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Headteacher Lynn Harrison

21.01.21

Dear parents,

Thank you for all your messages of support during this extremely difficult period. So many of you have commented that having all the resources prepared and dated has given you a straightforward structure to work from.

Home learning appears to have worked well this week with home WiFi generally providing a more consistent service than the WiFi at school! Children who had been in school last week certainly had more positive experiences of the live lessons with their own devices at home this week. The WiFi at school did not cope well with several devices all online at the same time. This in turn meant that staff had to come into very close contact with pupils in order to assist them.

All the staff have enjoyed their daily contacts with the children. Attendance at the online lessons has been very good and, now that teething problems have been largely resolved, Teams is enabling us to offer a good level of support to all children. We are confident that this, along with the home learning packs, will allow all children to maintain the progress that they had made during the autumn term and we do not expect to see the dips in performance that we saw after the first lockdown.

I am pleased to say that, if no further members of staff test positive for the virus this week, school will re-open for a limited number of key worker children as planned on Tuesday 26th January when the staff isolation period is complete. In light of the risks of the spread of infection in school settings, we would like to reduce the number of children using our childcare provision if at all possible. If you are working from home, please keep your children at home with you; if you have any alternative childcare options, please make use of them. The safest place for your child is at home. Please note, children of frontline NHS workers and emergency services will be given priority for places should it be necessary to review and reallocate places. If you need to retain your original key worker place, please email me on receipt of this letter using the email address: lynn.harrison@irthingtonvillage.cumbria.sch.uk.

We have reviewed our arrangements and will be introducing further safety measures as follows:

- Depending on the number of Key Worker children who continue to attend school we will introduce a Staff rota, if possible, in order to reduce contacts;
- Staff and children must wear masks when working in close proximity, for example when giving support during live lessons;
- Parents and carers must not enter school grounds without a mask when they drop off and collect either children or home learning packs;
- Staff will use twice weekly lateral flow tests provided by CCC.

Whether or not your child will be returning to school, he or she will need the next exciting instalment of their home learning packs! For work on Monday 25th and Tuesday 26th, please see the overviews which will be uploaded on Teams. The changeover of the packs is a big task for staff with marking of two weeks' worth of work for every child in school and distributing/ sticking in resources for the next two weeks' worth of phonics, English, Maths and topic for every child in school! Due to the unforeseen closure, the turnaround time will be much shorter than originally planned. With this in mind, we would be grateful if you would return your child's pack in full as early as possible on Monday 25th (8.30am onwards) and collect the next pack between 2 and 4pm the following day. Please be aware that it may not be possible to complete marking or to stick in every piece of work during this time but we will do our best.

Thank you for your support and understanding. Home schooling is a huge challenge and we really appreciate everything you are doing to help your children.

Yours sincerely,

Lynn Harrison