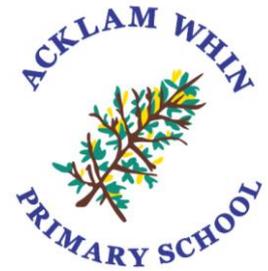


ACKLAM WHIN PRIMARY SCHOOL

“Preparing our children for their future.”



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11th January 2021

Dear Parents & Carers,

Well that was a week and a half. In a week where we have faced a number of U-turns, last minute guidance and a quick switch from open to all to open for some and remote learning for others; the things that have stood out most have been the amazing diligence and commitment from our staff, the incredible support and understanding from our parents and the hard work and resilience from our children.

It is without doubt, that we are all facing another challenging and worrying few months ahead. You may have seen Chris Whitty on TV this morning and Boris this afternoon describing the next few weeks as the worst with record cases and extreme pressure on the NHS. Having spoken to some of our NHS workers parents, the pressure and stress you are under right now is already a huge concern.

As a school we are equally concerned with what lies ahead for the safety of our children and staff. Our commitment is not only keeping the children and staff safe who are in school, but also supporting the many challenges you face while supporting your children with remote learning, as well as dealing with everything else.

Currently in school we have had a fourfold increase in pupil numbers from the initial lockdown last March. We know for so many of you, we are a lifeline in enabling you to continue to go out to work and keep things going. The Government did update the guidance for critical workers on Friday stating: *“Children with at least one parent or carer who is a critical worker can go to school or college if required, but parents and carers should keep their children at home if they can.”* This reiterates the clear guidance that the safest place for your child is at home, where possible.

We know this is a real challenge for you and we know that many of you don't have a choice. If you do, all we ask is that you consider even limiting the days that you need to send our children in, to try and reduce the risk for everyone.

Every week during lockdown, staff will be telephoning parents to check on how you are doing and offer any additional support we can. If you need help with remote learning, device problems, health concerns, welfare issues – whatever it is, please talk to the staff when they call, and we will do all we can to help.

We have been overwhelmed by your amazing support and heart-warming messages of gratitude. They really do keep us going and are genuinely appreciated by all the staff. We also welcome hearing your worries and concerns too as although at the moment, we don't know what is right for everyone, we are trying our hardest to help you and our children through all this.

The remote learning materials will be available every Monday and developed throughout the week on either the school class pages on our website or via SeeSaw. We will be using the Government recommended Oak Academy as well as a wide range of services that the children will be used to like BBC, My Maths, Purple Mash etc. There will always be a member of staff on hand during the day to support any problems or issues with the work – individual email addresses are on our class pages, and we are looking at ways to enhance our remote learning offer further to support the range of circumstances parents are facing at home, including face to face and live opportunities as well as personalised content and feedback.

The BBC has also today launched their biggest ever collection of educational programming and resources. You can find out about all the services they are offering here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-55591821>

As I set out in my last letter there is no pressure from us to complete all the work provided and remember, you are not expected to replicate the school day of 6 hours work. Whatever you can do, in the circumstances, for your family is great. We know you are doing your best. We love seeing photos of the children on our social media and we would love to see more – again not to pressure you to see the tasks you are doing – we just miss seeing our children.

Mr Jackson has updated our PE remote learning page where you'll be able to find lots of skills and challenges to keep active. You can find the page at www.acklamwhin.co.uk/parents/pe-sports/ Again, please let us know how you are keeping active either via twitter @acklamwhin or via email Mr Jackson direct.

Once things have settled down a little, I am also hoping to re-introduce a virtual Friday Assembly (I will apologise now before I even start) and other opportunities to help us all stay connected during the Lockdown.

Parkway will continue to be open for nursery day care and for wrap around care for as long as there is demand. Please contact them on 01642 813938 or email acklamparkway17@outlook.com.

Parents of children who are entitled to a free school meal have been contacted with regards to the temporary arrangements until we receive information from the DFE about their national scheme they have promised.

As always, if you would like to contact us for any support or advice, please call 01642 813938 or email awcontact@acklamwhin.co.uk. We are still here for you and our families and if we can help get you through these difficult times, we will do our best.

The Acklam Whin family will stay strong and together throughout the coming months, despite being apart. Our priorities are to support the children and families working at home, those who will continue to be at school and our staff and families who are working tirelessly to keep things moving forward.

Thank you for your constant support. We wish you and your families all the very best.

Mr Gamble