

Newchurch Community Primary School  
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Dear parent/carers,

We do not wish to tempt fate; however, we would like to start by congratulating ourselves (as a whole school community) for managing four weeks without having to lock down a class or the school as a whole. This is purely down to our partnership in keeping to the guidance given to us. Thank you for taking the following actions:

- Keeping to your allocated drop off and collection times
- Ensuring only one adult from each family collects the children
- Remembering to wear face masks past the red gates when dropping off and collecting the children (and respecting the staff and parents who are exempt from wearing masks for medical reasons)
- Adhering to the 2m social distancing rules outside the school gates and whilst on the premises
- Keeping your children off when you or they are symptomatic and trying to obtain a test

Your diligence in keeping to the rules is really making a difference in ensuring we are able to teach the children face to face – something we feel passionately about and do not want anything to get in the way of that.

There are a number of parents concerned about the continued breaking of the rule of six between some families and also the lack of social distancing on the village park. It is not up to us to tell you how to allow your children to spend their time out of school but hopefully, everyone will consider the impact of this in terms of the potential for the spread of the virus and as a consequence, the closure of classes as a result of a positive case of COVID-19.

### Homework and Google Classroom

Thank you so much for your patience during our transition to online homework. As always, when there is something new, teething problems occur.

Many thanks also to those parents who have responded to the remote learning questionnaire. The purpose of the survey was to gather the voice of the parent before finalising our plans should the children have to continue their learning remotely as a result of a positive case of COVID-19 being identified within our Newchurch Family.



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We appreciate that access to devices is varied for our families; the size of families can cause issues when all children need access to devices, parents working from home needing their laptop and also knowledge of how to upload children's completed work can impact on the effectiveness of remote learning. Therefore, your comments are so vital in helping us cater for our Newchurch robins. Here are our responses to some of the feedback we have received. If you have not yet made a contribution to the survey, it is not too late.

***What do I do if I have more than one child and not enough devices for them all to access their learning remotely?***

This is a real issue for many of our families and we thank those who have informed us of this problem so we are aware of it should their child's class be asked to isolate. We are currently working on changing the thirty mini laptops we have in school into chrome books using the Catch-Up funding provided by the Department of Education. In addition, we will be purchasing additional devices which will enhance our computing resources anyway and can be used as resources for remote learning should the need arise.

In the event that your child is asked to isolate, and you do not have sufficient devices for them to work from, the school will loan an iPad or laptop to facilitate your child's learning. This will involve a signed agreement between the parent and the school. The allocation of these devices will be based on the completion of the remote learning questionnaire where parents have indicated to us that they would need another device in order to enable their children to learn whilst they continue to work.

Should the whole school be asked to lock down, we will probably adopt a staggered approach to remote learning to enable devices to be shared within the family home.

***How can I upload my child's homework/remote learning?***

Understandably, when changes from the norm occur, there are challenges which face us. We are incredibly grateful for the resilience shown by our Newchurch families since the introduction of Google Classrooms and appreciate that we all have different starting points in terms of how we engage with technology. I personally consider myself technologically challenged and completely understand the pressures of changing with the times.

In the remote learning questionnaire, some parents mentioned that they would like clarification as to how to upload their child's homework/learning. Although we provided detailed guidance on this, some parents felt a video would be more useful to show the process of submitting work. Therefore, we will work on this and ensure you have it by the end of the week.

We have a number of very tech-savvy parents (and children) in our midst who have managed to upload their children's work. We are aware that there are class Facebook pages where you can all communicate with one another. Perhaps this is a method of gaining support from one another which could be explored.

***Why can't we just use paper and pencil?***

In these challenging times, all opportunities to reduce the transmission of the virus are taken. Some parents have mentioned that other schools are using homework books and handing them in. Every school has their own risk assessment and as part of ours, informed by the guidance given to us, we have decided to reduce the risk of transmission by not having homework books coming to and from multiple homes. This would put the staff at risk.



Work can either be completed using Google docs, which is part of the Google Classroom package, or by completing it on paper and uploading it. Either way works for the class teacher and both will be responded to equally.

We appreciate that the younger the child, the more support parents will need to give in the uploading of work but hope you understand that as part of our ICT strategy for this year, and in preparing the children to fly, we are aiming to develop practices which will support the children once they leave Newchurch.

***If we have to work remotely, does my child need to hand their work in at a specific time, or do we have flexibility?***

This is something we are still working on. The guidance states that schools must continue to provide a sequence of lessons which is supported by feedback from the class teacher to ensure continuity in learning.

We have listened to our parents, who would need to work whilst their children are working remotely, and are working on the best way to balance the workload of the teaching staff and the need to plan effectively, with the difficulties parents may experience at home. Please be assured we will aim to find a compromise that accommodates the majority of families.

***Does my child's work have to be printed out?***

Thank you to those parents who have brought to our attention the fact that tasks given in PDF format are causing problems as they require printing out to complete. Our staff briefing will look at how homework will be presented in order to ensure all children can access it with ease. We appreciate your patience as this is put into place.

***I am not sure if my child's teacher has received my child's homework***

As with the old procedure, homework is only expected in on the Monday when new homework will be set. To support their work-life balance, teachers may mark children's homework as it is submitted and return the marked work to your child; however, you should receive feedback from the previous week's homework no later than the Monday of the next school week.

As this is a new way of working, we are aware that parents and children will want to check their work has been received and as such staff will respond to this. However, teachers are not expected to respond to messages sent to them outside of their working hours (8:30am – 5pm). Some may choose to respond outside of these hours if they wish to but please do not be offended if you do not get an immediate response.

**Reading Plus**

Reading Plus has been purchased (at a considerable cost) for all KS2 children to support the development of their reading speed, their comprehension and understanding of vocabulary. Please could we ask that all those children who are not accessing it, do so. The login details are in the children's reading records. If you require any guidance, please contact school.

Some parents have informed us that their child has been given a starting point which appears to have taken them back a little. We have been informed that each year, a new assessment is done to decide where the



children need to start. This means that some children will need to repeat some tasks they have previously completed. We are sure that this seems a little deflating but it is purely to build the children's stamina and reading speed, giving them confidence with the texts they have used before.

Children in Year 3 will need to complete an assessment task to decide where their starting points are to be pitched. It is important that this assessment is completed by the children independently in order to ensure that they access the materials at the correct level and then progress appropriately through the scheme.

### Mobile phones

A few parents have brought to our attention their concerns regarding staff using their mobile phones. As teachers and children form their own nests and movement around school is limited, communication is very difficult. Therefore, messages to and from the office regarding pupil absences, the need for children to receive their medication, children being picked up for medical appointments etc. are communicated through the teacher's mobile phones. In normal circumstances, staff would not have their mobile phones out in class but as you can appreciate this is a necessity at the moment.

### NHS COVID-19 App

NHS Test and Trace has launched the NHS COVID-19 app that helps control the spread of coronavirus. It will do this by alerting people who may have been exposed to infection so that they can take action. The app is available to download on smartphones for anyone aged 16 or over. Please continue to support us in keeping our Newchurch families safe by downloading the app.

### Parental Conferences

Speaking honestly, we did not expect the online booking system to work so well. Within ten minutes we had nearly all the school booked in. There are still a few families not booked in so Mrs Dowling will be contacting you today to manually book them in and check you are aware of the procedure.

And finally...

With many school in Warrington experiencing closures of year groups, individual classes or whole schools, let us aim for a fifth week of our gorgeous children being taught in school by a staff force who are keen to ensure every child meets their full potential.

Thank you once again for working in partnership with us and here's to a great week!

With kindest regards,



Mrs Jayne Narraway

Head Teacher



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