



St Paul's Friday Round Up

Friday 8th January 2020

Welcome to our round up of news and information for the week.

Happy New Year to you all.

COVID – National Lockdown

We opened the school on Monday morning under the government's *Contingency Measure* and by Tuesday morning we had been placed within National Lockdown. Events have been incredibly fast moving and the details and guidance from the Department for Education is not released at the same time as the press announcements. It is often a number of days before the guidance is released and we need time then to plan for their implementation. Over the next few days and weeks we will send a number of additional emails to share this information as it evolves.

Remote Learning

The switch to remote learning is not easy for any of us. If you are feeling stressed and worried about helping your child or children to learn remotely, you will not be on your own. There are very many families for whom this will be a real challenge. Please do not give up or put undue stress upon yourselves. Every family is different and the challenges for every family vary.

Some families may have very good IT facilities and space to study, for others there may be too few devices for every child, strain on wifi and little space to study. Some parents will have some time during the day to help children with their work, whilst others will be busy working from home during the day. Some families have two or more adults in the family home, whilst others are single-parent families. We are working to support you all as much as we possibly can, within the context of the national lockdown and the importance of reducing community transmission of this virus.

We are working with government to receive and send out additional IT resources to vulnerable families, we are enhancing the remote learning offer with hard copy packs for vulnerable families, we are systematically contacting vulnerable families and will maintain this contact to help iron out difficulties with access to the remote learning offer.

In the ideal world, with the right facilities and sufficient time and expertise, children will be able to engage in all aspects of the remote learning offer, complete all of their work to the highest standard and submit all of it on time. We don't all live in the ideal world and so this ambition may place too much stress on your family whilst in lockdown. My message to you is not to lose hope and not to let remote learning add to your anxieties.

It is important to have a degree of flexibility and realism, in order to make remote learning work for everyone. There are a few key messages that I would like to share with everyone:

- If you submit work late, Google Classroom will highlight that it is late. This is an automatic function and is certainly not the school *telling you off* for submitting work late. We do ask for work to be submitted reasonably promptly and regularly, as this helps teachers with marking – however there is flexibility in recognition of everyone's different circumstances. If you get a 'late submission' comment, please do not worry about this.
- If you do not have an internet device, you can request a hard copy work pack from school, enabling your child to access the learning. Please email the school office.
- If you have more than one child, but only one device, you may find it helps to request a work pack for your children and then share the device over different days between each child. You could submit work for one child on one day and for the other on another day.
- **SOMETHING IS BETTER THAN NOTHING.** If you are struggling to get through all of the day's work with your child – perhaps you have a number of children, or perhaps you are finding some of the work that we are setting quite hard to explain to your child – focus on completing some of the work, rather than getting very anxious that it isn't all done. Remember, the teachers have recorded support videos on Google classroom, that you

can pause, rewind and watch again. You can also communicate live with staff at the start and end of the school day, as well as over the stream during the school day.

- Do other educational activities as well as remote learning – reading to/with your child, watching the BBC Bitesize education programmes that will be shown on TV from next week, using Joe Wicks and other home work out videos etc. will all help. You can share some of these activities with your teacher on the stream and in the live meetings.

We can all only do what we have the capacity to do in lockdown.

- A parent/parents working from home will not be able to devote the working day to supporting their child's home learning.
- In families with multiple children, parents will not be able to dedicate all their time to each child.
- In families with limited IT resources, you may not be able to access all the live stream meetings and all of the facilities of Google Classroom.
- In school, we have very limited staffing levels, we have many additional responsibilities and we have limited resources, so we too cannot do everything and respond to everyone in the way that we may want.

Remote Learning Hours

As I set out in my email to parents shortly before the return to school, the remote learning day starts at 9am and finished at 3:30pm. Pupils can join the teaching staff for a live meeting at 9am and a second live meeting at 3pm. All the work, instructions, help videos and worksheets are available in the Google Classroom throughout the day. The teaching staff are available through the comments session during the school day (except for the lunch hour). Finished work can be submitted during the day.

After 3:30pm teachers will not respond to any comments on the stream and the stream should not be used out of these hours, however, staff may return marked work to your child at any time. The return of marked work does not mean that the staff member is available to communicate over the stream, but it is simply the teacher doing electronically what they normally do in person – marking at the end of the school day!

Homework in Lockdown

Teachers will not necessarily be setting the same homework that we normally set, during the lockdown. After a week of working on computer screens, I am not keen to encourage a weekend of more computer-based tasks. This is not to say that those who wish to do more on the computer should not. There are many further resources available on BBC Bitesize: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/primary> that match the curriculum.

Weekend homework during lockdown should focus on learning off the computer. Reading with and to your child remains really important. Please continue to read regularly, this is even more important than during normal term time, as we usually read a range of stories, novels, poems in school every week. Physical activity is also very important, a walk in the park/along the river, a cycle or other physical activity.

Breakfast Club and Aftercare during National Lockdown

We do not have sufficient staff to run the schools breakfast club or aftercare for the foreseeable future. I know that some parents rely on this care, but the school is under significant staffing pressure and I cannot see that being resolved in the short term. The complications of avoiding mixing and contact and keeping bubble consistent mean that the running of breakfast club and aftercare during the lockdown is not possible.

Breakfast Club and Aftercare Bookings – Spring 2021

If you have booked and paid for breakfast club and aftercare for the spring term we shall process refunds shortly. Please allow us some time as we have significant staff absence at present. We shall process refunds as soon as we can.

Brass and Ukulele Peripatetic Lessons – Years 3 & 4

The brass and peripatetic lessons that were planned to start this term will be postponed until later in the academic year.

Collecting food parcels and other resources from school

We are putting in place arrangements to collect food parcels and other resources from the school. To minimise the risk of virus transmission, we have to set up COVID safe arrangements. This means that collection of some resources are supported by school staff, but others are not. You may find that resources are on a table, with your child's name written on them. You can simply take the resource for your child without needing to ring the school bell.

Most collections have been scheduled with time slots, to avoid crowding. Please arrive at your scheduled time.

If you have requested a resource from the school, please collect it.

A number of families requested work packs that we spent time creating but did not come to school to collect them. We also prepared workpacks for every child in Nursery, Reception and Year 1 (for week 1-2) to help with the home learning. If you requested a pack and were asked to collect it last week (this will be for week 1 and 2 learning only) and you did not collect it, we will place them on the table at the school office on Monday 11th January between 10-12 – please come and collect it.

Nobody should attend the school site if anyone in their household has tested positive for COVID in the last ten days, is awaiting the result of a COVID test, has been advised to isolate by NHS test and trace or is completing quarantine after travel.

If you are isolating for COVID on the day you need to collect a food parcel, please email the school office.

Benefits Eligible Free School Meal Provision

During the lockdown, families whose children are working remotely and who are entitled to benefits eligible free school meals will be able to collect a fortnightly food parcel from the school. We have contacted all families currently eligible and arranged collection times with them. Your employment circumstances may have changed recently and you may be eligible for Benefits Eligible Free School Meals. To check eligibility and make an application, please go to: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals>

You are not alone

The national lockdown places huge pressure on us all. This week we have been working hard to contact our most vulnerable families to offer support. We will continue to do this over the coming weeks. We cannot offer in school provision to every family experiencing difficulties, as we need to reduce the number of pupils on site to reduce the community transmission of COVID, but even when you are not attending the site, there is much we can and will continue to do to support you. This includes, sourcing and distributing computer devices, preparing and distributing workpacks, sharing details of wider support organisations etc.

If you are struggling you can find a range of support on the local authority's website: <https://www.hounslow.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Contact:

To contact the school, please send an email to office@stpauls.hounslow.sch.uk **We have significant staff absence and so you may not get a response as swiftly as usual.**

To contact the Chair of Governors: chair@stpauls.hounslow.sch.uk

The office gate is currently kept closed to reduce mixing. You can call the office from the gate if you need face-to-face support.