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Dear Parents and Carers,

First of all, a huge well done to you all.

The last few weeks have been the toughest yet for many families. January is normally quite a difficult month, never mind with the additional pressures and stresses that this pandemic has brought. I want to put your mind at rest - if you are finding this hard, harder than last time, you are absolutely not on your own. Almost everyone I have spoken to recently has shared the same feelings. The days are shorter; the expectations of home learning are greater; the financial pressures for many families are more challenging; expectations from employers for people 'working from home' have increased; the extension of the current partial opening for schools and the fear that our children will 'fall behind'. These are all very real pressures and I think it is important to know you are not alone with these.

There have been a few announcements by the government in briefings this week, which you may find useful if you were not already aware.

The Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, stated that there is, "insufficient data to show it would be safe for more pupils to return to school after half term". He also added: "I know how parents and teachers need as much certainty as possible, including two weeks' notice of the return of face-to-face teaching." The Government hopes schools can start opening to more pupils from 8th March 2021 (2 weeks after half term). The Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson, stated earlier in the week that schools and parents would receive, "a clear two weeks' notice period" ahead of full reopening. The government confirmed that schools will be fully 'closed' for half term to all children.

Whilst this information is not what any of us want to happen as we all want our children back in school, we all recognise that it is crucial that we do so safely. For those of you trying to juggle work, home learning and other pressures, we know these announcements are far from ideal, however, it is refreshing to actually know this information in advance.

All I can say to you is we do understand what you are going through; many of us are parents ourselves, juggling school, work, home learning and other pressures. We know it is stressful so remind yourselves that you are loving and supporting your children through a very difficult time – please look after yourselves and ask for help if you need it. As parents, we all just want to get everything right for our children and, as a result, we are often the ones placing the immense pressure upon ourselves to be the 'perfect parents'. I can tell you now, there is no such thing. Just do what you can, prioritise those moments to check in and talk to your child - wellbeing is everything. In terms of learning, prioritise the live meets and Maths/English tasks, and do not make yourself feel 'guilty' if this is not always possible. Use the private comments to message your child's teacher if you/or your child are finding it difficult to complete tasks. Often having a conversation with us enables us to offer some ideas, clarify some of the learning or alleviate any concerns you may have. This is the same for families finding things really challenging due to technology difficulties or lack of equipment. We are obviously supporting families as always, but we know there will be some families who are struggling and have not made contact. Remember, we are here to help.



In assembly this morning I mentioned a few things that might be worth implementing at home. Why not try:

- ⇒ When you wake up in the morning, try to think of 2 things you are grateful for.
- ⇒ When going to bed, can you think of one or two things that you have done well that day? Or two moments you have enjoyed? (These may be small, but they are significant).
- ⇒ Can you share your answer to these questions – at breakfast time, bedtime...?
- ⇒ Be kind to yourselves. When can you grab 5 or 10 minutes for yourself? Can you plan this in each day?
- ⇒ Can you/your child have a screen free afternoon?

Just a few ideas to consider.

Our remote learning offer for all:

- ✓ Teachers have made a daily, home learning video, welcoming the children to the morning, sharing any key learning points from the previous day, and introducing the learning set for the day. Children have been set English, Mathematics and a wider curriculum topic (plus phonics for EYFS and KS1 children) using Google Classroom or Tapestry. Staff have been responding to children's work and answering questions in the comments section.
- ✓ Your child can access 'Rising Stars' to read the online reading books they have been allocated, as well as other online learning, available for each year group: TT Rockstars, Spelling Frame...
- ✓ Children at home have been able to hold a 'Check in' session. This is a great way to support children's connection and wellbeing which is one of the most important parts for our children.
- ✓ A daily physical challenge or link will be posted on Google Classroom.
- ✓ Stories or chapters from the class novel have been added to your child's Google Stream/Tapestry account.
- ✓ We have also carried out live guided reading with children from years 1-6.
- ✓ We have also experimented with small groups of children who require specific input.

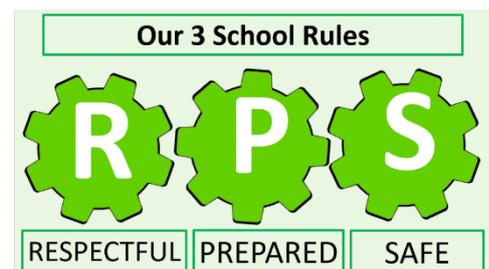
What next? Over the next fortnight we will introduce the following:

- ✓ We are trialing specialist sessions for children who need specific support, such as speech and language.
- ✓ We are also expanding our SEMH offer and starting a new 'Seasons for Growth' group to support children who have experienced loss of any kind.
- ✓ Additional small reading groups for identified children.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION!

Our staff have done a brilliant job delivering live sessions with children across school. This is new learning for us all. I am so proud of the way they have embraced this and put themselves well out of their comfort zone and into their 'learning zone' (just like we ask our children to do). They have really enjoyed seeing their children in school and online. There are however, some key points that I need to clarify and ask for your support with.

- ✓ An adult must be monitoring any of the live sessions (as per our policy). We have had a few incidents where adults have not been supervising their children during these sessions, and have not been aware of their child's actions/behaviours which has impacted upon the learning opportunities. The expectation is that any child attending these sessions has adult supervision as a safeguarding measure which protects all children and staff on these meets.
- ✓ Our school rules are as important as ever and children's behaviour during guided reading sessions, check-ins and assemblies should be as expected in school. It is helpful if they are not eating or drinking and they MUST be in a communal area - not in bedrooms please – as per the policy. It is important that they are prepared and ready to learn, in the same way they would usually do in class. Your support with this would be greatly appreciated.



Next week we will be sending out a Google Form questionnaire for feedback about the positive experiences of our remote learning offer and any helpful suggestions that may help us to continue to improve our offer.

COVID Update – Children at Home

Please notify the school of any positive cases of COVID, even if your child is accessing remote learning and hasn't been in school. We have been asked to add this information to a daily form which we return to the DfE. If your child has not been in school for the last week, please title the subject 'Positive case – remote learning'.

COVID update - children attending school:

As shared previously, the measures below still apply, however, **I do need to stress the importance of parents socially distancing and keeping 2m+ apart from each other, particularly at the end of the school day, when collecting children.** With the increased transmissibility of this disease, this is more important than ever.

- PLEASE DO NOT send your child to school if they have any of the three main COVID symptoms.
 - A high temperature – this means they feel hot to touch on their chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature).
 - A new continuous cough.
 - A loss or change to their sense of taste or smell.
- If they have a positive result – please email us immediately with the subject named as POSITIVE TEST and a copy of the confirmation, so we can review any action that may need taking to keep people safe. admin@rothwell-pri.leeds.sch.uk
- If your child has to isolate, they must stay at home. If they have siblings that need dropping off and you have no-one who can support you with this, please contact the school office and we will work with you to find a solution.
- Please email the results, even if it is a household member, before bringing your child back to school.
- If you are outside, within 1 metre of another parent for 1 minute (with or without a mask) you would be classed as a close contact if they were to have the virus. People are contagious from 2 days before they even have any symptoms. This would mean you would have to isolate for 14 days if Test and Trace had to track close contacts. Please try to maintain 2m+.
- If your child shows any of the 3 symptoms, we have to contact you to ask you to isolate as a household and anyone with symptoms must then access a test. This is the same for children across the country. As a parent myself, I understand the difficulties and additional stress this may cause, but we have to do everything we can to keep our school community as safe as possible.
- Please follow the 1 way system at all times please.
- Please try to ensure only 1 family member enters the school site to drop off or collect children, in order to reduce unnecessary risks.

Once again it was great to see so many of our children during our live Zoom assemblies this morning. It is just wonderful to see all of their happy faces and for us to come together and enjoy time together, celebrating as a team, as well as recognising the individuals who have been chosen that week. Children are chosen for a whole host of reasons as part of our Pivotal approach to behaviour management; this recognition plays a huge part in our ethos. A phrase we use in school regularly is 'going over and above'. This is a phrase we use in reference to effort and our children know this well. We expect all of our children to put effort into their learning - we are therefore looking for children who are pushing themselves, at their own level, into the learning zone. This is not in reference to the amount of work they have done, more around the effort they have applied.



Our superstars from today's celebration assembly were:

Key Stage 1

Class 1: Deacon M and Noa D
Class 1/2: Oliver W and Huey H
Class 2: Evie B and Dina J.

Lower Key Stage 2

Class 3: - Arthur R and Amber S
Class 3-4: Ava N and Ella S
Class 4 - Ava W and Jake N

Upper Key Stage 2

Class 5: Ruby S and Jonah G
Class 5/6: Preston F and Kaydie B
Class 6 Amy T and Orla C

As I mentioned in assembly, the children above should have already received their certificate in the post today.

We are so proud and impressed that on average 90%+ of our children are regularly accessing their remote learning. This is just incredible. Thank you to our wonderful, enthusiastic children, parents/carers and staff team.

To recognise and reward all of our children who are engaging well with their remote learning over the next fortnight, we will be looking to send out certificates at the end of this half term. Try your best over these next two weeks! You can do it!

And just before I finish, it has been great to read so many of the positive comments that have been sent to school - either by email, Google Classroom or Tapestry – acknowledging the learning we are providing for our children. Here are a small sample:

I just wanted to say a huge thank you to you and your staff team. You're doing an amazing job and I really appreciate all the work going in to providing home schooling material.

The speed at which you responded, the clear communication and the quality of the home-school activities is so impressive. Also, the addition of Google Meet sessions was an extra bonus and made my son X so happy!

Thank you so much to you and all the staff at RPS for all the support and encouragement you are giving on a daily basis and I know you are all juggling your own home and work life and all the challenges lock down is presenting us with. I know that you are all trying to do the best for our children and I can't articulate enough how much this means to us as parents.

I wanted to thank you all for your hard work and commitment to our children. You always do a wonderful job but recently you've been tested to breaking point and you've been incredible!

...the weekly newsletter this week brought a tear to my eye. I love your focus on keeping people safe and mentally well, and recognising the struggle that many families are facing...

Many thanks, keep safe.

Leila Rothenburg

Headteacher