

Wednesday 6th January 2021

Dear Parent / Carer

Well this is certainly not the start to the new year that we were all hoping for! I am writing to thank you all for your patience and understanding during this difficult time. We have received some wonderful messages of support and thanks and we really appreciate them – I always ensure that they are shared with all staff when we receive messages like this as it really helps. We understand that many of you are experiencing incredibly challenging circumstances and want you to know that we are here to help as much as we can. Children learning from home, via Teams is never going to be how we prefer to teach and we thank you all for all of your support in helping to make this work – it is a steep learning curve for us all.

Home Learning

As mentioned in my original letter on Sunday afternoon, home learning is continuing to be set via Teams for all pupils. It is our hope that all children will be able to engage in learning – whether at home via Teams or in school as part of our provision for children of critical workers and vulnerable pupils. We share your concerns about the potential negative impacts that this additional lockdown might have on your child's learning and progress and want to support them, and you, as much as we possibly can.

The most effective way for your child to learn and for us to ensure that they maintain contact with their class mates and the adults in school is via Teams. This platform allows us to set work, provide videos, have face to face check ins and provide feedback on the work that your child completes. We really do understand how difficult it is to support a 10 year old to understand long division or a 6 year old to understand what a noun is when you haven't done it yourself for 20+ years! Teams allows us to support them with this so that you are not feeling left adrift.

If you are having trouble accessing Teams, please contact the school so that we can support you to try and resolve this. Unfortunately, providing paper based packs of work is unlikely to ensure that your child receives the quality of learning to which they are entitled so it will really help if we can understand the issues that you are experiencing and support you to try and resolve these.

We are hugely grateful to all of you who are engaging with Teams and submitting work. We recognise that many of you are doing this while also working full time as well and know that this is a herculean task. The software makes us set a deadline before we can upload the assignment and I understand that some of these deadlines have been too short for some families who are trying to manage the online learning of several children at home and work full time themselves as well. I have therefore spoken with class teachers and asked them to change the 'deadlines' on the assignments set to a Friday evening giving everyone plenty of time to complete the work. We would still ask that you submit the work as soon as possible after completion as this means that the teacher can provide feedback on the work and support your child to move their learning forward, the sooner we can do this the better, but we do understand that some of you are

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Headteacher: Mrs L Buckley
Deputy Headteacher: Miss J P Heald
Loatlands Primary School, Harrington Road,
Desborough, Northamptonshire, NN14 2NJ
T: 01536 506404
E: parents@loatlandsprimary.net
W: www.loatlandsprimary.net



completing this work with your children after the end of the school day and do not want your children (or you) to feel stressed or upset by seeing that you are 'late' in submitting the work – this is never the case – please submit what you can, when you can.

As the whole country is now attempting to access Teams all day every day, the system can be on the slow side – we understand how frustrating this is. It is a nationwide issue, please be patient with it.

We are keeping registers of all of those children who are logging in to Teams meetings, submitting work and attending school. This is so that we can ensure that we are having regular contact with all children as per the government guidelines. If your child is unable to use Teams for 2-3 days in a row, it is likely that you will receive a phone call from a member of school staff – please don't be offended, this will just be an opportunity for us to check in and ask whether there is anything that we can do to support you. Where we are unable to contact you, we will leave messages where possible. If we are still unable to contact you then it is likely that members of school staff will conduct home visits to check that everything is ok. This is part of our statutory safeguarding responsibility. If your child is poorly, whether this is COVID related or not, please still feel free to leave a message on the absence line, and then we will know that your child is unlikely to be completing any home learning and will not phone you – hopefully this way you won't feel that we are hassling you.

Your child should have an exercise book at home that has got their login details stuck in to the front (please remember to add @loatlandsprimary.net to the end of their username when logging in.) If you get to a point in which the book is full, please contact the school and we will arrange for you to collect another book.

School Meals

Our hot meal provider, abm, are continuing to provide hot meals at lunchtimes for all pupils currently attending school. Please continue to book these in the usual way.

If your child is entitled to Pupil Premium Free School Meals but is not currently attending school, our catering provider will provide a food parcel for them this week. We will be in touch shortly to arrange for you to collect this food parcel from the school office.

We are still awaiting information from the government regarding provision for those that are entitled to Pupil Premium Free School Meals moving forward. As soon as we have this information, we will share it with you. (Please note that this is only in relation to Pupil Premium Free School Meals and not Universal Infant Free School Meals).

KS1 Snack

As many of you will know, children in Yr R – Yr 2 receive a fruit based snack each day. Unfortunately, we have been informed that this will be discontinued during the lockdown period. If your child is attending school and

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you would like them to have a mid-morning snack, please send one with them from Monday onwards. Please remember that snacks should be healthy (fruit or vegetables) and should not contain any nuts.

Stay at Home Message

As you will have heard from Prime Minister Johnson's announcement on Monday evening, the overriding message currently is for everyone to stay at home where possible. We are aware of the Prime Minister and the government's message that we need to reduce the amount of contacts that we have as much as possible and would ask you to work with us to keep our whole community as safe as possible. With this in mind we would continue to ask that your child only attends the critical worker / vulnerable pupil provision when absolutely necessary. We are currently providing double the number of spaces for children of critical workers and vulnerable pupils when compared to the previous lockdown in March.

Gates

Those of you that have visited the school recently will have seen that our new gates are now all in and operational. This will make our entire school site much safer for everyone. During drop off and pick up times, these gates will be unlocked and will just need to be pushed to open them (please continue to use the one way system already in place during these times.) During the school day, all gates will be locked and anyone needing to access the school during the school day will need to use the intercom on the central gate (the one next to the Nursery) to ask office staff for access. The vehicle gate also now has intercom access but we will continue to ensure that vehicles are not moving around the car park during drop off and pick up times.

Pick n Mix Homework

This Friday will see the return of our Pick N Mix homework. Please note that this is entirely optional. There is absolutely no expectation that your child completes this homework but is intended as an additional resource should you need one.

Finally, I would like to take the opportunity to thank you again for your understanding. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Kind regards



Mrs L E Buckley
Headteacher

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