. As a result, teachers may not be in the position to immediately respond to emails sent in the early afternoon. They will endeavour to respond, as soon as possible, from 3:30pm onwards.

Anti-Bullying Policy

Just to inform you that our anti-bullying policy has been updated and can be found on the school website by using the link below:

<http://www.ryarsh.kent.sch.uk/policies/>

At Ryarsh, we have very high expectations of behaviour and conduct. We aim to resolve any issues quickly and effectively. Should you have any concerns about this, especially in regards to online behaviour, please contact us immediately.

Mental Health & Wellbeing

Over the next few weeks, we are fully anticipating that children's mental health may begin to deteriorate, as it did during the first lockdown, due to a variety of factors such as reduced social interaction. We know how important it will be to keep children enthused, happy and connected with each other. To help with this, we are currently exploring ways to provide different types of experiences for all of the children in our school. This could include various workshops, themed days/afternoons and whole school experiences. If there is anything you would like to draw our attention to, please feel free to contact the class teacher. We already have some exciting ideas in the pipeline but would love to add to these.

Have the best weekend possible,

Daniel Childs and the team at Ryarsh Primary School