



## Collingwood Primary School Newsletter Friday 8th January 2021

*"We live our lives with arms and minds wide open"*

*Please follow us on Twitter @collingwoodprim*

Welcome back, sort of, and a happier new year to all in the Collingwood Family!

I know that Christmas feels a long time ago but I wanted to say a big thank you very much for all of your cards, lovely gifts and especially the thoughtful messages from both parents and children, they were really, really appreciated! Not all of mine had names on and it has been a little bit busy this week, so I apologise if I have not thanked you personally.

Unfortunately, several members of the Collingwood Family tested positive during the holidays but there was no need for us to notify any of you to isolate. I wish you all a speedy recovery.

I apologise for the many emails and texts we sent you during the holidays...as most of you guessed, we had no prior knowledge of either the two week delay in Essex or the decision to close primaries, we found out, with you, by listening to Boris on the telly! I have been somewhat alarmed by some of the announcements I am hearing on the news and social media and would very much like to give the school's perspective on some of the issues but my overriding message to you is **please ask us why we have taken the decisions we have before phoning Ofsted as Gavin Williamson has suggested...we have absolutely nothing to hide from you!**

### **School Closure**

In my opinion, Collingwood is no more or less safe that it was in December other than the discovery of the new variant. School Closure to all except Critical Worker and Vulnerable pupils limits the number of people mixing and therefore should reduce virus transmission in the town. The children who are here, are here because their parents have no choice. **Please do not be tempted to send your child into school, even if you do meet the criteria, unless it is absolutely necessary or cases will increase and we will need to send children and staff home to isolate and Critical Worker parents will not be able to work.** Pupils in school are accessing the same work as pupils at home so there is no advantage to being in school.

We currently have 30ish pupils coming in, not all on the same day, in three different bubbles. **All staff** are on site at some point on a 2 week rota and, at the moment, we have managed to keep staff in the same bubbles other than sports coaches who work with different bubbles whilst socially distancing.

### **Laptops**

Our school laptops and Chrome books are being used by the pupils who are in school and by staff who are working from home. We have lent some to pupils but have very few spares.

Last term we were allocated 15 laptops by the government for our 243 pupils. I applied twice and was turned down twice as we did not meet the criteria. I am told that the Government's January offer has increased significantly and that I will be "invited" to apply. Eligibility is based on children's needs, disadvantaged status, age, isolation circumstances etc I promise you that I will keep applying and will let you know if and when I am successful.

I believe that other devices eg X-Box, Playstations, Smart TVs and mobiles will enable pupils to access the work our teachers are providing for them. Please investigate the devices you already have before considering purchasing a new one. You should be able to get onto any website using the URL box or Microsoftedge or Google. It is easier if you have a keyboard to plug in but the controller can be used to type. It is possible to access the school website, videos and Google Classroom.

The majority of our pupils are not eligible for Government laptops. Therefore we are currently looking to see if we can secure a bulk buy discount so that we can offer you the option of buying a device at a lower cost that you might be able to elsewhere. **I am not telling you that you have to buy one, much of our work does not require an online device.**

**Many internet companies are offering free data to support children's learning so it might be worth giving your provider a ring as they will not do it automatically. The ones we know about include BT, Virgin, Three and Vodafone.**

### **Remote Learning**

All schools are required to publish their remote learning offer by 25.1.21. Ours will be sent out to all parents next week. The Government's requirement of 3-5 hours per day online learning does not mean 3-5 hours sat in front of a screen or 3-5 hours of a teacher talking to children from a screen.

Our teachers do not provide **continuous, live** lessons as:

- All of our staff are committed to being onsite, teaching Critical Worker and Vulnerable pupils at some point.
- Not all pupils are of the same ability and therefore not all would be able to access a "one size fits all" lesson.
- This is not manageable for all Collingwood parents, particularly those who need to use laptops for their own work. Not all parents are able to support their child at given times and if there is more than one child in a house they are unable to use a screen at the same time. Videos can be shown at any time.
- Our teachers are spending their days marking, responding to individual pupils and planning rather than appearing on screen. They cannot do both.
- Feedback from parents about how hard organising home learning is tells us that many parents prefer concentrated learning in the mornings and more practical activities in the afternoons.
- Many parents and staff are wary of encouraging pupils to have endless "screen time" which is detrimental to mental and physical wellbeing.

For those parents who prefer continuous adult on screen instructional lessons there is The Oak National Academy ([www.thenational.academy](http://www.thenational.academy)) and BBC Bitesize ([www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)) There are plans for 14 weeks daily lessons for Primary pupils to be broadcast on CBBC and other television channels following the January 2021 Lockdown announcement. We will let you know when we have more information about this.

**Our teachers will meet virtually with pupils at least twice per week and will be "seen" by pupils daily through a combination of live meetings, recorded videos and some live teaching/instruction/feedback sessions.**

**The layout of next week's plans will look different and will give you more flexibility to organise your child's learning around times that suit you.**

## **Working in partnership with you!**

We know that parents are not teachers...we find this way of working intense and exhausting too! You do not need to prove to us that you are a good parent...anything you do to support your child's learning is good as far as we are concerned.

- Do not be too hard on yourself if something goes wrong or if you do not cover everything.
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- Expect your child to do some things on their own. They would not have constant 1:1 support in school so should not have it at home. Teachers will not have set impossible tasks for children although we have probably set too much work so that fast workers do not run out.
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- There is nothing wrong with doing something that is not on the plan if it benefits your child's learning. Do not feel guilty about using The Oak National Academy ([www.thenational.academy](http://www.thenational.academy)) or BBC Bitesize ([www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)) or putting your child in front of an educational television programme instead of doing the work that has been set, if it fits in better with your circumstances. Just let teachers know what your child did instead so that we do not chase you to submit work.
- Organise the learning in a way that suits your circumstances...not all of it needs to be done at specific times although planning times for work and times for breaks/play is really important. Plans from next week will be set out differently allowing you more flexibility.
- Please do not submit more work than has been asked for, teachers have not got time to respond to it all...one piece of work from every child, every day is 160+ pieces of work a week...if teachers do this, they will not have time to plan or teach! We realise that there is probably far too much on this week's plans for everyone to complete. Remember, this was only meant to be for Monday so teachers did well to quickly adapt this to cover a whole week. We will amend what we send you over the next few weeks so that hopefully, it will become more manageable for all.
- **Remember to say "well done!" to your children and to yourself...you are doing something really hard...could I do your job especially without training and at such short notice?**

We are listening to your feedback and will continue to include your comments in our FAQ in each Friday newsletter but may not respond directly to all of your emails. Teachers will not respond outside of their working hours or at weekends, they too have families at home.

Stay safe, keep warm at the moment and talk to someone if you feel anxious.

Mrs A Buckland-Garnett

***If you think we are doing a good job, please tell Ofsted by clicking here [Give your views](#)***

We regularly email free school meals voucher information to parents. If you think you are eligible and have not heard from us, please email [admin@collingwood.essex.sch.uk](mailto:admin@collingwood.essex.sch.uk)

## **Governor News**

Our Governing Body has its own page on our website. (Click on the link top right) Our Statement of Governance, which details the membership, attendance and work carried out by our Governing Body is available to view on our school website. Our policies can be found, on our school website, on the policies page [www.collingwoodschool.net](http://www.collingwoodschool.net)

Do not forget the letter emailed to you about our Parent Governor elections. Please contact the school office on 01245 322258 if you wish to speak to one of our existing governors to find out more about what this rewarding role involves. All nomination forms need to be completed and returned to the main office not later than **Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2021**. Our Governors look forward to hearing from you.

Hellos and Goodbyes

Welcome to Sam, our new Sports Coach from Jack of All sports and to Claire Gillen, our new school Counsellor from B.C.C.s who will continue to work with families remotely.

**Remember that if a member of your household is symptomatic, the whole household must self-isolate until the test result is received. Pupils should not be in school whilst someone is waiting for results.**

### Dates for your diary

All dates can be found at [www.collingwoodschool.net](http://www.collingwoodschool.net) If school is ever closed, at short notice, it will appear on <http://www.essex.gov.uk/Education-Schools/Schools/Dates/Pages/Emergency-School-Closures.aspx> and the school website/twitter first and be announced on Essex FM and BBC Essex as soon as possible. Please avoid ringing the school as the phone is unlikely to be answered whilst we are organising staff!

Thurs 14th Jan	Parent Governor nomination forms to be submitted by today.
Fri 15th Jan	Closing date for Primary School applications - Sept 2021 start
Mon 15 <sup>th</sup> - Fri 19 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Half Term
Mon 29 <sup>th</sup> Mar - Fri 9 <sup>th</sup> Apr	Easter Break
Mon 3 <sup>rd</sup> May	May Day
Thurs 6 <sup>th</sup> May	School Closed for Polling
Mon 31 <sup>st</sup> May-Fri 4 <sup>th</sup> June	Half Term
Fri 16 <sup>th</sup> July	Last Day for pupils
Mon 19 <sup>th</sup> - 21 <sup>st</sup> July	Non Pupil Days - school closed

School Closure days for 2021-2022 are not usually agreed by Governors before June. These will appear here and on our website calendar as soon as these have been agreed.

### other sources of information and support

Don't forget that we hold a wealth of information from organisations wanting to support you in times of financial hardship. If you think that you may be eligible, please email [admin@collingwood.essex.sch.uk](mailto:admin@collingwood.essex.sch.uk) briefly outlining your circumstances and Mrs De'Ath or Mrs Wraight will contact you with any relevant information we hold.

Additional support for families in other aspects is available from [essex.gov.uk/topic/support-for-residents](http://essex.gov.uk/topic/support-for-residents)

**The Department for Education coronavirus (COVID-19) helpline** is available to answer questions about coronavirus (COVID-19) relating to education and children's social care. Staff, parents and young people can contact this helpline by calling: Phone: 0800 046 8687 Opening hours: Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm

**Chelmsford Foodbank:** In order to obtain food, you need a voucher which can be accessed from the Child and Family Wellbeing Service <https://www.essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk> 0300 247 0014, Or Citizen's Advice <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/contact-us/contact-us/search-for-your-local-citizens-advice/local-citizens-advice-details/?serialnumber=100386> 01245 205579. You will then be able to collect food from the Foodbank centre or arrange for a delivery.

**Community and Family workshops for parents** are added weekly -so please keep checking <https://aclessex.com/community-family-learning-online/>