



8th January 2021

School Update

Dear Parents,

It seems amazing that we have got to the end of what has felt like a very long week – with its many twists, turns and changes! I would just like to thank you for the many positive words of encouragement and support as well as a number of very funny, comic observations which have really helped to keep our spirits up!

I haven't got too much to update you with since Wednesday but there was one further important change for schools that came out this week which was that the following have been cancelled:

- KS1 teacher assessments
- KS2 tests and teacher assessments
- Phonics screening check

Nonetheless, we will still continue to strive, albeit currently through remote learning, to give our children the best possible provision for them to make good progress as we go through this school year, regardless of when all of our children return back to school.

Of course many of you will have become 'honorary members of the teaching profession' this week and I do not underestimate how difficult this is when many of you have your own challenges with your own work. I know that there will be different opinions about what we, and other schools are doing in regard to remote learning, but I would urge that all of us work together to try to ensure that all of our children get the best from us at this time. Cooperation is one of our school values and Collaboration one of the core learning behaviours that we wish to instil in our pupils – and the current situation is an ideal opportunity for us to role model both of these.

We opened up our year group emails this week and can I please remind everyone that these are for support with home learning – not an opportunity to question school policy concerning our remote learning offer. It is important that our staff are able to monitor and respond to the work coming in, answer children's queries on Seesaw, plan and organise further activities as well - and sometimes do this when they are working in class with the children who are still coming into school. It's a huge task and I can assure you that our teachers and support staff have even more work when working this way than when they are teaching in class. We all long for the day when we are back in school together again and can work normally!

We have come a long way on this 'digital journey' since the days of the first Lockdown in March and in the last few days we have held some of our first classroom Google Meets. Our remote offer is very much an evolving journey and you will see over the next week, if you haven't already, greater use of our own videos, Meets and other technology to support your children's learning.

Conversely, for some of you, we know from our feedback, that the amount of screen-time that pupils have and for others the limited availability of devices, is an issue. This is something that we will also look at as we travel along our remote pathway.

There is some light in the distant tunnel at least. January is always a rather gloomy month but as the days get lighter and we move into the sunnier days of spring and summer and the vaccinations roll out further, we hopefully will have brighter days ahead. In the interim let us all pull together as children, staff and parents and really demonstrate our Garden Fields community spirit so that we can get through the challenging weeks ahead.

In the meantime have a good weekend and try and get some fresh air, even if it is rather cold!

Kind regards,

Mr Farrugia