



UPDATE FOR PARENTS/CARERS FROM MRS GLASS 21.1.21.

Hello everyone, I hope you are all well and keeping safe. It's been such a busy time in school lately, so apologies for my not sending an update to you all sooner. For the last three weeks we've been busy getting used to the new ways of remote learning as well as teaching the children who are still coming into school – I never thought we'd be back into a third lockdown but here we are. I know how frustrating that must be for you all, but hopefully very soon we will all be able to return to school again. We are once more in a situation where Government have said if children can be cared for safely at home they should be, for the time being at least.

School closure.

As you know things all changed on January 4th when the Prime Minister announced that all schools in England were going to close to the majority of pupils as sadly another national lockdown was announced. However, I had already sought the agreement of Governors to close school prior to this announcement and informed everyone on 3rd January. This gave parents a bit more notice to make necessary arrangements before the announcement of the changes which I knew were coming. It also meant that staff were ready to provide remote learning straight away from 4th January and so no learning was lost.

It's obviously a worrying time for all of us as the situation with Covid 19 in the country is as bad as it's ever been and for everyone's safety schools had to go back to being open just for children of key worker and pupils who are vulnerable. We must follow the guidance to keep everyone as safe as possible. I would request that even those parents who are key workers, if your child can be cared for safely at home please consider doing so. Our numbers have risen and we need to be able to keep pupils and staff safe in schools as much as we can. I'd also like to politely remind any visitors to the site they must wear a face mask, as well as anyone who is dropping off or picking the children up. Again, this will help to keep us all safe.

Remote learning

Since the start of term we have had to move our learning online, something which both you as parents/carers and the staff have had to get used to. We only sent two bubbles home last term, (Y4 and Y5), so these children and parents had had some practice with our remote learning, but for the majority of you it has been a totally new experience. **We appreciate how much you are doing to support your children at home. It can't be easy, as there's such a lot to take in,** and for lots of you home education is for children of different ages and abilities, and balancing your own working at home has to be factored in too. (The staff with their own children know how hard this is too of course !)

Despite these pressures, I genuinely feel that the way children, parents and staff have responded so far has been amazing. We are thrilled with how almost all of the children (supported by parents) have engaged with the online learning activities provided by teachers every day through Class Dojo. We've loved seeing the work that has been sent in, the high quality of the work completed, and the levels of

engagement with the online apps such as Reading Plus. Hopefully you feel that teachers have been there to support with this and offer help to children and yourselves when it's been needed. This way of working is hard and time consuming especially when the year group bubbles are still attending school and being taught too. It's also taken a while for everyone involved (at home and school) to get to grips with Dojo; how to use and upload work, and how to get the best out of the app. Some of you haven't had suitable or sufficient devices at home – if this is still the case please get in touch immediately and we'll try to help.

We continue to be so proud of you all; you are all working so hard even though home learning can be extremely tricky. At Bowburn Primary, we are keeping in touch with you in a variety of ways: seeing your amazing work on the different platforms such as Class Dojo, sometimes on Facebook; receiving your email or Dojo messages (parents and children) -sharing work to portfolios or sending messages with photos of you and your work. Staff have made phone calls to parents to help with things or celebrate successes. My staff are working hard to record clips to introduce topics or when there are obvious misconceptions and to keep praising everyone and earning those Dojo points! We know that lots of you are enjoying the online learning apps such as Mathletics and Times Tables Rockstars for maths, Reading Plus, Lexia and Bug Club for Reading amongst others. Lots of lessons are being delivered through BBC and Oak Academy, which Government also recommend.

Please remember that work doesn't all have to be done on screen and you should intersperse this learning with more practical activities, which are especially important for the younger children. Lots of you are working on paper-based resources too, which we are happy to provide if you are struggling with accessing devices or you feel this is more manageable for you or your child. You can photograph and send in work to the children's portfolios, or interact with it directly on Dojo. Year 6 might be trying some of the PE sessions recorded by Mr Griffiths (Bowburn's answer to Joe Wicks!) We know children in Nursery are undertaking exciting daily challenges.

We hope that children are still enjoying reading. Your child may also have been lucky enough to get some new books for Christmas to read too. Children in KS2 can access lots of books from home through Reading Plus and there are lots of great websites out there with lots of books to read and share interactively.

Remember that we are here to help so if you are having any difficulties at all - get in touch. You can ring us via the school office and we can talk to you if you need us. Children can also message teachers through Dojo, with a little help from the grown-ups if they need it, whether this is to share achievements or ask for help.

So what about 'live' lessons ?

We know many of you have been wondering about why we haven't had any 'live' lessons. Maybe some of the older children in your family have some of these at secondary school. Whilst we will continue to use our current approach as the basis of our remote offer, we are almost finished setting up the systems to enable live interaction with teachers and pupils. We need consent for this from parents (very important for safeguarding reasons- this will be done over the next few days) and we have asked DCC to set up an email system and Office365@bowburnprimary login details for every pupil. This has been done to avoid having to use parents email

addresses. This is now complete and will allow access to Microsoft Teams which will allow a way to meet as a class and for teachers to deliver some live teaching. This can also offer an opportunity for children to say hello to each other and their teacher perhaps at the start or end of the session. We know how important this might be for the children's mental health. However, please don't expect 3 hours of 'live lessons' everyday as this won't be provided- primary age children don't learn best in this way anyway- and it's why children normally come into school and teachers don't just beam everything out to your laptops and tablets at home instead !

The login details for Office365 and consents for live learning will be shared in the next few days, probably via Dojo. We will also provide a set of guidelines that we expect children, parents and staff to adhere to whilst engaging in live sessions.

We are determined to give children the best remote learning we can, it is a different way of working for all of us, and it will evolve and get even better over time- we feel we have come a long way already in just over 2 weeks ! We also know that some families might be dreading getting to grips with yet another way of accessing remote learning, whereas others are already familiar with the platforms and are ready to do so.

*As I said during the first lockdown, remember what you are doing **is** good enough, we appreciate this is sometimes difficult but we will work hard with you to provide the best remote education that we possibly can.*

.....*And finally*

Mr Soler, Miss Noble and I will be visiting the new school site tomorrow , so watch out for some photos appearing on our face book page and website soon.

Take care, stay safe

Mrs Glass