

# Wendover CE Junior School

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*We aim to be the school of choice at the heart of our community.*

*Through living our Christian values, all children and adults at WCEJS have the opportunity to flourish as individuals.*

*We nurture the curiosity to learn, the courage to lead and the compassion to care.*

## WCEJS Newsletter 8 January 2021

This was not the start to the term that anyone was hoping for. Thank you to everyone in the school community for how you have responded to the late news that schools would be **partially closed**. I use this phrase deliberately as it is important for everyone to remember that we are **not** closed. We are educating around 100 pupils in school and a further 280 remotely. I am sure you agree that this does not describe a closed school.

Staff have worked extremely hard this week to ensure we were ready for partial closure and the switch to remote learning. We are already very close to capacity in terms of the numbers of pupils attending school and we hope that our operating capacity is not affected by a further reduction in staffing – this will require us to make very difficult decisions at short notice. There is a fine balance between meeting the requirements of the government in providing places for those who are eligible and maintaining safe numbers of people in school.

I know that parents have been greatly affected by this sudden change to daily life and the unwelcome return to having to juggle working from home with supervising children as they learn. We greatly value your support and resilience. It is important though to remember that many school staff are also parents; they are working throughout the day teaching, planning and monitoring remote learning and then supporting their own children when they get home.

Thank you to parents who have sent positive messages– they mean a great deal to staff. We are also grateful for feedback, your comments are always considered even if we do not reply to individual emails. We will continue to improve the level of service that we offer our school community, as we have always done. However, I would ask that parents accept that we are operating in very difficult and stressful circumstances.

Mr G Kynaston

### COVID Update

Within school, we have reintroduced measures that were in place during the first lockdown. Principally we are teaching in groups of no more than 15. Additionally, staff are wearing masks or visors when inside to further reduce the spread of infection. Children may wear a mask if they wish.

As ever, ensure that you monitor your family's health stringently. Do not send your child into school if:

- they are unwell, have a temperature, new or continuous cough...
- anyone else in the household is symptomatic
- anyone in the household is waiting for the result of a test
- they need to self-isolate.

If unsure, keep your child at home and email the school office.

## Remote Learning

We have spent a good deal of time developing our online learning platform (e-Schools) since the first lockdown. We have looked at research findings regarding what constitutes effective remote learning, talked to other school leaders about their provision and read all the recent government guidance. It is clear that there are different opinions about whether a synchronous (live teaching with all children at home and school doing the same thing at the same time) or asynchronous (a system that allows greater flexibility for when and how pupils learn) approach is best. We believe, based on the available evidence and the feedback received during the first lockdown, that an asynchronous system is better for our community. We do not have the capacity to offer both systems at the same time.

Our Remote Learning provision more than fulfils the government requirements and we believe that our provision is good (our provision offer has been shared with parents and is available on the school website). Some schools are choosing to offer live lessons and other are choosing to use video support. We have decided to make good use of external video, both in school and for those learning remotely. Children at school are 'doing proper lessons' and use the same resources that are provided on e-Schools.

We are developing a Class Chat which will allow pupils to talk to their class teacher each week via video link; pupils will be able to talk about how they are coping, how their work is going and what support they feel they need the following week. It is hoped that all children will complete their first Class Chat next week (joining details will be shared with pupils through e-Schools early next week). Additionally, we are looking at providing more 'real time' support for maths and English via e-Schools – more information will be available next week. Children who are working remotely and classed as vulnerable will also receive additional support via MS Teams starting next week. Parents will be notified of these arrangements via email.

We expect that children will engage with remote learning daily for up to four hours. This includes:

- Daily maths tasks (1 hour)
- Daily English tasks (1 hour)
- Learning in at least one other area of the curriculum (1 hour)
- Daily reading, learning of times tables (including TT Rockstars) and spellings (1 hour)

Children should be encouraged to spend the **full amount of time allotted**, showing that they have tried their hardest, not simply completing tasks at a minimal level. There is always scope for improvement, redrafting, reworking, thinking deeper and higher levels of challenge.

We know that it may be more difficult to work at home rather than at school and that there are a multitude of distractions. Some children may well refuse to work on particular days or find reasons for not attempting work. This is not unusual. Learning resilience is not as high as it was prior to COVID. In school, we are continuing to promote growth mindset and resilience. If pupils do not understand, they are required to read through instructions again, review video and powerpoints, look at the success criteria and have a go.

Teachers are not expecting to receive 'perfect work' and do not require it in any specific format (image upload of written work is absolutely fine). They want to see that pupils have tried their best and not simply produced the minimum. Success Criteria and answers are often provided for children to self-assess and to help parents gauge the quality of work.

With so much remote learning and working from home happening simultaneously, there is often a strain on the resources available to families and internet. We are therefore trying to provide resources that can be viewed on many different devices, including xbox, play station and smart TVs. Devices with small screens may be able to screen mirror / link to TVs to assist reading / viewing. We are trying desperately to order devices for eligible pupils from the government website but have had no success so far.

#### **Critical worker – Premier Education.**

Wendover Play Active Club at the Youth Centre will start up again from Monday 11th January in a reduced capacity. We will operate from Monday to Thursday both morning and afternoon.

If you would like to book, please do so in the usual manner by booking online. If you have any queries please contact Adam on [akempton@premier-education.cm](mailto:akempton@premier-education.cm) or 01296 620 097.

#### **Safeguarding**

If you have a safeguarding / welfare concern or need additional support then please contact Mrs Bartlett: [admin@wendoverjunior.co.uk](mailto:admin@wendoverjunior.co.uk) Further information is available on our website.

