

A NEWSLETTER FROM

MS ELBOURNE-CLOAD



HEADS UP

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Friday 8 January 2021



Well... this was not the newsletter I was planning to write at the end of the first week back this term. Monday's 8pm announcement about schools closing on Tuesday was as much news to schools as it was to parents. Luckily I had anticipated that things may move in this direction, looking at the increasing infection rates, which is why I asked for the questionnaire to be sent out. But then the government seemed so adamant that schools would be open, we decided to continue with our planned Inset, assuming all would continue as normal!

So, as you can imagine, we were working late into Monday night and Tuesday to try to get everything up and running ready for remote learning. From the outside it may seem that it is a simple switch from school to online learning but there are a great many things that have to be in place to move forward: rotas for staff, devices for children, free school meals to be collected, new risk assessments to complete, home-learning expectations for teachers, to name but a few.

Equally, I know that a whole different set of plans had to be put in place in homes across the country and the challenges that come with trying to balance home-schooling and work cannot be overemphasized, not to mention the stress that being in lockdown causes to everyone.

We have more children in school altogether for this lockdown, as there has been an increase in keyworker jobs. I know, because of this, we could have potentially had a much higher number of children in school and so I really would like to thank parents for supporting our schools in only sending children in when absolutely necessary. I would also like to reiterate that the children we have in school either have key worker parents, an EHCP or may be in school for another reason, which is confidential.

I would ask that you try to read all messages we send out on Parentmail and respond promptly to any questions or forms to enable us to plan accordingly.

I would like to thank everyone for their emails and comments of support and I know from the summer, when we all work together, we can get through anything – hopefully by this summer we will be looking back on this and breathe a sigh of relief!

So, now on to other things:

Mr Tavender – Role change

For the next year Mr Tavender will be undertaking a change of role, from being Deputy Headteacher at the junior school, to working as Head of Schools across both schools. Mr Tavender will be further developing teaching and learning, the curriculum and the progress of our federation, as well as directly supporting me as Executive Headteacher. You will also notice that Mr Tavender is the leading force behind the technology for remote learning and will be supporting parents and children with any technical issues.

Remote Learning

Hopefully, by the end of this week everyone will have devices and remote learning plans up and running. We have sent home our remote learning expectations and rationale for our approach. A little like homework, home-learning approaches are not going to please all the parents all of the time. However, we have planned our remote learning in the way we feel will support the largest percentage of our school community, whilst having the biggest impact on children's learning. We have tried to be mindful to balance

the work in such a way that it is not overly reliant on parent input and that there are opportunities where children can watch teaching videos or undertake activities that will allow parents to get on with their other responsibilities. We would like to support parents as much as possible by making the instructions as child friendly as possible, so that they need less parental support and hope that over the next week or two, children will settle down into a routine that enables them to work successfully.

Daily Check-ins

From Tuesday, we will start having Daily Class Check-ins. These will be a maximum of 10 minute meetings, where the children will be able to see their teachers and classmates, share work for the day and have a chat as a class. While these are informal meetings, we would like as many children to attend as they can, but understand if this not always possible. We hope these will help motivate the children and add some structure to the day.

Infants will be using Zoom, and codes and times will be sent out via Seesaw on Monday.

Juniors will be using Google Meet. To make sure the system works and to iron out any issues, Mr Tavender will be holding Year group quizzes for the juniors on Monday. The link will appear under their name at the top of their class stream just before the meeting starts.

The live quizzes will be at these times:

Year 6 - 10am

Year 5 - 11am

Year 4 - 1:15pm

Year 3 - 2:15pm

Fundraising Run Challenge

It is great to see all the positive things people can do in lockdown to stay motivated. I am very excited about the epic run challenge that Seb and Sam from Year 3 have set themselves. Inspired by David Attenborough's recent documentary, they have pledged to run 202.1 km in 30 days to raise money and awareness for the World Land Trust. They hope to raise £2021 by the completion date of 7th February. You can support and follow their story at:

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundrai.../rebecca-andrew-johnson>

New Website

If you haven't had a chance to look at the schools' new joint website please go and take a look – it has lots of additional resources for home learning. Also, remember to sign up to our Twitter page @CunninghamSch to see our latest tweets.

Although we know people are mostly at home, it would be helpful for our records and discussions with County to know what the Covid situation is like in our community, so if any of your family tested positive over Christmas or do so during lockdown, please could you let us know.

So I would again like to say thank you for all the hard work by our families to support us and the children with getting through this (hopefully) last lockdown, whilst still moving our learning forward. We will keep in regular contact and **please don't hesitate to contact us if needed.**

Finally, I will leave you with my favourite saying. I always have it up in my office and it always helps me when things seem a little tough: *'Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass, it's about learning to dance in the rain'* – let's get those dances going!

Ms Elbourne-Cload
Executive Headteacher

We welcome feedback from parents. If you wish to send any suggestions or comments, please forward them to admin@cunninghamhill.herts.sch.uk