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Dear parent/carer,

May I begin by apologising for the number of letters we are sending out at the moment. There is a fine line between giving too much information that people feel bombarded and keeping everyone well informed. As there is so much change needed at the moment, we feel it is better to make sure everyone is kept in the loop and hopefully, as things settle and our new way of working progresses, the need to communicate so often will disappear.

Thank you to those parents who contacted us to say they will help to keep the risk low by keeping their children at home. We are very grateful and appreciate your consideration to the wellbeing of our staff and children.

As we move into week two of the lockdown and our blended learning, we have listened to the feedback we have received, celebrated the positives and reflected on what the next steps are as we take a step into uncharted territory. We are thankful to have the support of our Newchurch Family.

Changes to the location of classes, drop off and collection times

Due to the high numbers of children now requiring a place in Year 2, and with the need to keep everyone safe, we have no option but to relocate this class in order to ensure there is sufficient space in line with the guidance and our risk assessment. Therefore, Year 2 children and staff are going to move into the Year Four classroom and make use of the ICT suite, which is situated next door. Year 4 will move into the Year 2 classroom.

For young children changes such as this can be extremely unsettling; many of them will not even have seen the classrooms on the other side of the school before and so we need to support them in this transition. We have put together a loom recording for the children which will act as a social story for the children to see where they are going from Monday. Please excuse my lack of technical ability when doing the virtual tour! Here is the link:

<https://www.loom.com/share/83dff38cb0e74e6ca614f7f7d7e68dc2>



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As you can appreciate, having the class split will place additional pressures on the Year 2 team. Instead of two groups to support (remote learners and children in school), the Year 2 team will need to consider three groups. Due to the changes, some children may not always be in a group with children they are friends with. Please respect that we need to group the children in some way and it needs to be based on their educational needs. Your child may be a little unsettled at the start but it will pass as they become used to their new surroundings.

Of course, change has a ripple effect and so we will need to change the timings of the start and end of the day for both Year 2 and Year 4 to ensure that year groups are not arriving at the same time. We could have simply just said go through the different gate but with the current timings of Year 2 and Year 4, they would be arriving at the same time and the same gate as Reception and Year 3. The changes to the times and gates are as follows:

Class	Drop off time	Collection time	Gate
Year 2	Between 8:50am and 8:55am	Between 3:00pm and 3:05pm	Year 6 gate
Year 4	Between 9:10am and 9:15am	Between 3:20pm and 3:25pm	Reception gate

For those children working remotely, Miss Igglesden and Mrs Conreen will review the class timetable and upload it onto Google classroom. For some parents, the changes may cause problems with dropping off/picking younger siblings up from nursery. If this is the case, please email me on my head's email and I will see how we can find a solution. The email is:

newchurch_primary_head@warrington.gov.uk

The next step in our remote learning

At the start of our blended learning, you may have been thinking, 'How am I ever going to keep this up for 6 weeks?' We are not going to lie, at one point that was a feeling we had too! However, as the fog has dissipated and clarity has begun to flourish, we are confident that the remote learning package we are working towards will enable us to sustain six weeks (or more if the need be) of quality learning.

Last week, our priority was to ensure that all children were able to access the virtual register in the morning, the story at the end of the day and engage in online phonics or spelling sessions with a member of staff.

This week, we are taking this a step further and introducing a live guided reading session for small groups of children using the materials that were sent home in the children's resource packs. These are for Year 1 to Year 6. Mrs Sizer will deliver reading sessions with the children but of a different kind. The teachers will have updated their timetables to include the times of guided reading and your child will be sent a link to access it **just before** the session is about to start.

Many parents have informed us that the live streaming motivates the children, helps them connect with their peers and also allows parents to focus on with their own work if they are working from home. The live streaming of lessons is new to us all and confidence is growing daily. Of course, the age



of the children and their ability to independently engage with technology makes it a very different experience for Years 5 and 6 than Year 1 and Year 2.

This week, you may see some classes having a go at live streaming to both children working remotely and in school for other subjects such as Maths and English. This means that the teacher will be in their little 'recording studio' out of the classroom (The Nest, staffroom or in the locker areas) delivering a live lesson to the children working remotely. Simultaneously, the teaching assistant will click on the link the children working remotely have received and the children within the classroom will also be able to be part of the session; therefore, all the children get exactly the same teaching session. This is what we are aiming to do for all classes to reduce the amount of time parents will need to support their child but we are taking it step by step with the younger children and building up to it each week.

With the increase in the number of live sessions, some families may find that they do not have the devices to support all their children's remote learning. If this is the case, please contact school and we will see what we can do to support you.

Communication with and from remote learners

We would like to express our gratitude to you for trying to keep to the timings for uploading the children's work. We know for some of you, uploading by 4pm is a challenge and we thank you for trying as it is making a difference. Thank you also for your patience waiting for responses from staff when you have had queries.

As a staff, we met last night to discuss ways to improve this. One consideration was ensuring the children use the looms or videos before contacting school. Teachers have made the loom recording so the children can be a little more independent as they can be replayed in the event a child needs to go over a method or listen to the explanation again. Of course, if they have looked at the loom recording a few times and still do not understand, then please ask them to send a message and support will be given. Another consideration is asking the children not to use the Google Classroom to send chat messages to one another as these appear on the stream. These mount up over the course of the day and really, staff need to concentrate on those messages which request help so only having the necessary ones will speed things up.

Parental Conferences

Hopefully, you have all booked in your parental conference times and are eager to meet with your child's class teacher. As the teacher will be online with parents on the designated day, live streaming by the teacher will not happen. The register and story will remain in place but will be conducted by the teaching assistant.

On the day of the parental conference, the children will be given a task mat of activities which they can work on throughout the day and in any order. These will be linked to the children's current topic (or book) and give an opportunity to look at the Arts and perhaps go outdoors. Our original plan was to



have the class covered by Mrs Dixon or Mrs Storey so the normal school day could go ahead, but due to the high numbers of children in school, and the fact that Mrs Dixon and Mrs Storey would need to be in a different bubble to their usual one, we have made the decision to try a new way of working which hopefully will give you a little more flexibility throughout the day and give the children some opportunities to participate in mindfulness activities.

The guidance has changed and the recommendation is that all parents should keep their children at home if they can. Anyone who is able to, no matter how difficult it may be, please consider this as infection rates and mortality rates are increasing and we want to keep everyone safe. Hopefully, after reading this letter, which outlines the development of our remote learning, you may find that you are in a position to do so. What we hope you can see is that the children will be taught equally whether they are at home or school and that we are working towards reducing the level of home schooling you are doing as parents by more live streaming. We are aiming for this as we cannot guarantee that this way of learning will only be for the next five weeks as planned.

As always, many thanks for your continued and valued support.

Kind regards,

Mrs Jayne Narraway

Head Teacher



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