



The Federation of Antrobus St Marks and Great Budworth CE (A) Primary School
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Dear Parents

At the start of week 2 of this lockdown I would firstly like to pay tribute to all the staff who last week were faced with the enormous task of setting all their planning to online learning with just a few hours' notice. Much of the background work had been done thankfully, which meant we were able to open straight away unlike other schools who remained closed for the first part of the week.

However, the recording of lessons requires different planning and materials which weren't delivered to school until Tuesday/Wednesday of that week. To say last week was stressful for us all is an understatement! Then just as we were breathing a sigh came the news that Great Budworth was having to close until Tuesday 19th January

However, as always, our first priority is the children and we are pleased to say that across both schools we can see lots of activity on Microsoft Teams, Purple Mash and MyMaths. Staff at Great Budworth will be working from home, this includes the office staff.

During the latest podcast for Headteachers, we were given some background information about the new variant and what this means for us in schools which I would like to share with you. I'm sure that you have picked up the media referring to the number of pupils in schools this weekend too.

1. Schools are still safe places for children. However, the new variant transmits more as an airborne virus and so we must reduce social contact between adults in school more than last time and this means reducing the number of staff on site. We are more at risk of passing it on to one another than it passing between children to children and children to adults. The only way we can reduce staff on site is to reduce numbers that are coming into school on a daily basis. This also frees up staff to work from home providing the remote learning the majority of you need. Reducing the number of children in school also reduces the number of parents bringing them and thus being outdoors which is another way of reducing contact between adults and will slow the virus down.

So this leads me to say a huge thank you to those parents who are keyworkers who have decided to keep their children at home. **This is by far the safest thing to do for all our sakes.** As is being stressed in the media, being a key worker does not give you the right to a school every day but should be a last resort when you absolutely can't manage at home.

2. Schools are strongly advised to keep their numbers down to around 10% of their usual numbers with skeleton staff. Without schools trying to do this the R rate will likely not reduce to below 1 any time soon, which will make this lockdown longer and tougher for us all. At the moment Antrobus is running at 25%, Great Budworth 19%.

So my question to those keyworkers coming into school every day is a serious one:

Is this place in school vital every day?

School should be a last resort. Do you absolutely need this **every day**- needing it because it is hard to manage at home is not the same thing. It is hard to manage at home for every single one of us! Similarly, can you think about wrap around care and whether this is completely necessary. This is not the same for those families who have had individual conversations with staff and timetables have been agreed. This still remains the same and has been factored into our numbers.

3. Because of the new variant, I am asking staff to wear masks more whilst they are in school, particularly when they are in communal areas and to be even more careful at keeping their distance from one another.

4. Even though it's cold, we will be opening windows and doors regularly so if your child is in school, they need to be dressed for the weather: school uniform, hats, gloves, coats etc etc

5. We continue to follow all earlier guidance regarding hand hygiene, not sharing books etc.

6. Please continue to update school on Covid positive tests using the Covid email covid@greatbudworth.cheshire.sch.uk

Moving on to normal school matters, we welcome Mrs Nicola Crampton today who joins our admin team as the Bursar, taking on Mrs Murphy's role. Last week I also accepted the resignation of Mrs Robins from the admin team at Great Budworth. Wow, what a week! Mrs Robins has received a promotion at her other job and so we wish her well in this new role which will start in a month's time.

We are continuing to gather information as to who needs laptops/iPad support from home. The list is ever increasing and so we need to just check what we have against who hasn't got anything and who has got something but not enough. Obviously if you are offered something from school it will be on the understanding that it will be returned to school in the same condition it is lent in.

Staff are monitoring social media from various places and any hints and tips for acquiring extra data, how you can use other equipment- Xbox and Playstation to name two, will be tweeted regularly.

Lunches in School

Obviously we have a reduced supply of food coming into school and our cooks will do their best to provide meals as closely lined to the menus as possible but this won't always be possible. Please bear with us whilst they develop a routine. Rest assured a hot meal will be available every day that we are open.

Free School Meals- these are available for children in school. For those self-isolating, we can arrange for a food parcel to be delivered to school for you. This will include items and menu cards for you to be able to make 5 days of meals so you only need to collect a parcel once a week.

Please let the office staff know if you require a food parcel. We will only ask for those that are required to save waste.

Finally, I was not expecting to start my final countdown year like this. I am hugely disappointed not to be seeing all the children in school as are all the staff. I hold onto the hope that this doesn't have to be for a very long time. We can make a difference by following the guidance and encouraging all those we know to do the same.

You are doing a great job from home although it might not feel like it. After the last lockdown, when we were able to get the children back in, they were mostly back on track within the first term. We can do this again and this time, you have much more support with what you are doing at home.

Try and keep positive, if it's not going well, have a break. The work that is being set doesn't all have to be done if it's too much. You know your children and your circumstances and when enough is enough. As we continually say to the children, just try your best and do what you can. We all understand, most staff are juggling work and homeschooling too and it's not easy for any of us so be kind to yourself.

Kind regards

Sandra Finney
Headteacher
11 January 2021