

# Garden Fields J.M.I School

Townsend Drive  
St. Albans  
Herts  
AL3 5RL  
Telephone 01727 890440



Headteacher : Mr A. Farrugia

- ◆ E-mail : [admin@gardenfields.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@gardenfields.herts.sch.uk)
- ◆ Website : [www.gardenfields.herts.sch.uk](http://www.gardenfields.herts.sch.uk)

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15<sup>th</sup> January 2021

## School Update 15/01/2021

Dear Parents,

It seems amazing that we are already two weeks into the term! We hope that you are all beginning to settle into your working routines now including the many of you who are supporting your children with their remote learning. It has been a rather miserable week weatherwise this week but as I write to you the sun has made a brief appearance at last!

Thank you to those who are having to do this whilst trying to organise your own work. Mrs Dicks has also spoken to me about the number of keyworkers who are working hard to use the school as little as they need to – only where absolutely necessary.

We are very happy to do what we can to support front line workers at this incredibly difficult time in the pandemic. We simply ask that where possible children remain at home. This is simply because if there is a Covid outbreak at school, the virus will then infect not just children and staff - though this is bad enough - but also those at home. We know as well that it is often the adults who suffer the greatest from the effects of Covid, with the potential to develop more severe symptoms.

We now have a register of children who need to come into school on each day, including those with particular vulnerabilities who we deem it important to keep attending school. We would like to ensure that these details are now final so that we can finalise our staff rotas for up to half term. Please could you therefore notify us by 12 p.m. on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> January if there is any further need for places as we will not be able to offer a place after that, unless you have a change in employment. It is important for us to know now precisely who will be coming into school so that we can get the staffing allocated correctly. If you have someone else at home who can oversee the remote learning then please keep your child at home.

I hope that you have noticed the enormous efforts made by our staff team on their remote learning. Many of you have noticed the greater use of video, Google Meets and more structured routines for work. The time it takes to produce work, oversee and mark it, as well as be on rota to work in school with children of keyworkers and some of our more vulnerable pupils, is considerable.

We do regularly review what we are doing and share best practice and we are learning all the time about what works well.

I know some of you have different preferences about the timing of when lessons go out but essentially the expectation is that the teaching is set in the morning and introduced for that day. Typically the idea of this is that lessons are ready for a 9.00 a.m. start. There is flexibility in when work is done though,

depending upon your own particular circumstances, such as when devices are available. Whatever you do it is important to try and keep to a routine where possible – children benefit from a structure, but remember to include breaks etc. You probably know all this by now!

Reception and Year 1 teachers are trying to schedule activities the day before at the moment as they recognise that with their children being younger and less independent, there may be more preparation from parents required!

Please note as well that you will have seen many of our teaching and learning support assistants joining in by posting videos and marking work. It's a real team effort!

We have had lots of positive comments and feedback from you over this week– thank you so much! I would also like to thank you for the special greetings card that the staff were sent this morning signed by many of you. We were delighted to receive it - it really cheered us up!

Have a good weekend – the forecast is poor for tomorrow, but good for Sunday - at the moment!

Yours sincerely,

Mr Farrugia