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11 February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

### **Thank you**

Well it is the end of another half term, I cannot lie as I think for all of us this term has been the hardest of the pandemic. I want to thank you all for your support and patience during this term. To all our wonderful children I want to say well done and we are hoping we will get to see you all in the near future. We are very proud of all of you for all you have achieved in lockdown. I have really enjoyed looking at the work submitted through Tapestry and Purple Mash. Keep up the good work. I would also once again like to extend my thanks to my amazing staff who have worked tirelessly this term.

### **March 8<sup>th</sup>**

As of yet we are still unaware of what the government plans are for return to school from March 8<sup>th</sup>. I know many of you may think we are informed before everyone else but like you we get to know the plans at the briefings as you do. Rest assured like every new announcement we are ready to roll with whatever the government informs us we need to do. As soon as the announcement is made, we will be in contact with you to let you know our plans.

### **Live learning trial**

As you may be aware we have been trialling live learning for groups of pupils over the last couple of weeks. I have to be honest and say we have had a very mixed response. As feared, we have at least half and sometimes more of the children not turn up to sessions. On many occasions no one has turned up for a session which is a huge waste of a teachers' time. If you know your child will not be attending the session, please could you let school know as soon as possible. If a child fails to turn up for two sessions, then their place in the live learning will be withdrawn.

We have also had several occasions where parents have left the room and we have had to terminate the session for the child. As we have stated, for safeguarding reasons, parents must remain in the room for the entirety of the session and cannot just pop out for five minutes! In our older year groups, we have also had issues with children not being ready for learning or leaving the room to get drinks etc. Again this is not acceptable. We are running a lesson and expect children to behave as such.

Another issue that teachers are facing is we have had many parents offer constructive criticism on lessons. Although I am sure this is meant to be helpful, could parents please refrain from offering this advice. As a teacher we evaluate every session and as trained professionals, we are able to adapt and refine our practice.

Having said all of the negatives, for some of our children these sessions have been incredibly beneficial and we will continue to run them. Teachers in each year group are running sessions differently as the needs of the children are different depending on age and capability to use the technology. We will refine and hone our offer as time goes on. Teachers will continue to identify the children who we feel need live sessions and contact parents appropriately.

Can I also say that teachers have loved seeing the children and are exceptionally grateful to all the parents who have supported their children in how to use the technology and bearing with staff when the technology may have had glitches. This has been a huge learning curve for all.

Live learning is in addition to our online learning. The core of our online learning remains the learning pack both physical and online, teacher videos, CGP books and phone calls.

#### **Video lessons**

Can I just remind parents that every week all year groups have a suite of videos where teachers are giving inputs to the lessons for the week. These videos will help the children to understand and clarify their learning for the week. We also upload story sessions for the children and families to enjoy. All of these can be accessed through Purple Mash and One Drive.

#### **Bubble life**

We now have a quarter of our school population in at Southcote and a sixth of our school population at Katesgrove. Children and staff are really enjoying learning and I know on our return, a couple of classes are going to try and broadcast a class assembly so children both at home and school can see each other. Thank you to all our key worker parents for all they are doing. We really appreciate your hard work and effort during these difficult times.

#### **Reminder**

Please ensure we have your up to date phone numbers for all your contacts. Staff are quite often finding that numbers do not work. Please email admin with any corrections.

#### **Test and Trace over half term**

We will be contact tracing over half term again so please answer the phone if we try to contact you. As a reminder please report any positive tests over half term to: [covid@katesgrove.reading.sch.uk](mailto:covid@katesgrove.reading.sch.uk) / [covid@southcote.reading.sch.uk](mailto:covid@southcote.reading.sch.uk) .

We will be continuing as staff to be tested over half term and this has been very reassuring to us all to have these tests available.

#### **Home Learning Packs for week beginning 22<sup>nd</sup> February**

Paper copies will be available for collection from the usual places tomorrow (Friday 12<sup>th</sup> February) and also on INSET Day which is Monday 22<sup>nd</sup>.

#### **Half term**

This will be a very odd half term for us all but we encourage all the children and parents to have some fun, get outdoors and get creative. As I can't go away this half term we have decided to go camping in our living room! We are also creating a valentine's menu and cooking together and are looking forward to pancake day and coming up with new flavour combinations for our pancakes. We are also looking forward to some bike rides and muddy walks in the woods. I wish you all a happy and healthy half term.

Stay safe.

Yours sincerely



Mrs L Telling  
Executive Headteacher  
The Kennet Federation