



## **Parent Newsletter Tuesday 23rd February 2021**

Dear Parent/Carer,

Yesterday we all received the news that primary schools will re-open for face-to-face teaching for ALL pupils on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March. In the lead up to this, with the support of the Trust, I will be reviewing our risk assessments, procedures and parent handbook in light of the new department for education guidance that was released yesterday. In the same way as when we re-opened in September, I will endeavour to ensure you are fully updated on the school actions to minimise the risks of the transmission of the coronavirus. In the meantime, we will continue to offer a full-time table of remote learning for your child as well as in school provision for pupils of critical workers and vulnerable pupils.

### **Stay Learning**

Thank you for your commitment and patience as we all adapted to this new way of learning. As a school we have done brilliantly. 94% of our pupils are participating with the live lessons daily, with 88% having high engagement and taking part in every live lesson. 99% of our pupils are participating with remote learning offer. With two weeks left, we want to continue these high levels of engagement to minimise the disruption to your children's education and continue to maintain routine and keep a strong connection to school life. I understand how challenging this can be for families and appreciate all the efforts you are making. Here are three top tips that can hopefully help make remote learning a little easier:

1. **MONITOR** Try monitoring your child's level of interest and engagement as they learn in this new way. The simplest way is to observe, watch your child's eyes to see if they're following along with the screen. Check in to see if they're taking notes or zoning out. Ask questions at the end of a lesson, it's good to confirm that your child is learning. If you find that your child is not engaging with the lessons, let us know so we can better explore the issue. It might be technical issues, like bad audio, poor connection, or an unhelpful camera angle – the change can make all the difference.
2. **DIGITAL BREAKS**- Try to encourage regular screen breaks, and where you can get stuck in with physical activity, a Joe Wickes class or just whack some music on and have a kitchen disco. Time away from screens is good for the mind, body and soul. Maybe set alarms, like the school bell, and get up and out for fresh air so they're not sedentary for the entire day.
3. **FACETIME**- Kids are social creatures, but until it's safe for them to return to school, encourage them to video chat rather than scroll through social media. Avoid social isolation and protect them from becoming wholly reliant upon their devices with regular face-to-face

chats about screen time, discuss how much time they think is reasonable to spend online and make a “contract,” committing to goals for on-screen vs. off-screen hours outside of remote learning.

And remember that you’re not alone in this journey, check in with other parents to see what they’ve found effective or to ask if they need help. It’s important that we all work together as a community for the good of our children and families. The end is now in sight!

### **Parent Meetings and Wellbeing Wednesday**

Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March will be a ‘Wellbeing Wednesday’. Children will have the opportunity to have a fun social session with their classes and then some time away from a screen, exploring the curriculum in creative ways.

We would also like to use this day to hold parents' meetings with you. The plan is that these can be via a telephone call. For those pupils remote learning, it will be a good opportunity for you to speak to the class teacher and share information about remote learning, what achievements have been made and what were the challenges. For those children who have attended school, teachers can update you on the progress your child is making and you will also be able to share information from home.

I know the timing of these meetings are short notice but I was waiting for the government decisions before making the arrangements. I believe these meetings will ensure good communication to support a smooth return for all pupils to school.

A letter with further details about these meetings and instructions to sign up will be shared with you tomorrow.

### **World Book Day – Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> March**

World Book Day is a brilliant opportunity for everyone to celebrate the joy of reading. Reading and sharing stories is the perfect lockdown activity for everyone to enjoy! We will hold a range of fun reading-based activities on this day, including a whole school assembly where there will be a ‘masked reader’ competition. Can the children guess which member of staff is reading a book?

Children in school are invited to dress up as a character from a book. If children at home would like to dress up too, please send us your photos for us to put on our Facebook page and school website. Watch out for the World Book Day £1 tokens which can be exchanged at participating supermarkets. These will be distributed to children who are remote learning on 8<sup>th</sup> March and are valid until 28<sup>th</sup> March.

### **The Mental Health Support Team**

This is a new service in Portsmouth that are working closely with Primary schools to support them and their families with children’s mental health. Your local MHST can offer a wide

range of support and play a critical role in supporting the whole school community, young people, their families and carers around the return to education following COVID.

Mental Health Support Teams are:

- Open for business both term-time and school holidays
- Able to work safely and effectively both face-to-face (in variety of settings) & remotely

As a school, we have regular meetings with this team and are able to make referral for pupils with mild to moderate anxiety. The team will then be able to work with parents to offer guidance and support.

If you feel this service would be of benefit to your child and yourself. Please get in touch with the school and ask to speak to Miss Knight our pastoral lead.

I am looking forward to working towards the return to face-to-face learning for all our pupils.

Warm Regards

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading 'Sara Paine', is displayed within a light grey rectangular box.

Mrs Sara Paine

Head teacher