



06/01/2021

Dear parents and carers,

Firstly, it has been great to see so many children responding to online learning throughout the day across the school.

We just wanted to write to give a little more information based upon the day's events so I apologise for the lengthy email!

The current pandemic has, and continues to, cause us many challenges. We have been working tirelessly over the course of the last few days to ensure that we are able to offer the children of Parkgate a high quality online learning experience.

As educators, face to face teaching is very different to facilitating an online education. As with any walk of life, it requires a different skill set. The world of technology, for many people, can be a struggle at the best of times, in many cases children are far more advanced and resilient! Added to this, comes the additional pressures and exposure that the internet and Social Media brings. Confidence levels play a part in what we are trying to achieve. As an example, some individuals are happy to be recorded or to stream live events, whilst others are not. This is something that we need to respect and has helped to inform our decision making process of how to best provide online learning and the platforms we use.

Due to the pandemic, we have been unable to facilitate face to face training for staff. We have worked remotely to develop staff confidence and understanding in being able to utilise our chosen platforms of Seesaw and Tapestry. Whilst we have developed confidence, it does not mean that we have all become gurus overnight. This is a learning experience for us all. One thing for certain is that we are committed to continuing to develop our online provision based upon feedback and experiences.

The lockdown that we currently find ourselves in is very different to the first. The expectation of learning is much higher both for us as educators and for children as pupils. We tend to find that we have a very mixed response to accessing online materials.

Lockdown one, we set project based learning. This time around, all teachers will be interacting with their classes, setting daily learning and responding to it. Please be aware that teachers have been rota'd to facilitate teaching in school and on some days will be responding less due to the fact they are working with those children. Children are requested to submit their learning before 3.30pm

each day. This will allow an opportunity for it to be looked at and marked. There will be no expectation for teachers to be marking and commenting late into the evening. It may be the case that to keep the platforms well-ordered and organised that learning at the end of the week may be archived to allow the next weeks activities.

### **Chromebooks**

We have been overwhelmed with responses requesting Chromebooks. Tomorrow we aim to communicate with families to start to arrange collection of devices. Today, we have also looked at ways in which we can increase further the availability of additional devices to allow us to support as many people as possible. There will be an additional expectation that if Chromebooks have been distributed, that learning is being completed and submitted. If it is not, then we will be asking for them to be returned.

### **iPad scheme for Year 4 and Year 5**

I have received a few emails asking for an update on the scheme. The good news is that the iPads are now in the country! Having spoken to Jigsaw24, they have arrived and have been sent to the factory that completes the necessary set up at the pre-school deployment stage. I was hoping for more of a timescale to give to you today but that hasn't come through at the time of writing this email. Rest assured that as soon as I have a timeframe I will let you know.

### **Free School Meals**

Parents of children who are entitled to Free School Meals vouchers will need to keep a look out for an email tomorrow with their voucher codes. Although the guidance hasn't arrived yet from the Local Authority, we have pressed ahead and ordered our vouchers for our families rather than waiting. We are aware that many families situations will have, and will continue to change affecting finances. Please be reminded that to apply for Free School Meal vouchers you need to apply through the Local Authority website. The link can be found below and Sharon in the school office is happy to support with filling in the form.

[https://www.coventry.gov.uk/info/54/benefits/168/free\\_school\\_meals](https://www.coventry.gov.uk/info/54/benefits/168/free_school_meals)

### **Key Workers and Vulnerable children**

We have to plan very carefully for children being in school. This is why we requested parents to let us know whether they would like a place for their child in school to allow us to create bubbles. There are clear guidelines that have been emailed out previously regarding the process for Key Workers. This lockdown, the message is very clear. If your child is able to stay at home then they would be far safer there than mixing with others in school. We work on a week by week basis and will not change bubbles part way through a week.

Finally, please be reminded that our main platforms we are using are Tapestry for EYFS and Seesaw for years 1 – 6. This is where your child will find their learning. Tomorrow we will upload a series of written guides and video clips that will show you and your child how to access and respond to

learning. There will be a variety of devices being demonstrated and a variety of options for how to complete the learning. Hopefully this will alleviate some of the stresses and anxieties that I am sure are out there...it is technology after all! For those children who have not got their Learning Journal at home, we can arrange for collection from the school office, if you ring the school office or email the info address.

We have developed a series of documents to share with you, these can be found as attachments to this email. These are not yet live on the school website but will be by the end of the day tomorrow. The documents form our 'Remote Learning Offer' to children and families. The myON document is something brand new for KS2 children so they will not have seen it before as it is something we have only set up today. This made need a small amount of support to set up. This is different to what we have previously sent out for bubble closures. Please bear in mind, as mentioned earlier, that we are constantly looking to enhance and develop remote learning so this be a very minimum.

Live reading sessions and Weekly assemblies on a Friday will begin next week. We have a few creases to iron out over the next few days!

We will continue to do as much as we can to support from a distance and be as creative as we can to solve problems for you. The [info@parkgate.coventry.sch.uk](mailto:info@parkgate.coventry.sch.uk) remains the hotline for questions and queries relating to most things school related.

With another day of rising figures of infection and deaths, please take care and keep safe.