

Parent Letter 08/01/21

Firstly a Happy New Year and my sincere thanks for helping us to cope with the bombshell of Monday night. As you might imagine we had plans in place for a 'normal' return only to have to spend the whole of Monday night communicating the change! Anyway, without your support it would have been a lot more challenging so thank you.

Thank you also for your support at the beginning and end of the day which is working smoothly as a result of your co-operation.

We have completed the first week under the new regulations and after reviewing the situation are pleased with our progress. At this point there will be no changes to the timings of the day or the structural organisation. We do need to be stringent on only identified vulnerable pupils and children of critical workers attend to keep our numbers within safe guidelines.

Just also to ensure parents and children not included in school at this time that you are still very much part of the team so please keep in touch. Your class teacher will be sending messages to you to keep you up to speed. We are aware that there are a range of options for delivering remote learning but we believe ours not only meets the purpose but is also resilient enough to continue throughout the half term regardless of any changes. Please look at our guidance carefully as it answers a range of questions you may have.

There are some key aspects to remember:

1. Children are not always immediately motivated by work so don't see this as a failure for you or the content.
2. Teaching is a skill so all we ask is you do your best.
3. Even as a teacher, home education is very stressful, much more so than being in school. Choose the right time for you and your child.
4. Keep in touch via the class dojo for support and most importantly feedback.

Recent government initiatives to support home learning include a scheme to temporarily increase data allowances for mobile phone users on certain networks. This is so that children and young people can access remote education if their face-to-face education is disrupted.

For each request, we need to know (send your details to enquiries@orchardsjunior.school)

- the name of the account holder
- the number of the mobile device
- the mobile network of that device (for example Three)

This is not issued by the school and we will have no influence on whether this is granted but we will help us much as we can. If increasing mobile data isn't a suitable option for some children, we can also attempt to get a 4G router allocated to you. Again, this is granted by the Department for Education not schools but let us know if we can help.

As with the last lockdown, on full return we will plan our curriculum to ensure the appropriate gaps are plugged to continue to build on your child's development. These are challenging and strange times for all but if we keep helping each other and bear in mind the difficulties we all face then we will get through it.

Dr Jones