Friday 6th November 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

I hope you all had a good half term break and were able to enjoy some well-needed family time together. I know for many of us November may be looking a little daunting with lockdown back in force but I am really pleased that we are able to remain open and hopefully provide some stability during this period. With strict following of our plans, teamwork, some good humour and a little bit of luck we will get through.

I am reviewing how we are working and taking on board the emerging advice from the government. As you are aware, I wanted to try and operate as normally as possible this term within the government guidance and I am sorry to have to make more changes now.

Having thought long and hard about all the guidance presented to me, I feel our focus needs to be on keeping the school community as safe and as well as possible during the working day and that we should reduce as much as possible other activities in order to support this happening.

Therefore, whilst the lockdown is in place the following changes will be enforced, as advised by the government.

* As of Monday 9th November all after school, extra curricula clubs will be suspended (football, gymnastics, multi sports and Art Club). Further details will follow from each provider about how these sessions will be made up.
* Breakfast Club will continue during Lockdown.
* Visitors to school will be reduced unless to see a specific child due to SEND.
* Instead of asking parents to wear masks we ask all parents to stay well back from the gates when dropping off your children. Children should be guided to a blue cross at the correct time and the staff on the gates will let children in when they are ready.
* EYFS and Year 1 children can still be handed over to the teacher but I ask you all to be aware of the space that you give the teacher.
* Any messages that need to go into the teacher should come in through a phone call to the office.

**Additional Reminders**

* I must ask parents to remember to keep children by their side at all times whilst waiting on school grounds. Children must not be running around, climbing on railings or on their scooters whilst on school grounds and this includes in the car park.
* Please do not arrive with your children early and disrupt another year group’s drop off times.
* Only **one** adult to accompany children onto site.
* Please be patient with staff on the gate whilst they try their best to ensure children enter safely. As you can appreciate the office staff are not able to spend time with the children as they used to which makes it very difficult to identify which child is in which class and who is related to who.

I understand that some of us find these changes difficult and frustrating but we have not taken these decisions lightly. I hope you can appreciate how difficult it is to make these decisions and the effect that they have on the staff as well as the parents and children.

**Intervention Programmes**

Interventions are now up and running and your children may well have come home talking about some of the changes we have made. The teachers are working incredibly hard to make sure that the last lockdown does not affect your child’s academic achievements. The children are also working extremely hard and I am impressed how they are taking the changes in their stride.

We welcome Mrs Pullin to our team who will be working across the school supporting the teachers by enabling them to teach in smaller groups.

**Century Platform**

Although we have been lucky over the past few months not to have to close class bubbles due to an outbreak of COVID cases, it is important that we are prepared. We could at any time find ourselves reverting to remote learning. The Trust have therefore invested in a platform that children can access easily at home. This platform enables teachers to set work and give feedback to children in a completely safe online environment.

The Century Platform is designed predominantly for Key Stage 2 children but can be accessed by Key Stage 1 children if their teacher feels the children are ready for it. It is an exciting new tool, which we will be exploring with the children over the next few weeks so they are confident if they need to use it at home. More information about the platform will be sent out to parents when we feel that the children are ready to access it at home.

**School Lunches**

As promised, we have reintroduced hot meals for the children and Mrs Curtis has worked hard to produce a menu that is varied and healthy. Unfortunately, we cannot accommodate individual requests regarding additions or exclusions to sandwiches or hot meals. Once lunches return to normal children will again be able to make their own sandwiches and ask for exclusions of certain elements as they arrive at the serving trolley however, we are unable to accommodate this at the moment.

**Parent Consultations**

Parent Consultations have been organised for the 18th and 19th November and you will be notified through ParentMail when you are able to book your slot. Please be patient with staff as they navigate through yet another new system and try their best to make all appointments on time. You can help by keeping your appointment focused and to time – no longer than 7 minutes. Please remember that this appointment is a discussion about how your child has settled into their new year group. A further consultation will be arranged later in the year to discuss your child’s subject attainment and progress.

**Christmas**

I know some of you may feel that it is too early to mention Christmas but it will be upon us before we know it. I refuse to let COVID steal Christmas this year and will do everything in my power to ensure the children are able to enjoy the Christmas period as much as any other year. We will be working hard to organise some COVID safe activities that hopefully will be able to involve our whole school community and bring a bit of COVID safe Christmas cheer to Old Stratford.

I look forward to sharing these ideas with you but until we exit lockdown, I will not get too excited. Fingers crossed for the 2nd December!

Kind regards,

Mrs Sarbutts

