

Mrs N Gardner  
Acting Headteacher

Mrs K Hankin  
Acting Deputy Headteacher



15<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope this letter finds you well. We wish those of our community who have Covid a speedy recovery. This email will replace the newsletter again this week. Next week, our newsletter will resume so we can share and celebrate learning both at school and at home.

Thank you for the many positive comments we have received from parents about the provision at school and the remote learning offer. Remote learning has developed enormously since March as we have become more knowledgeable about how to best provide this provision through the range of platforms and resources available. Remote learning is a fast evolving area and a new expectation of education that teachers and leadership have worked extremely hard to navigate and develop.

### **Parent Questionnaire**

We will be sending out a parent questionnaire to find out as many views as possible about what is working well and what can be improved. We are continually reviewing our offer to ensure it is the best it can be. Your feedback is always valued.

### **Managing Remote Learning**

As we head towards the third week of lockdown, we have found a few of our parents are struggling which may include more who have not emailed in. We understand that having children at home and not at school during lockdown is a challenge for many. We also know that managing remote learning is another pressure on families; especially for those trying to work from home, who have several children to support in a small space and for those with younger children who need time and attention.

We want all children engaged and accessing learning but we also want mental well-being to be a priority for the whole family. Please know that we understand you are doing your very best at this difficult time. We understand that our timetable might not suit everyone every day. Some parents prefer to be given structure while others need some flexibility. If you feel that you may be struggling and would like some guidance or support, then please let us know.

A good place to start is to create your own remote learning timetable that works for you and your family. We recommend following a routine that combines work, physical activity and downtime. Keep us informed of your approach. We do not want to add to the pressure that everyone is already feeling. Calls home are there to offer support as we work together to get through this period.

**Our vision is to create a community of successful learners who feel confident, happy and safe and who show respect for themselves, each other and the environment.**

Derwentwater Primary School, Shakespeare Road, Acton, W3 6SA

Tel: 020 8992 9296 / 020 8992 5710

Email: [parentcomms@derwentwater.ealing.sch.uk](mailto:parentcomms@derwentwater.ealing.sch.uk)



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### **Remote learning and Government Guidance**

Government guidance has been updated and states that key stage 1 should be offered 3 hours of learning and key stage 2, 4 hours of learning. The amount of work and the length of time it takes can vary from child to child. Some families may want less work, others more, whilst some will feel the amount is accurate. Children take different lengths of time to complete tasks but we believe we are setting an amount of work that is adequate and that will meet the government requirement. Again, as a parent, you decide what you think is appropriate for your child. We also understand that there needs to be a balance between screen time and that learning doesn't only happen when completing remote work. Cooking, helping with chores, playing games and much more all contribute to building vital skills and broadening knowledge.

### **Google Meet**

We recommend downloading the Google Meet app on iPads to support smoother access to the meetings.

### **Uploading Work**

Some parents have struggled uploading work so we have created a useful guide. Please click on the link for guidance. This video is also on the school website. Depending on how you access the school site you will see it: 1. On a laptop on the right hand side, the third video down 2. On a phone - it is at the bottom.

<https://www.derwentwaterschool.com/home-learning/google-classroom>

### **Chrome Books and Laptops**

We received 51 chrome books from the department of education which we have loaned to families whilst we are in lockdown. We are currently resetting some of the school laptops for remote use which we will share with families who have no or limited access to devices. We will let families know when they are ready. School is also looking into fundraising with the aim of buying more devices for the school to loan to families.

### **Critical Workers**

Due to the growing numbers of children in schools, the government have announced that parents and carers who are critical workers should keep their children at home if they can. We know that this is not possible for everyone and welcome looking after children in these circumstances so our critical workers can support the national effort.

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### **Communicating with School**

We have had some parents ringing into school for logins and general queries. Can I please remind parents to message their year group email or [parentcomms@derwentwater.ealing.sch.uk](mailto:parentcomms@derwentwater.ealing.sch.uk) as the phones will not always be manned when staff need to be deployed elsewhere. We are working hard to respond to emails quickly and I hope you feel that responses are timely.

### **Nursery Opening**

We are working out the logistics of opening nursery as soon and as safely as possible. With the current rate of infection being very high and the NHS being overwhelmed we will be gathering interest of attendance this week and then we will inform parents of the start date. This is likely to be 25<sup>th</sup> January. This will be confirmed next week along with other attendance arrangements.

### **The Space – Supporting Everyone’s Mental Health**

**The Space** is now on Google Classroom. It is open to all pupils and will have information and activities that focus on the children's well-being. For example, there will be a Mindfulness section on meditation. Activities will be added to it weekly and we hope that it will be a place that will help those children (and parents) to manage these times more effectively. A separate email has been sent from Helen Thorp, our school counsellor, who supports children, families and staff with their mental health. Her contacts are in the email if you need support.

### **Free School Meal (FSM) Vouchers**

The relaunched national voucher scheme will be available to access from the week commencing 18th January and will replace the current food parcels. However, as the EdenRed government system has had many issues in the past we are continuing with food parcels for next week as we do not want families to struggle in the interim. We will continue to update you as we hear back from EdenRed. The food parcels have been improved and will include more food; such as eggs, milk, butter and yoghurt. Parcels will be available for collection on Tuesday from 2.45 to 3.00. If you requested a parcel, please pick it up on this day as it will not be available after this. Due to some of the food being perishable, we will give uncollected parcels away to other families. Let school know if you need support with this.

### **Covid Safety Measures**

All measures in school are there to protect the children, staff and the community and we look forward to being able to open fully again in the near future. However, for now, it is important to remember that we are closed in order to protect our families and community and to support the NHS whilst the infection rate is so high. Please adhere to government rules. Now that we have a test centre in Acton for people not showing symptoms, we will be asking staff to get tested on a

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weekly basis. This means asymptomatic people will be identified and can self isolate. With this and the vaccine roll out we very much hope that the spread of the virus will be greatly reduced.

As always, thank you for your ongoing support.

Kind regards

Nikki Gardner