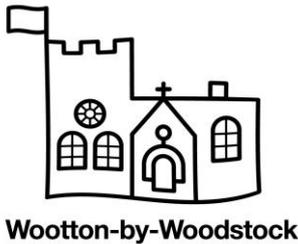


Wootton-by-Woodstock CE Primary School



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14th January 2021

NEWSLETTER EXTRA

Dear Parent,

I am writing with further information following the rather rapid turn around of events during the last couple of weeks.

First, I would like to thank you all for getting on board so quickly and supporting your children with their remote learning. It is evident from my calls to many of you yesterday that, like the school, you had prepared yourselves for such an eventuality as another lock down and have been able to back up the school's work admirably. Thank you. I know that home schooling alongside working at home yourselves is not always easy and, as I said last time round, we can all only do our best in difficult circumstances. Think how much stronger we are now - together we can make it work! In spite of everything,

“This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it.” *Psalm 118:24*

LIVE LESSONS AND GOOGLE MEETS

All home-schooled children are expected to attend live lessons and Google meets each week. School staff aim to do these at the same time every week, as far as possible, so that we all know where we are. These will happen as follows:

| Teaching group | Teacher | Day | Time | Subject |
|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| Ash Yr 1 and 2 | Mrs Lawrence | Monday and Tuesday | 9.30-9.45 | English and maths |
| | | Monday and Tuesday | 10.45-11.00 | English and maths |
| Ash Yr R | Mrs Lawrence | Monday and Tuesday | 11.30-11.45 | Reading, singing, maths |
| Ash all pupils | Mrs Arneil | Thursday | 9.55-10.15 | Class chat |
| | | | | |
| Maple | Mrs Palmer week 1 | Monday | 9.00-9.30 | English |
| | Mrs Palmer week 1 | Tuesday | 9.00-9.30 | Maths |
| | Mrs Palmer week 2 | Wednesday | 9.00-9.30 | English |
| | Mrs Palmer week 2 | Wednesday | 10.30-11.00 | Maths |
| | | | | |
| Willow | Ms Brown | Monday | 9.30-10.00 | English |
| | Ms Brown | Thursday | 10.45-11.15 | Maths |

Please note that Mrs Palmer's live sessions will alternate weekly between week 1 and 2 as she works an alternating pattern. The week beginning 18th January is week 1.

In addition to the above we are able to re-start our catch-up intervention programmes run by Mrs Clemons and Mrs Cambrey. These will include:

- ELSA
- Reading Between the Lines
- Phonics

Timings for these will be confirmed soon.

An additional intervention to support pupil spelling will be built into the learning led by the class teachers. This is known as Sir Linkalot and the introductory activities will need to be followed up at home with, perhaps, a little bit of help from parents and carers.

ATTENDANCE

All pupils who are not in school are expected to engage with remote learning activity and follow the curriculum provided by the school. All pupils must attend the online lessons and Google meets unless there is a valid reason for not doing so. In practical terms, if your child is not present at these sessions then this equates to an absence from school. The school reports attendance figures daily to both the ODS and the DfE. We recognise that there are sometimes difficulties of various kinds and so, should your child not be in attendance, the school will contact you to ascertain the reason for absence, just as it would in normal circumstances.

Similarly, if your child is ill, has a medical appointment or some other valid reason to be absent from school/learning then we would ask that you contact the school, as you would normally, to let the class teachers know that your child will not be taking part. This will help the teaching staff to plan and personalise learning more accurately.

FREE SCHOOL MEALS

We understand that, during times of pandemic, employment and income can change. If your own circumstances change and you think you may be eligible for support with your child's meals, then please contact Mrs Withey. Mrs Withey will have the latest information about eligibility criteria.

STANDARD ASSESSMENT TESTS (SATs)

SATs have, once again been cancelled this year owing to the pandemic. Even though children will not be taking the SATs the school will continue to cover the same curriculum and assessment tracking processes as if they were. It is, quite clearly, more difficult for teachers to make accurate assessments of pupils working at home. Assessing pupils cannot be done simply by looking at returned work; in normal circumstances teachers and TAs would be monitoring pupil interactions, conversations and learning attitudes throughout the day to help inform their judgements. We do anticipate, however, to be able to undertake more of this throughout the summer terms once the vaccination programme is well underway and infection rates may have reduced enough for everyone to be back in school. Please note that your child will not be disadvantaged by not taking the SATs. The curriculum is still being provided and learning is still taking place. This is the same for all schools nationally.

CHILDREN OF CRITICAL WORKERS AND VULNERABLE PUPILS

Many of you may have heard in the news that schools are overwhelmed with pupils, who are entitled to be in school under the criteria of vulnerability or key worker status, while trying to work with reduced staff. Numbers of pupils in schools are many times greater than in the first lock down. This is the same at Wootton: there are less pupils in the school this year, yet we have more pupils in school under key worker and vulnerable criteria. This is partly because the criteria have changed slightly from lock down 1 and partly owing to parental choice. Understanding this, last week, the government was very clear in its communications that:

“Children with at least one parent or carer who is a critical worker can go to school **if required**. This includes parents who may be working from home. If it proves necessary, schools can ask for simple evidence that the parent in question is a critical worker, such as their work ID badge or pay slip. **Parents and carers who are critical workers should keep their children at home if they can.**” (*Restricting Attendance during national Lockdown: Schools. Guidance for all Schools in England*)

We now urge you to reconsider whether or not it is absolutely necessary for your child to be in school. If your child can be kept at home safely, irrespective of your key worker status, then they should.

The aim of lock down is to limit the transmission rate of the infection so that the NHS is not overwhelmed and can remain functional. Without the NHS everyone will be at risk of many more health issues besides Covid_19. We need to make sure that our **critical** workers can work. These are workers who are working directly to fight the pandemic and maintain essential services.

I attach a letter from Anne Dellar, CEO of the ODST urging parents to reconsider their circumstances and whether or not they do absolutely need a school place for their child. In view of this information please let Mrs Withey know should your requirements change. Thank you.

FEBRUARY HALF TERM

While we have no secret information about the February break and nothing has yet been announced by the government, we suspect that there may be a possibility of the school having to be kept open for childcare of critical workers as it was last Easter. Certainly the infection rates would currently imply that all NHS staff may need to be working extremely hard in the weeks ahead. The school would only be open to those families whose work is absolutely essential to fighting the pandemic. This is simply contingency thinking at this stage. We will contact you about this should it be necessary nearer to the time.

Finally, we hope that you all continue to stay safe and well and find a little time to switch off and do something enjoyable to preserve your sanity.

With all good wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'V. Lucas', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Valerie Lucas
Head Teacher