



St Paul's Friday Round Up

Friday 29th January 2020

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

Remote Learning – Keeping Safe Online

I have been very impressed to see so many children engaging with the remote learning offer and joining the live stream sessions for their year group. This morning I learnt that we have Reception children who want to be police officers, teachers, doctors, princesses and even dinosaurs! Their enthusiasm was infectious.

I am very conscious that whilst laptops, tablets and computers are helping us to continue with learning, they still present some dangers. This is particularly the case when using the Internet for research. On occasion inappropriate advertisements and popups can appear whilst your child is working. There are lots of precautions that we can take, but sadly on rare occasions, even the most carefully protected device can throw up something inappropriate. In school we are fortunate to have an education designed firewall which filters and blocks a great deal of inappropriate content. However this can mean that when preparing lessons we do not see all of the content that might be visible outside school.

In school we do not ask the children to use Google to search for things, instead we use Swiggle:

<https://swiggle.org.uk/> This is a search engine aimed at primary children and managed by the South West Grid for Learning, an educational internet service provider.

Action:

Bookmark Swiggle on the device your child is using – perhaps even set it as the homepage. That way your child is one click away from safe searching.

Where teachers have a specific website that they want to use, they will share the web address. Use the hyperlink to get to the page, as a typing error or inaccurate predictive text can throw up an inappropriate suggestion – there can sometimes be a world of difference between a website ending .co.uk, from .com.

If your child is using a device shared by other family members, you might want to consider clearing previous history and cookies from the computer history. This will reduce advertising based on prior searches. There is a risk that some useful cookies, such as regular shopping site data may be lost.

You may also consider changing the ‘pop up’ settings on your web browser software. You can set it so that it prompts you before opening a pop up.

There are multiple family safe settings that most internet providers include with their service. These can be activated to set up a bespoke firewall. You might consider revising these for the time that your child is learning remotely.

Be aware that You Tube, whilst an excellent source of learning videos, will also generate suggested viewing content and can quickly move from appropriate material to inappropriate material.

We can never make IT use 100% safe, so must do our best to establish a safe environment – setting times when children can use devices (we will never expect children to work into the evening or overnight). Removing devices from bedrooms overnight, so that they can't disturb your child with notifications and keeping an eye on what your child is doing.

Finally, it is important to talk to your child about what to do if something unpleasant or inappropriate appears whilst they are working, as well as the risks of persuasive software. Sadly, some very negative content can be hidden behind a very innocent front screen.

I hope that these tips help to keep children safe as they study remotely.

Supporting all our Families

We have been very fortunate that we have received IT devices to distribute from the government, from a local donor and through resources we have in school. Mrs Lee, the school's inclusion leader, has been systematically distributing devices as they come into school and are made ready for distribution. I hope that if your child has received one of these devices, that they have found them really helpful. The home learning on Google classroom includes differentiation to support children across the ability range in each class.

We have also produced hard copy learning support packs for every child in Reception and Year 1. We have prepared learning packs for children in other year groups where IT resources have been a challenge. We sent home text books for every child from Reception to Year 6 and Mrs Lee has made up bespoke learning packs for a number of children with significant special needs.

Teachers and other staff have made phone calls to all families across the last few weeks. I hope that you have found these calls helpful, as well as the contact over the live stream and through the class stream facility on Google Classroom.

We have also been able to provide details of external support organisations for families with specific needs. Mrs Lee has coordinated this support.

We hope that in this way we have not missed anyone. We shall continue with this for as long as the school must remain closed to the vast majority of families.

Prime Minister's Announcement on School Reopening

Earlier this week, the Prime Minister announced that the nation would not be in a safe place in terms of the pandemic response to reopen schools immediately after the February half term. He has suggested 8th March as a possible return date. This suggestion is highly caveated and should not be seen at this stage as definite. A return may be staggered or limited to specific year groups. The Secretary of State for Education has pledged to give parents and schools two weeks advance notice of a reopening. We never get any advanced notice and so will find out more when it is announced publicly.

Staff are making plans for the remote learning offer to continue after the half term holiday.

INSET Day and Half term

We shall be using the planned INSET day on Friday 12th February to support staff in working on the remote learning offer. The school will close to all pupils and there will be no remote learning offer on that day. There is a 'Friday' set of work in the hard copy workpacks that have recently been distributed. Teachers may make use of these materials on the first day back after the half term break, Monday 22nd February, when remote learning will restart. Staff will share how they plan to use this additional material nearer the time over the Google Classroom stream.

Benefits Eligible Free School Meals

We have continued to provide free school meal parcels this term to all families eligible to benefits eligible free school meals. We will send a timetable for collections after half term by email before the end of this half term.

During the February half term the London Borough of Hounslow have made provision for all benefits eligible free school meal families. LBH are working with a voucher supplier called Wonde. In the next couple of weeks all families eligible for BEFSM will receive a voucher from Wonde to use at a local supermarket. Each voucher will be worth £15. The vouchers will not become valid until the week of half term. Please look out for the voucher email.

If your circumstances have changed and you believe that you may now be eligible for Free School Meals, please follow this link (<https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals>) to check.

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